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Online Seminar: Palestinian Authority's Security Services is a threat to Citizens' Lives and Freedoms

On Thursday, July 8, 2021, Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](#)) held an [online seminar](#) entitled "Palestinian Authority's Security Services is a threat to Citizens' Lives and Freedoms".

The [seminar](#) was joined by a number of activists and legal experts to discuss possible solutions that can be presented to the international community to end violations of these services and achieve peace and security for Palestinian citizens.

The seminar was also held in the presence of **Mr. Erkki Tuomioja**- the former Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Rhys Davies, a British barrister specializing in international criminal law and human rights law, gave the opening speech and stressed that the central job of any government is to protect the rights and safety of its citizens and he asked, "Is the [Palestinian authority](#) an active threat to the safety of its own citizens in light of the shocking events that unfolded two weeks ago?".

Ghassan Banat, [Nizar Banat's](#) only brother, stated that Nizar has five children, the youngest of which is only a month old who would become an orphan of a man who loved journalism, photography and enjoyed life.

Ghassan stressed that "Nizar was killed for his criticism of the Palestinian authority's corruption, criticizing the vaccine swap deal between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which was a scandal, and criticizing the unemployment rate in Palestine, as 36% of the Palestinian men between (24-30 years old) are unemployed"

Ghassan added "Nizar formed an electoral list and people supported him. However, elections were canceled, so he sent a letter to the [European Union](#) to cut off funding



to the Palestinian Authority for its undemocratic practices. Nizar pursued democracy in his own country away from killing and blood-shedding”

Ghassan pointed out that “The Palestinian Authority ordered the killing of Nizar, claiming that he is a collaborator and a traitor for calling for a cut-off to the funding to the political system in Palestine”.

“On that day, the PA shot live bullets in Nizar’s bedroom, which prompted him to leave his wife and children at home and flee to a (C- Territory) for two months to protect his life, despite not committing any crime to be sought for.

On the night of Nizar’s death, he was asleep while 20 soldiers from the preventive security device, headed by officer Aziz Temezi (shown in a video), raided his house”, added **Ghassan**.

He continued “They **brutally** beat him, and two of his cousins witnessed the brutal incident. They could easily arrest him, but they started beating him with the sharp objects all at the same time. Nizar tried to get up, but they sprayed 3 bottles of pepper gas in his mouth.

Then they tied Nizar and beat him again and dragged him to the car and beat him again in the car, which is recorded on the cameras of the neighborhood, and maybe he was killed in the car. Six minutes later Nizar was dead.” Ghassan added, saying that according to a doctor, he died of the paper spray gas, not of a heart attack as the PA authorities claim”

“The authorities refused to give Nizar’s body to his father or brother and gave it to other relatives and ordered his burial in the middle of the night.”

In his speech, **Ghassan** asked for help to reach the EU and give details of the crime of murder of his only brother and demanded the **international community** to take action as the PA will not fairly investigate Nizar’s murder and these crimes won’t stop, where Nizar is number 39 of those killed at the hands of the PA.

Majdoleen Hassona, Journalist at TRT network, stressed that the murder of Nizar Banat uncovered the reality of freedom of expression and freedom of the press in Palestine.



She added “After the murder of Nizar Banat, [protesters](#) went to the streets and demanded a just investigation of the killing of Nizar. The PA oppressed the protesters and the press, to prevent them from revealing the truth”.

Majdoleen and other journalists were beaten during the [protests](#) and had their cameras and cell phones confiscated and broken, while female advocates and journalists were sexually harassed in the streets, and subjected to all forms of [violence](#).

Majdoleen pointed out that “Security forces broke Fayha’ Khanfar’s arm, Diala Ayish was beaten and harassed in the police station, and another was injured by a bomb that exploded in her face.”

Majdooleen also called for international protection by the UN as they fear being killed or detained to be kept silent.

In his speech, **Edward Joseph**, Professor of International Relations at Johns Hopkins University, started by saying that corruption is a terrible scourge that has massive implications on society. However, the tragic killing of Banat has caused a reaction in the US and EU and others have called for justice and a proper investigation

Edward stressed that “The change will come from the Palestinian citizens and those who support the PA like the US and EU and others to say you have to be accountable to your citizens and when an activist is taken into custody, and they have to call for accountability.”

“US and EU have to demand the report that was done after the investigation of the killing of Nizar Banat, the PA will either release the report in which the EU and Palestinian citizens read it and see if its satisfactory, or they will refuse to release the report, or their report will be released and seen as a sham report, then we can come to the next step. Citizens can call for an independent inquiry”, added **Edward**.

He pointed out that “Palestinians may also call what Banat himself was calling for which is: cutting off EU funding”.

Wael Abu Nemeh, a Palestinian lawyer and a human rights activist, said “We have a long experience with the US and Israel regarding forcing the PA to respect its own laws and basic human rights like freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.”



He added "Unfortunately, we are not confident that they would do much because the role of the PA is to protect Israel's security, and this is how the PA is preventing the Palestinians from fighting the occupation, rather it helps the occupation, [arrests](#), and kills the political opponents.

He concluded his speech by saying "Nizar was not the first or last one who was killed by the PA or in the [prisons](#) of the PA. We have a problem that might escalate to a civil war, and the international community has a big role in this issue as the PA is a part of the Oslo Accords".

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)