



Glorification of a shahid who recently perpetrated a stabbing attack, at an annual ceremony of appreciation for high school and university graduates in the village of Al-Eizariya, east of Jerusalem

September 18, 2019

Overview

► On September 7, 2019, **the youth club of the village of Al-Eizariya** (situated east of Jerusalem) held **the annual ceremony of appreciation for high school and university graduates who are residents of the village.**¹ The ceremony was held at **Al-Eizariya Girls High School**. Prominent figures attending the ceremony were the head of the Jerusalem Office in the PLO; chief of the PA General Intelligence in the Jerusalem District; the Fatah secretary in Al-Eizariya and his deputy; the mayor of Al-Eizariya, school principals, the students and their families. Although it was attended by high-ranking officials, this was a low-profile ceremony, downplaying the fact that **it was held in memory of the perpetrator of the stabbing attack** (in the ITIC's assessment, out of caution).

► Jamal Bassa Abu Hadid, Fatah secretary in Al-Eizariya, began his speech by noting that the ceremony was dedicated to the memory of the youth Naseem Abu Rumi, resident of Al-Eizariya, who, together with his friend, also a local resident, carried out a stabbing attack at the exit from the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem (Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, Fatah deputy secretary in Al-Eizariya, September 11, 2019). **As in the past, a shahid killed while carrying out a terrorist attack was praised**, this time in front of **high school and university graduates**.

¹ Al-Eizariya is a village situated east of Jerusalem and north of Abu Dis. It has 10,000 residents. Since the Oslo Accords, it has been part of Area B, i.e., **under the Palestinian Authority's civilian control and Israel's security control**.



Right: Naseem Abu Rumi and his friend stabbing the policeman (Israel Police Force Spokesperson's Unit, August 15, 2019). Left: Fatah secretary in Al-Eizariya Jamal Bassa Abu Hadid speaking at a ceremony in memory of Naseem Abu Rumi (Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, Fatah deputy secretary in Al-Eizariya, September 11, 2019)

The “shahid culture,” reflected in the glorification of terrorists who perpetrated terrorist activities, is a common practice in the Palestinian Authority and Fatah. It is a major component in the Palestinian heritage and part of the policy of the Palestinian Authority. Shahids are usually commemorated in various ways, including naming streets, squares, schools and public institutions after them. **Special attention is given to the glorification of shahids among the younger generation in order to turn them into role models.** Thus, terrorist attacks and their perpetrators become publicly legitimate, **increasing young Palestinians’ motivation to follow in the footsteps of the shahids and carry out attacks against Israel.**

► **The ceremony in Al-Eizariya was sponsored and funded by Hilmi Abu Rish, a businessman who was born in the village. The businessman, who attended the ceremony, is a resident of Washington and owns major businesses in the United States** (a travel company, a tour agency, a branch of a major hotel chain in Washington, and a limousine rental company). He regularly donates money for social causes in his home town Al-Eizariya. Among his other projects, he annually funds the graduate ceremony (for details, see Appendix B).

The ceremony in Al-Eizariya

► On September 7, 2019, **the Al-Eizariya youth club** held a ceremony of appreciation for residents of the village who are high school and university graduates. About 180 graduates took part in the ceremony. It was attended by officials of the Palestinian Authority, Fatah and the PLO, as well as local functionaries and dignitaries. Prominent figures attending the ceremony were **Adnan al-Husseini**, the head of the Jerusalem Office in the PLO; **Jihad al-Faqih**, chief of the PA General Intelligence in the Jerusalem District; **Jamal Bassa Abu Hadid**,

Fatah secretary in Al-Eizariya; **Sami Abu Ghaliya**, Fatah deputy secretary in Al-Eizariya; **Issam Faroun**, mayor of Al-Eizariya; **Ata Jaber**, chairman of the Al-Eizariya youth club (who is also a department manager in the Al-Eizariya municipality); school principals, and relatives of the students (Facebook page of the Al-Eizariya youth club, September 8, 2019; Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, Fatah deputy secretary in Al-Eizariya, September 11, 2019).



Ceremony of high school and university graduates in Al-Eizariya
(Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, Fatah deputy secretary in Al-Eizariya, September 11, 2019)

► **Jamal Bassa Abu Hadid**, Fatah secretary in Al-Eizariya, began his speech by noting that **the ceremony was dedicated to the memory of the youth Naseem Abu Rumi**. On August 15, 2019, Abu Rumi, resident of Al-Eizariya, together with his friend, carried out a **stabbing attack at the Chain Gate in East Jerusalem**, wounding a policeman (Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, September 11, 2019). Later in his speech, Jamal Abu Hadid praised the graduates and called on them to continue their studies (Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, September 11, 2019).

