



A shooting attack against an IDF force near Nablus ended with the death of the shooter. The Palestinian foreign ministry issued a false report, representing the killing as a "barbaric execution" (a familiar PA response to Palestinian popular terrorism events).

November 8, 2020



Security camera footage of the shooting attack

Overview

On November 4, 2020, a Palestinian armed **with a hand gun** drove to a roadblock near Hawwara (south of Nablus) and **opened fire** at IDF soldiers manning the site. The soldiers identified the threat, took cover and **returned fire, killing the shooter**. No IDF casualties were reported (IDF spokesman, November 4, 2020). Security camera footage documented the event, showing the shooter driving to the site, stopping his car and **shooting at two IDF soldiers at close range**. The terrorist who carried out the attack was **Bilal Adnan Rawajba, the legal advisor to the Palestinian Authority (PA) Preventive Security branch in the Tubas district**.



The scene of the shooting attack and the terrorist's vehicle (Qudspress website, November 4, 2020).

► **The Palestinian foreign ministry** called Rawajba's death "a barbaric execution," representing it as Israeli terrorism, and (as usual) calling on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to immediately open an investigation into Israel's [alleged] "war crimes." **The PA's official newspaper, al-Hayat al-Jadeeda**, also represented the event as a [so-called] "execution" without mentioning that Rawajba died while attacking IDF soldiers. Fatah's Facebook page and the Palestinian social networks praised the "heroic shaheed" who carried out the shooting attack. **Mahmoud Abbas** did not comment.

► **Glorifying Palestinian terrorists while providing them with political and media support is a PA and Fatah method of reacting to popular terrorism attacks** (the so-called "popular resistance," i.e., attacks not orchestrated or carried out by the institutionalized terrorist organizations). For example, an analysis of the PA's reactions to ramming attacks over time shows they are repeatedly claimed to have been "traffic accidents" and that Israel "executed" the Palestinians who carried them out, followed by calls for international investigation. Such responses are heard even when it is clear that **the terrorist was killed while carrying out an attack he himself initiated**, such as the current attack.¹ Moreover, the involvement of an officer in Preventive Security in a shooting attack targeting IDF soldiers, which is particularly serious in and of itself, was not condemned by either the PA or Fatah.

The current response of the PA foreign ministry and the Palestinian media to the shooting attack, and the repeated finger-pointing at Israel, **express the support the PA and Fatah give the so-called "popular resistance"** [i.e., popular terrorism]. It also includes rebuilding the houses of terrorists demolished by Israel and political and media support given to the terrorist attacks. The support is given while the PA markets to the West the image of the "popular resistance" as a peaceful and non-violent struggle.

Bilal Adnan Rawajba

► The Palestinian media reported that the terrorist who shot at the IDF soldiers was **Bilal Adnan Rawajba**, 29, from the village of Iraq al-Taya, south of Nablus. **He was the legal advisor, with the rank of captain, to the PA's Preventive Security branch in the Tubas district.** He was married and had a three month-old daughter (Watan TV, November 4, 2020). A few hours before the shooting attack he uploaded a selfie to his Facebook page with the

¹ For further information, see the July 5, 2020 bulletin, "Palestinian Authority and Fatah responses to the ramming attack in Abu Dis show their support for this type of popular terrorism attack."

post, "Oh Allah, you are the light that shines from you. Light my path and days," possibly indicating he was planning an attack (Hebron News Facebook page, November 4, 2020).



Right: Bilal Adnan Rawajba (Watan, November 4, 2020). Left: Bilal Adnan Rawajba's last Facebook page post (Hebron News Facebook page, November 4, 2020).

