



Settler to be indicted for fatal shooting of Palestinian activist in West Bank

Matan Golan

Haaretz has learned that the State Prosecutor's Office plans to file an indictment against Yinon Levi, the settler who was filmed shooting Awdah Hathaleen to death in the West Bank village of Umm al-Kheir in July 2025.

He will be subject to a hearing on suspicion of reckless manslaughter, which carries a maximum penalty of 12 years in prison. The indictment against Levi, who was released to house arrest a day after the shooting, is unusual, as the majority of nationalist crime cases against

Palestinians are closed without charges being filed.

On the day Hathaleen was killed, Levi and other settlers were working on state land near the settlement of Carmel, the IDF outpost-turned-civilian-settlement, which was built on Umm al-Kheir's agricultural land in the early 1980s.

When the group of settlers had finished their work, they drove their excavator through private Umm al-Kheir land, and Palestinian residents attempted to

block them.

One Palestinian resident was injured by the excavator. Some villagers gathered and threw stones at the machinery, and Levi was filmed shooting back at them in response.

A video Hathaleen filmed just before his death shows Israeli settler Yinon Levi shooting at him.

Eyewitnesses told Haaretz in July that Hathaleen was not involved in the stone-throwing and was standing about 30 me-

ters from Levi. According to witnesses and a Haaretz investigation conducted during a visit to the village, Levi fired at the village community center, where Hathaleen was standing beyond the fence, and was hit.

In 2024, several countries, including the U.S., U.K. and Canada, imposed sanctions on Levi, a resident of the Carmel settlement in the South Hebron Hills, in part because of his involvement in the expulsion of 250 Palestinian residents of the

village of Zanuta in the area.

The U.S. State Department sanction applies to "planning, ordering, otherwise directing, or participating in an act of violence or threat of violence targeting civilians, affecting the West Bank."

The U.S. State Department stated that Levi led a group of settlers who engaged in actions creating an atmosphere of fear among Palestinian communities in the West Bank.

"Levi regularly leads a group of settlers who at-

tack Palestinians, set fire to their fields, destroy their property and threaten them to harm them again if they do not leave their homes," the State Department said. Bank Leumi subsequently froze his bank accounts.

A report by the human rights organization Yesh Din found that only three percent of cases opened over violence against Palestinians led to a full or partial conviction. The report, which includes data from 1,750 cases between 2005 and 2025, shows that only 18 percent of cases were solved, and 93.6 percent of

investigations ended without an indictment being filed.

Eitan Peleg, the Hathaleen family's lawyer, told Haaretz that he hoped that the decision would be a "warning sign for all violators of the law." According to him, "With respect to offenses committed by Jews against Palestinians, it is widely known that law enforcement in the West Bank barely exists. In this sense, this is a positive outcome."

Indeed, the decision to indict Levi stands out in its rarity, against the backdrop

IDF warns of West Bank escalation with start of Ramadan

Yaniv Kubovich and Amos Harel

Israel's defense establishment sees the approaching month of Ramadan as a sensitive test. This will be the third year in a row that the Muslim holy month is marked against the backdrop of an ongoing war. But, unlike the previous two years, when Palestinians in the West Bank were relatively deterred from engaging in violence, the Israel Defense Forces today believes that the security situation is more fragile and complex.

A series of security incidents, government policies widely seen as weakening the Palestinian Authority and worsening economic conditions in the West Bank are all raising Palestinian tensions. In closed-door discussions, senior army officials have warned that the Palestinian street, which so far has failed to mobilize for mass protests or clashes with the IDF, may now engage in both.

Under decisions taken by the cabinet and approved by the defense minister, the number of Muslim worshippers from the West Bank that will be allowed to ascend to the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) during Ramadan – which begins Tuesday evening – will be limited to 10,000 women over age 55 and 10,000 men over age 65. The PA's request for larger numbers was rejected by Israeli political leaders.

The defense establishment has always viewed provocations and security incidents on the Temple Mount as threats to the security situation, and this remains true today.

The issue of work permits is adding to Palestinian tensions. Since October 7, 2023, permits for some 140,000 West Bank Palestinians haven't been renewed, depriving the PA of a key revenue stream. The defense establishment proposed a

Police arrest 23 after female soldiers' visit sparks Bnei Brak riot

Aaron Rabinowitz, Josh Breiner, Yair Folds and Yaniv Kubovich

Israel Police arrested 23 protesters in Bnei Brak on the heels of a riot sparked by an official visit of two female Israeli soldiers to a soldier's home in the ultra-Orthodox city. The two were attacked by locals and had to be evacuated by police.

New Palestinian constitution?

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Police said they used stun grenades and batons to quell the riot, during which a police car was overturned and a police motorcycle was set on fire. Demonstrators also threw trash cans at another police car. Three police officers were lightly wounded during the riot.

"We were at a house," one of the women soldiers told the Walla news site. "I put

on a skirt from the start to avoid it," she said, referring to potential commotion triggered by wearing pants, which some religious Jews define as immodest clothing for women.

"I had asked my commanders not to go there, and they didn't listen to me," she added. After being noticed by locals, the two tried to hide in trash cans and escape the scene, but the crowd found them anyway, she said, noting she hadn't been armed.

The riot is the latest instance of violent clashes between the Haredi community – which has carried out mass protests against mandatory military service over the past few months – and law enforcement.

The second female soldier described how a local woman called the police to rescue them.

