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When Palestinian Blood Isn't Equal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Recently, the human rights organization AGPS published a report documenting 3,840 cases of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the Syrian war in 2011 – nearly four times the number of those killed during the six years of the first intifada (December 1987-September 1993). The circumstances of the deaths were shelling, shooting, or torture in the interrogation rooms of prisons throughout Syria. Mahmoud Abbas remained silent and did not condemn Bashar Assad or Iran. Palestinian blood in the West Bank and Gaza appears to be worth far more than the blood of Palestinians elsewhere in the world. This is because Palestinians who are killed by IDF fire serve as a bulwark against Israel, whether by the Arab states or by the Western world.

A recently published report by the Action Group for Palestinians in Syria (AGPS), a human rights group, documented 3,840 cases of Palestinians who have been killed since the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2011 – nearly four times as many as those killed during the six years of the first intifada (December 1987-September 1993). The causes of death ranged from artillery shelling to shootings to torture in the regime's infamous prisons across the country.

In addition to this report, the Syrian regime released for the first time a list of names that included 548 killed Palestinians. While the regime's report did not note their causes of death, rights groups agree that those Palestinians died as a result of being tortured, starved, and deprived of adequate medical treatment.

The AGPS also said that 1,682 Palestinians are still missing, their fates unknown. According to some assessments, these Palestinians were either killed at some time during the bloody civil war or – “in the best case” – are still in prison. Therefore, at least 5,522 Palestinians have either been killed or have gone missing since 2011.

Along with those killed or missing, tens of thousands of Palestinians in Syria have lost their homes and employment. The Yarmouk refugee camp, which was home to tens of thousands, was utterly demolished over the course of the war. Before the camp was destroyed, the Assad regime laid siege to it. During that time, images of emaciated Palestinians began emerging in Syrian opposition media outlets.

Despite these horrors, not one official in the Palestinian Authority publicly condemned the Assad regime.

This is incredible. Where is the outcry from the PA, Arab and global news outlets, rights groups, Palestinian and Arab politicians? Where is their denunciation of Syrian President Bashar Assad's war crimes against the Palestinians? Why isn't every single Arab lawmaker in Israel excoriating the Syrian dictator?

When a Hamas or Islamic Jihad terrorist from Gaza is killed by IDF soldiers while trying to plant a roadside bomb or trying to breach the border fence, the Arab and Western worlds are apoplectic. The Arab League issues its familiar condemnation; the consistently hostile Kuwait denounces Israel at the UN and tries to convene the Security Council; Mahmoud Abbas requests international protection for the Palestinians; and all these reactions are covered round the clock by the Arab and Western press.

When Palestinians are killed by other Arabs, evidently no one cares – not in the Arab world, and not even among the Palestinians themselves, whether in the PA or Hamas. Everyone is silent. Palestinian blood in the West Bank and Gaza is far more valuable than Palestinian blood in other parts of the globe.

Palestinians who are killed by IDF fire can be used as a tool, whether by Arab countries or the Western world, to undermine and weaken Israel. Human rights groups in the West and in Israel too invest most of their energies and attention to the Palestinian issue in Israel. The equation is plain to see: When Israel or the Jews can't be blamed for killing Arabs, it's not interesting.

Throughout the war in Syria, Abbas's silence on the plight of the Palestinians there has been deafening. He has never repudiated Assad or Iran for killing Palestinians. He seeks the best of all possible worlds: support from both Iran and the Arabs. It appears he has been successful.

During the atrocities perpetrated in Iraq several years ago, a downtrodden Yazidi woman held a placard that said: "The tragedy of the Yazidi people is that the Jews aren't their enemy."

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