Reactions to Bilal Rajabwa's death

The PA

- ▶ **Mahmoud Abbas and other senior PA and Fatah figures** abstained from official comment. An examination of the Palestinian Preventive Security Facebook page found no reference to either the shooting attack or the terrorist's death (Facebook pages of Palestinian Preventive Security and the National Palestinian Security Forces, November 3 and 4, 2020).
- ▶ However, **the PA foreign ministry** strongly condemned Israel, calling the killing of Bilal Rawajba "**a barbaric execution**" and an expression on the ground of the terrorism carried out by Israel. According to the foreign ministry, the silence of the international community in view of [alleged] Israeli crimes (such as the killing of Rawajba), the fact that it has not imposed sanctions on Israel or investigated and brought Israel to trial for its [alleged] crimes, only serves to encourage Israel to continue. The Palestinian foreign ministry called on the ICC to immediately open an investigation of Israel's [alleged] "war crimes" (Wafa, November 4, 2020). **The PA foreign ministry**, as usual, **completely ignored the circumstances of the terrorist's death**, which **occurred while he was shooting at IDF soldiers**.
- ▶ **Al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, the PA's official newspaper**, reported the event on the front page with the headline, "The occupation executed [our] comrade Bilal Rawajba at the 'Roadblock of Death' " [a name invented by the Palestinians for the roadblock south of Nablus] (al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, November 5, 2020). The **Wafa News Agency** published pictures of the traffic jam at the Hawwara roadblock caused by the shooting attack without mentioning its cause (Wafa, November 4, 2020).



Traffic backed up at the Hawwara roadblock, no cause given (Wafa, November 4, 2020).

Fatah

- The official Fatah Facebook page posted pictures of Bilal Rawajba. One bore the heading, "Honor and glory to the pure shaheeds," and another was a drawing of Bilal Rawajba on the background of the Palestinian flag (official Fatah Facebook page, November 5, 2020).



Right: The official Fatah Facebook page glorifies Palestinian terrorist Bilal Rawajba. The Arabic reads, "The shaheed, Captain Bilal Adnan Rawajba of the Palestinian Preventive Security, who died today after having been executed in cold blood by the Israeli occupation at the occupation's Hawwara roadblock. Honor and glory to the pure shaheeds" (official Fatah Facebook page, November 4, 2020). Left: From the official Fatah Facebook page, "the shaheed, Captain Bilal Rawajba" (November 5, 2020).

- The Facebook page of the village of Iraq al-Taya, where Bilal Rawajba lived, issued a notice from Fatah in the Nablus district-Iraq al-Taya region mourning the death of the "heroic shaheed," captain in the Preventive Security, Bilal Rawajba. There were dozens of comments, including wishes for him to sit beside Allah in paradise and for Allah to have mercy on him (Facebook page of the village of Iraq al-Taya, November 4, 2020).



Mourning notice from the Fatah branch in the Nablus district-Iraq al-Taya region (Facebook page of Iraq al-Taya, November 4, 2020).

The Rawajba family

► **Abd al-Jawad Rawajba, the terrorist's brother**, rejected the IDF's version of the attack, claiming it was "a fabrication" and calling his brother's death an [alleged] "**execution**." He claimed his brother had been driving from home to a meeting at the Preventive Security headquarters in Ramallah. He claimed that he could not have opened fire because Preventive Security service operatives are not armed when they drive from one location to another on the West Bank (al-Quds, November 5, 2020).

Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

► **Hamas and the PIJ condemned the killing of Bilal Rawajba**. Hamas sent condolences to the family and said **his [spilled] blood stressed that the path of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] against Israel** was what could restrain Israel and prevent its [alleged] "crimes" (Hamas website, November 4, 2020). The **PIJ** called Bilal Rawajba a victim of an alleged Israeli "**policy of killing and execution**," which reflected Israel's "**organized terrorism**." The PIJ said young Palestinians on the West Bank would not surrender to terrorism and killing, and would avenge the blood of all the innocents (PIJ website, November 4, 2020).

The social networks

► **The social networks** in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip condemned the killing of Bilal Rawajba, which they **referred to as an "execution"**. Palestinian social network users praised Rawajba and all the shaheeds, and sent their condolences to the family. Many, including those who shared the security camera video documenting the event, **ignored the**

circumstances of his death and continued claiming he was innocent. Some wondered what the response of the security services would be, since Rawajba was one of them.