



Published on *The American Task Force on Palestine* (<http://www.americantaskforce.org>)

[Home](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

Palestinians and Israelis can coexist if occupation ends

Media Mention of Hussein Ibish in The National - December 16, 2013 - 12:00am
<http://www.thenational.ae/article/20131214/OPINION/131219524> ^[1]

Palestinians and Israelis can coexist if occupation ends

[Hussein Ibish](#)^[2]

December 14, 2013

The unstable and unhealthy relationship of dominance and subordination, of discipline and control through violence, built into Israel's occupation was graphically illustrated this week in two separate, tragic and bloody incidents.

Last Saturday, a 15-year-old Palestinian child, Wajih Wajdi Al Ramahi, was shot in the back and killed by Israeli occupation forces. The soldiers were sniping from a watchtower near the Israeli settlement of Bet-El. There are conflicting accounts of what happened, but even the official Israeli military version as it now stands is utterly damning.

The Israeli army says it deployed soldiers to "ambush" and "apprehend" stone-throwing Palestinian youths. In other words, the soldiers were lying in wait for the children. They duly appeared, and seeing the soldiers, according to the Israeli army, began throwing rocks from a distance of 150 metres (therefore posing no actual threat). The Israeli military says then "the squad commander began the procedure for arresting a suspect and shooting was only in the air."

And yet somehow Wajih ended up lying on his face, dead on the ground, shot in the back by the army of occupation. Nothing in the official Israeli account begins to justify or explain what happened to him. Everything points to what can only be described as a calculated ambush that led to a completely indefensible homicide.

Lest anyone think this incident is a bizarre aberration, not only have 23 Palestinians been killed by Israeli occupation forces this year in the West Bank, the history of the Al Ramahi family is an object lesson in the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship.

This family originates from the village of Muzayriah, which was destroyed by Israel in 1948. Residents of that town and 36 other destroyed villages, including the Al Ramahi family, now live in the Jalazun refugee camp, near where Wajih was shot and killed.

His father, a Fatah activist, was jailed by Israel from 1972-1992. Occupation forces destroyed two of the family's homes and boarded up two more. The family says two other close relatives were killed by Israeli troops in the past 15 years: Mohammed Ahmed, 14, and Mohammed Jamal, 21. To cap it all off, Wajih's older brother and two of his cousins are currently in Israeli custody and awaiting trial.

But the violence is a two-way street. There's another Palestinian in Israeli custody today, formally indicted this week for murdering an Israeli soldier last November.

Sixteen-year-old Hussein Sharif Rawarda, from Jenin, is accused of stabbing and killing 19-year-old Eden Atias while he was asleep on a

bus in northern Israel. Rawarda claimed he was acting on behalf of his jailed uncles. But his father, who condemned the killing, said his son was apolitical and probably motivated by economic distress.

The two grievances are inextricable. The entire system – social, economic and political – that Israel operates in the occupied territories can only be described as separate and unequal. The particular stressor on any occupied individual may manifest as social, political or even economic, but they all arise from the violent system of domination by a foreign occupying power.

Although it was written long ago and about a different time and place, Frantz Fanon's 1961 essay Concerning Violence – for all its undoubted historical and ideological anachronisms, and naive enthusiasms – remains the best overall guide to the psychological dynamic between the oppressor and the oppressed.

Its descriptive contrast between “the settlers’ towns” and “the native town” is uncannily evocative of the present day occupied Palestinian territories. And his evaluation of the psychology of these relationships applies as precisely to Israelis and Palestinians as any Fanon may have had in mind more than 50 years ago.

Fanon describes precisely the deforming and dehumanising impact on both the occupier and the occupied: “The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity.”

And so 15-year-old Wajih lies shot in the back like a stray dog, while 16-year-old Hussein is about to stand trial for murdering 19-year-old Eden in his sleep.

Routine tragedies demonstrate how and why the status quo is simply unmanageable, with millions of disenfranchised Palestinians living for decades under Israeli military rule with no end in sight. The relative calm that has recently prevailed, and that is now fraying, cannot be maintained if the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. For everyone's sake, conditions for Palestinians must be immediately improved, and in overt preparation for independent statehood.

The relationship of occupied Palestinians and Israeli occupation forces is essentially that of prisoners and prison guards. There is an ordered, legalised hierarchy of power and privilege inherent in the occupation. There is nothing hard-wired in either Israeli or Palestinian culture that makes people on either side relate to each other as they do.

Instead, each individual acts out the position to which they are assigned in a highly structured interaction between rulers and ruled. The same formula could be transplanted between any two other national groups anywhere in the world with similar results. A mere reversal of fortunes would likely see a concomitant reversal of roles.

Violence, incitement and abuses can and should be minimised by all authorities. But there is only one way to actually end this vicious circle of inhumanity. The occupation must end, so Israelis and Palestinians can live, at long last, not as the oppressors and the oppressed, but side-by-side as citizens of equally sovereign, independent states.

TAGS: [Civilian Deaths](#) [3] [Israeli Military Action in the West Bank](#) [4] [Peace Based on Two States](#) [5] [Palestinian Statehood](#) [6] [Settlements](#) [7]

[Events](#) | [Daily News](#) | [About Us](#) | [Resources](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Donate](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

[!\[\]\(9c2e8d1b5bd77cb5c9f83b7a9cff79fd_img.jpg\) Front Page Features](#) [!\[\]\(f822cba4d3f2ea10b4ad95c475f0f631_img.jpg\) World Press Roundup](#) [!\[\]\(62daf864e0e5ec08faafdb75353dbc28_img.jpg\) ATFP in the News](#) [!\[\]\(133a001b71af31c8173047ce7f919443_img.jpg\) Policy and Analysis](#)
[!\[\]\(c45867e38959554a19ee8cac73094567_img.jpg\) Briefing Summaries](#)

Source URL (retrieved on Nov 14 2019 - 9:15am):

http://www.americantaskforce.org/in_media/mm/hussein_ibish/2013/12/16/1387170000

Links:

[1] <http://www.thenational.ae/article/20131214/OPINION/131219524>

[2] [mailto:\(Unknown address\)](mailto:(Unknown address))

[3] http://www.americantaskforce.org/civilian_deaths

[4] http://www.americantaskforce.org/israeli_military_action/israeli_military_action_west_bank

[5] http://www.americantaskforce.org/palestinian_statehood/two_state_solution

[6] http://www.americantaskforce.org/palestinian_statehood

[7] <http://www.american taskforce.org/settlements>