**The International Criminal Court appoints a Palestinian official who overlooked torture in Palestinian jails**

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Israpundit

December 31, 2018

<https://www.israpundit.org/the-international-criminal-court-appoints-a-palestinian-official-who-overlooked-torture-in-palestinian-jails/>

On December 26, 2018, Ambassador Alan Baker reported for the Jerusalem Center of Public Affairs:

The election of the Palestinian Attorney-General, Dr. Ahmad Barrak, to serve as a member of the “Advisory Committee on Nominations” of judges of the International Criminal Court, if it were not so serious, could be seen as comical. It cannot but invoke the ancient Latin maxim “ovem lupo commitere,” or in its literal and colloquial version “to set the wolf to guard the sheep.”

This sums up the acute absurdity to which respected international institutions in the international community, and particularly the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, have descended. Sadly, they have permitted themselves to be abused and manipulated by an irresponsible Palestinian leadership, intent on hijacking international organizations for obvious and blatant political purposes….

The election of the Palestinian Attorney-General, Dr. Ahmad Barrak, to serve as a member of the “Advisory Committee on Nominations” of judges of the International Criminal Court should be cancelled because while Dr. Ahmad Barrak acted as Attorney General of the Palestinian Authority, Human Rights Watch reported that the PA used threats, arbitrary arrests and violent abuse, including beatings, electric shocks and stress positions to crush dissent.

The Palestinian security forces “systematically” abuse and torture opponents and critics in what could amount to crimes against humanity and undermine Palestinian accusations against Israel, Human Rights Watch said Tuesday.

“Systematic torture as part of a government policy is a crime against humanity,” Omar Shakir, HRW’s Israel-Palestine director, told AFP.

The rival authorities of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas both used threats, arbitrary arrests and violent abuse, including beatings, electric shocks and stress positions, the New York-based rights group said in a report released in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank.

Both particularly focus on those allegedly affiliated with the rival faction, including protesters, dissidents, journalists and bloggers, with the aim of crushing dissent, the report said…”

On December 2, 2018 Bejamin Kerstein reported in the Algemeniner about an interview between the Palestinian Authority’s chief negotiator Saeb Erekat on Deatche Welle’s TV show Conflict Zone,

Facing a series of withering questions from hard-nosed interviewer Tim Sebastian, Erekat sought to defend himself and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on issues ranging from their dealings with the Trump administration to the peace process, corruption, and PA human rights violations…

Sebastian then asked about a recent Human Rights Watch report that found 147 incidents of “shocking abuse” by Palestinian security forces. Erekat protested that a committee had been formed to “investigate every single matter.”

“You say this every time. You have exactly the same answer,” said Sebastian.

“The people who committed these atrocities will be held accountable. That’s my promise,” Erekat replied, then said, “Security figures in certain areas were fired. They were demoted.”

“How many?” asked Sebastian.

“I really can’t…” said Erekat.

“It doesn’t mean anything unless you have a number,” asserted Sebastian.

“I will get you the number,” Erekat replied.

Pressed further on the issue of human rights abuses, Erekat cried, “When it happens we stop it! We admit it! We don’t hide it! We don’t find excuses! We don’t buy people!”

Sebastian pointedly asked Erekat, “Aren’t you ashamed of all this?”

“In some cases I’m ashamed, yes,” Erekat said, but added, “Sometimes I can’t because I’m a young Authority. I’m 23 years old. I cannot differentiate between freedom of expression and incitement.”

Asked what a future Palestinian state would look like, Erekat responded, “The future Palestinian state would look like the discussion that’s going on now. The future of the Palestinian state will be the future of democracy, human rights, women’s rights, accountability, transparency, and the rule of law. This is my promise.”

“So very different from what you have now,” Sebastian noted dryly.

On March 30, 2013 David Rose wrote in the Daily Mail:

Chilling confessions made by a former official from the Palestinian Authority:

Said in nineties people were tortured ‘badly’ and ‘beat them hard’….

Nowadays, he adds, the preferred method is termed ‘shabeh’ – the hooding and tying of the prisoner in a variety of agonising positions for up to eight hours. He does not elaborate on the details, but claims: ‘It works with 95 per cent of the subjects.’ It also takes considerable skill: ‘You have to deal with it as if you were playing a guitar. Each case has its own specialty.’

This extraordinary interview is the first admission by a former perpetrator of the widespread torture of Palestinians – not by Israel, but by the Palestinian Authority (PA).

…Just what ‘it’ means was described by a very recent victim, a professional man in his 40s who was freed without charge two weeks ago after more than a month in Mukhabarat detention.

‘For most of the time I was held, they gave me shabeh every day,’ he says. ‘Always I was hooded, and sometimes they tied my arms in front of me and attached me to the wall, leaving me like that for long, long hours, on tiptoes. You have pain in the arms, in the legs and in the body, and swelling in your muscles. Often I could also hear screaming from the prisoners.

‘But it was worse when they suspended me with my arms tied behind me. Your body is curved, like a banana. Most of the time they do not let your feet touch the ground.’ He showed me his arms and hands – they were still puffy and swollen. ‘During the shabeh, they looked much worse,’ he added.

In another variant, the suspect was hog-tied – laid on his back on top of a chair with his wrists and ankles lashed together beneath the seat. Usually the torture happened at night: ‘When you’re exhausted, they take you back to your cell.’

He was arrested because someone claimed he had an illegal weapon. ‘But I’ve never had a weapon and I am opposed to Islamic extremists. I’ve criticised the PA at social gatherings – maybe that’s why someone denounced me. That was the worst thing of all – that I was in jail at the hands of my own Authority.’…”