Testimonies of Palestinians tortured by PA to be shown at The Hague

June 23, 2019

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Israel Hayom

<https://www.israelhayom.com/2019/06/23/testimonies-of-palestinians-tortured-by-pa-to-be-shown-at-the-hague/>

Testimonies from Palestinians who suffered torture at the hands of the Palestinian Authority because they collaborated with or were suspected of collaborating with Israel are due to be presented to the International Criminal Court at The Hague on Monday.

Two years ago, Jerusalem District Court Judge Moshe Drori ruled that the PA was responsible for abuses against 52 Israeli and Palestinian citizens from Judea and Samaria that included murder, abduction, imprisonment, torture, and rape.

The ruling described horrific violations: the victims were subjected to electric shocks, being hanged upside down for long periods of time, having molten plastic being poured on their bodies, having their fingernails and teeth pulled out, forced sterilization, denial of sleep and food, and the murder and rape of their relatives. One account described how a premature baby related to one of the victims was intentionally removed from its incubator.

Following the ruling, the court ordered the PA to pay the plaintiffs compensation totaling 14 million shekels ($3.9 million) for denying them their liberty and an additional 1.5 million shekels ($410,000) in court costs.

The Jerusalem Institute for Justice and attorney Barak Kedem, who represented the plaintiffs in the Jerusalem District Court, joined forces in order to "show the world the brutality with which the Palestinian Authority treats its prisoners."

On Monday, the filmed testimonies of the former prisoners are slated to be shown at the International Criminal Court. Attorney Uri Morad, head of the international law department at the JIJ, explained that "In February, we contacted the ICC at The Hague and asked for a criminal probe into PA President Mahmoud Abbas on suspicion of crimes he [allegedly] perpetrated against his own people, including an ongoing and extensive spree of murder, torture, and illegal imprisonments against the Palestinian population.

"The testimonies that will be presented tomorrow [Monday] demonstrate a well-oiled system that uses violent means to oppress the civilian population," Morad said.

Kedem added: "The fact that we have people here who experienced that hell should horrify any human. It doesn't matter what people you belong to or what your political opinions are … I hope that as a result of our appeal to The Hague and to world leaders, other countries will ask themselves whether they want to stay part of the system that sends money to the PA, and we hope that The Hague will hold the perpetrators of these atrocities to account."

One of the victims whose testimony will be shown at the ICC said, "I wished for death more than 20 times a day because of the suffering. The torture was awful. Once they sat me on an electric chair. I was sure I was going to die."

Another said: "The top guy showed me an explosives belt and said I would either wear it and carry out a bombing in Israel, or they would kill me right there."

Another Palestinian told the camera that he once entered Israel illegally with the goal of perpetrating a terrorist attack, but was badly hurt in a car accident. He was rushed to an Israeli hospital, where he was saved. The medical care he received in Israel prompted him to change his opinions and begin collaborating with Israel in its war against terrorism.