► The youths who carried out the stabbing attack were **Naseem Mukafeh Abu Rumi and Hamouda Khader al-Sheikh**, both 14 years old, from the village of Al-Eizariya. Naseem Abu Rumi is the **son of Mukafeh Abu Rumi, member of the DFLP leadership of the Jerusalem Branch** (Watan News Agency, August 15, 2019). The DFLP published a death notice for him (Facebook page of the Democratic Front – Jenin Branch, August 15, 2019). After the attack, there were many posts **praising it and expressing sorrow for the death of the two boys**. **The posts received thousands of likes from Palestinian users, who asked Allah to have mercy on their souls and let them enter into paradise.**



The two boys who carried out the stabbing attack. Right: Naseem Abu Rumi. Left: Hamouda Khader al-Sheikh (Israel Police Force Spokesperson's Unit)



Death notice published by the DFLP student faction for Naseem Abu Rumi and Hamouda Khader al-Sheikh (Facebook page of the Unity Faction, August 16, 2019; Facebook page of the Unity Faction at Al-Quds University, August 16, 2019)

Appendix A

The stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem

► On August 15, 2019, two Palestinian boys stabbed a policeman near the Chain Gate at the exit from the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. One of the stabbers was shot to death and the other was critically wounded and later died of his wounds. The policeman was moderately wounded and evacuated to the hospital. Another Israeli civilian was slightly wounded in the leg. After the incident, the police closed the entrances to the Temple Mount to anyone under 50. The Old City was also closed, but after a short while it was reopened. After the gates were closed, there were calls among the Palestinians to come to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and hold the evening prayers in front of the gates which were closed by Israel (Shehab Twitter account, August 15, 2019).



**The policeman being stabbed by Naseem Abu Rumi and his friend
(Israel Police Force Spokesperson's Unit, August 15, 2019)**



The knives found in the possession of the youths who carried out the stabbing attack (Israel Police Force website, August 15, 2019)

Appendix B

Businessman Hilmi Abu Rish, who financed the ceremony

The ceremony in Al-Eizariya, dedicated by the local Fatah secretary to the memory of the youth who perpetrated the stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem, **was sponsored and funded by businessman Hilmi Abu Rish (Abu Ibrahim)** (Facebook page of Sami Abu Ghaliya, deputy secretary of the Fatah movement in Al-Eizariya, September 11, 2019). The businessman, who attended the ceremony, donates money every year to finance the graduation ceremony of students of the village of Al-Eizariya and for other social causes.

► Businessman Hilmi Abu Rish (Abu Ibrahim) was born in the village of Al-Eizariya. **He now lives in Washington DC** (PALSPORT, March 25, 2018). In March 2018, Hilmi Abu Rish donated \$40,000 for the construction of infrastructure in the Al-Quds Stadium and for the Al-Eizariya youth club (PALSPORT, March 25, 2018). Abu Rish, who has been the honorary president of the Al-Eizariya youth club for years, annually donates money to fund the graduate ceremony in Al-Eizariya (Facebook page of the Al-Eizariya youth club, June 5, 2012).



Businessman Hilmi Abu al-Rish, honorary president of the Al-Eizariya youth club (Facebook page of the Al-Eizariya youth club, June 5, 2012), (PALSPORT, March 25, 2018)



Businessman Hilmi Abu al-Rish attending the graduate ceremony in Al-Eizariya, dedicated by the local Fatah secretary to the memory of the youth who perpetrated a stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem (Facebook page of Ata Jaber, chairman of the Al-Eizariya youth club, September 8, 2019)

► In November 2016, Hilmi Abu Rish received a plaque of appreciation for his support of his fellow Palestinians from Maan Erekat, head of the PLO delegation in Washington at the time. The plaque was awarded to him at a cultural evening held at Georgetown University. The evening was attended by figures of the Palestinian and Arab diaspora residing in the United States, ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, academics, and the famous Lebanese singer Omaima al-Khalil (Facebook page of Mohammad Hamad, November 3, 2016).



Businessman Hilmi Abu Rish with Lebanese singer Omaima al-Khalil, after receiving a plaque of appreciation from the PLO representative in Washington for his support for the Palestinian people. The ceremony was held at Georgetown University (Facebook page of Mohammad Hamad, November 3, 2016).

Abu Rish's businesses in the United States

► Hilmi Abu Rish **owns travel and tourism companies, a hotel, and a limousine rental company, the biggest in Washington.** Following are details of his companies (according to Manta.com, September 18, 2018):

- ◆ **Monarch Travel:** A travel company established in 2014. Its annual revenues are estimated at \$500,000-\$1,000,000. It employs about 5-9 people.
- ◆ **Bethany Travel Agency Inc.:** A Washington-based travel agency, established in 1977. It also provides limousine services. Its annual revenues are estimated at \$838,717 and it has about 40 employees.
- ◆ **The Marquis Limousine:** A limousine rental company, the biggest in Washington.
- ◆ In addition, he runs the Washington branch of the **Fairmont Hotels & Resorts** chain, which was established in 2001. It is based in Toronto, Canada, and from there, it operates 75 hotels in 24 countries, with an impressive presence in Canada and the United States.