"She asked what are you were doing here and said, 'You have to get out of here,'" she told Walla. "And



Police facing off against ultra-Orthodox men in Bnei Brak on Sunday, after two female soldiers visited an ultra-Orthodox household.

Tomer Appelbaum

High Court: Levin has 3 weeks to explain why panel isn't meeting

Chen Maanit

The High Court of Justice issued on Sunday a show cause order ordering Justice Minister Yariv Levin to explain he hasn't convened the Judicial Selection Committee for all litigation levels – magistrate's courts, district courts and the Supreme Court. The order, signed by Justice Ofer Grosskopf, Alex Stein and Gila Canfy-Steinitz, ordered Levin to respond by March 8.

On Thursday, the High Court heard the petition by the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, which argues that Levin is mandated to convene the committee immediately. During the hearing, the justices criti-

cized Levin's conduct, saying his refusal to convene the panel is causing a shortage of judges and impacting justice for criminals. Stein said that judges are forced to release murder suspects instead of detention because of the shortage.

Stein made the seriousness of the shortage clear in the hearing. "I look at the Be'er Sheva District Court, and it's a crisis. With all the crime in the south and six missing district judges – that's a crisis. There is no other way to describe it."

Grosskopf believes that Levin is cognizant of the seriousness of the situation, saying, "Service to citizens has been significantly affected, and the minister is

also aware of this, I think."

The objective of the petition, which has garnered the support of Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, is to fill multiple open judges' positions throughout the judiciary. Levin is separately represented in the proceedings by attorney Zion Amir.

The response by Baharav-Miara and the Court Administration states that Levin is acting unlawfully and harming the public by preventing the selection of magistrate court and district court judges despite the irregular load on the judiciary. According to data they provided the High Court, Levin is delaying the appointment

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Amid controversial Human Rights Watch resignations

Is Israel-Palestine conflict testing very idea of global human rights?

Dahlia Scheindlin

These days, it can feel as if just a shrinking cluster of people in the world still believe in universal human rights, or in the institutions established to implement them. Last week, yet another controversy hit the community as two Israeli and Palestinian researchers for Human Rights Watch, a flagship global watchdog, resigned.

Omar Shakir, who led the Israel-Palestine team, and assistant researcher for the team, Milena Ansari, accused the group of suppressing a report nearly a year in the making for political reasons; much of the time the paper was in an internal review process. The report argued that denying Palestinians the right of return amounts to a crime against humanity.

Human Rights Watch stated the release was paused while its new director reviewed concerns from certain staff members that the legal arguments were not strong enough and hard to defend. The report has not been made public, but other outlets have reviewed it.

Shrinking, or crumbling, edifice

It's troubling to watch such a prominent organization's Israel and Palestine team fall apart – over Israel and Pales-



A Palestinian family who recently returned to Gaza.

Omar al-Qutaa/AFP

time. A few weeks ago, I wrote about hypocrisy among political activists exploiting and tainting the notion of human rights. But at the institutional level, the list of organizations suffering debilitating in-

fighting or controversy over this specific conflict is long. Israeli human rights group B'Tselem faced an angry resignation of a longtime Israeli staffer, who believed it did not adequately describe the horrors of Hamas' attack.

(Disclosure: The staffer, Roy Yellin, contracted me to conduct surveys for the group from 2016 to 2021.) Amnesty Israel diverged so sharply

from Amnesty International over the question of genocide that the latter suspended the local branch's activities.

UN agencies are often at the epicenter of these clashes. In mid-2025, around 500 employees called on Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to declare that Israel was committing genocide, while the right-wing activist group UN Watch demanded his resignation, calling him "obsessed" with Israel. A year ago, one of U.S. President Donald Trump's first actions after taking office was to slap sanctions on the chief prosecutor

of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, largely because of its investigations of Israel; then more sanctions were imposed on ICC judges.

Human Rights Watch has struggled with the issue for years. In a 2009 New York Times opinion piece, the group's co-founder Robert Bernstein said its misguided and disproportionate focus on Israel undermined its raison d'être of holding non-democracies accountable. A longtime editor of the group's reports, Danielle Haas, resigned in November

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Zim to be sold to German-Israeli consortium with Qatar-Saudi ties

Yoram Gabison and Ben Kroll

Zim Integrated Shipping Services, Israel's largest shipping company, is expected to announce it has reached an agreement to be fully sold to a consortium led by German shipping company Hapag-Lloyd and Israeli private equity firm FIMI.

The deal is set to close at \$3.7 billion or \$30 per share – 35 percent higher than Zim's trading value on the New York Stock Exchange. Qatar Holding, a subsid-

iary of Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund hold 12.3 percent and 10.2 percent, respectively, of Hapag-Lloyd's shares.

Citing the connections to two countries with which Israel does not have diplomatic relations, the Israel Hayom daily reported on Sunday that Transportation Minister Miri Regev has ordered an examination of the emerging deal, including ways Israel can stop it. The report said the government was surprised by the scope and structure of the deal.

Hapag-Lloyd and FIMI will publish an offer to acquire all of Zim's shares and subsequently delist it. Hapag-Lloyd's requirement to establish a link with an Israeli company is due to the golden share that guarantees Israel's critical interests. Under the terms of the golden share, Zim must be incorporated in Israel, a majority of its board members must hold Israeli citizenship and the company's chairperson and CEO are required to be Israelis.

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