

## 15 Year-Old Anas, Son Of Salim Shawamreh (ICAHN) Shot By Israeli Soldiers.

Report by Jeff Halper, December 9 at 4:56am ·

Greetings to all from Brussels. I just spoke with my friend and colleague Salim Shawamreh, ICAHN's field coordinator and Palestinian activist whose home has been demolished (and rebuilt by ICAHN) six times. I learned that his 15 year-old son Anas had been shot by Israeli soldiers. He is thankfully (and miraculously) alive, but severely wounded and traumatized. The story is harrowing, a good example of how the IDF is doing nothing less than hunting Palestinians -- and especially children and youth.

Because their home is demolished and because they cannot live even in the part that was rebuilt (it falls in Area C of the West Bank, which means that Salim and his family would lose their Jerusalem residency if they lived in their home, cutting them off from schools, employment and places of prayer), the family rents quarters in a crowded slum called Kufir Aqab. Although a part of Jerusalem, Kufir Aqab lies beyond the Kalandia checkpoint, thus receiving no city services (except demolitions), despite the fact that the residents pay municipal taxes.

In the fraught atmosphere of Israeli repression, parents are afraid to send their kids out of the house, even to school. A couple days ago Arabia, Salim's wife, nonetheless asked Anas to down to the corner grocery to buy a few things. Israeli soldiers constantly patrol the streets of Palestinian neighborhoods, their jeeps, guns and waving Israeli flags intentionally "in the face" of the residents, intimidating them by their "presence." As a result, Palestinian kids face off against the soldiers, pelting their jeeps with stones, the soldiers responding by firing plastic-encased "rubber" bullets and tear-gas at the kids, then chasing them into the alleyways. It doesn't matter which child the soldier catches -- the smallest and slowest one, a child who happens to be in the way, a youth standing inside the doorway -- he or she is picked up, beaten and arrested.

And so it was with Anas. Coming out of the grocery he was accosted by soldiers who grabbed him for throwing stones. Anas protested that it wasn't he, even showing the soldiers the bag of groceries he had just bought to prove that he had been in the store. No matter. The soldiers hustled him in to their jeep and drove off. They took Anas to an isolated valley behind the Adam settlement in the West Bank. There they pulled him from the jeep, beat him, and shot him twice in the leg from zero-range with their rifles as he lay on the ground. Then they got into their jeep and drove off, leaving him to bleed to death in the valley.

Fortunately, the incident was witnessed by a group of Palestinians, who immediately called an ambulance after the soldiers left. Anas was taken to a hospital in Ramallah, where he was operated on. Arabia and Salim, frantic when Anas did not return home, were relieved to hear from the hospital even as they feared for their son's life. It is still not clear what damage Anas suffered, whether he will have permanent nerve damage, will be able to gain full use of his leg, and to what degree the wounds, the trauma, will remain festering inside. Salim plans to take him to Amman for further medical tests – he is afraid that if he brings him to an Israeli hospital Anas may be arrested. And in the end there is nothing to be done. I suggested filing a complaint against the soldiers, but Salim is again frightened that they might use that as an excuse to arrest Anas. He and Arabia are just thankful he is alive, and want to let it all go, focusing on Anas's recuperation.

You can well imagine the anger boiling inside the family towards the army, the Occupation, Israelis in general, all of whom able to do anything they want to Palestinians with no fear of arrest or accountability. Will there be further developments to this sad and infuriating story? Will everyone from Hillary Clinton and Trudeau to the European leaders and beyond continue to praise Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East" and their countries' "most loyal ally"? Where, after all, does justice fit in?