

## **B'Tselem's initial findings on Nakba Day incident at Bitunya: grave suspicion that forces willfully killed two Palestinians, injured two others**

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20 May 2014

#### **Findings refute the military's claim that no live ammunition was fired in the incident**

This morning – 20 May – B'Tselem obtained the full video footage from all four security cameras installed on the building opposite which the minors were standing when shot. The footage is available to the media at B'Tselem's offices. Please contact me to arrange copying the material (you will need to bring a hard drive or thumb drive, the footage is approx. 21 Gigabites).

We have made available two sequences, containing footage from two opposing cameras, depicting the moments of the killing. All footage credit to B'Tselem:

#### **Footage of the killing of Nadim Nawara (cameras 1+2):**

#### **Footage of the killing of Muhammad Salameh (cameras 1+2):**

On Thursday, 15 May 2014, four Palestinians were shot with live ammunition in the West Bank town of Bitunya, close to Ofer Prison, during a demonstration marking Nakba Day. Two of them, both minors, died of their wounds: Nadim Siyam Nawara, 17, from the village of al-Mazra'ah al-Qibliyah, and Muhammad Mahmoud Salameh (Abu Daher), 17, from Ramallah. Muhammad 'Azzah, 15, also a minor, was hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit in Ramallah, where he is recovering from his wounds. The fourth victim, a 23-year-old who wished to remain unnamed, was lightly injured. All four were injured in the upper torso: Nawara and 'Azzah were struck in the chest, Salameh was struck in the back, and the fourth man was struck below his left elbow.

In response, the IDF Spokesperson stated that army forces operating in the area that day had used only crowd control means, and not live ammunition. B'Tselem's investigation refuted this version, finding strong evidence that live ammunition was used and that the fire hit the upper torsos of all four victims. The investigation, compounded by security camera footage of the incident, indicate that the circumstances of the incident in no way justified use of live fire. These findings raise grave suspicion that the killing was willful.

B'Tselem obtained medical opinions regarding the entry and exit wounds found in the bodies of all four victims, which are completely consistent with injuries caused by live fire and could not have been caused by rubber-coated metal bullets – especially not when fired at a relatively long range, as was the case here. Also, eyewitness accounts described the sound of live gunfire, which sounds different from rubber-coated bullet fire.

The army's open-fire regulations clearly stipulate that live ammunition should not be used against

stone-throwers, except in cases of immediate mortal danger. Security camera footage of the incident proves that at no stage were security forces endangered by any of the four victims, or by anyone close to them at the time of the shooting. The footage shows Nadim Nawara being shot while walking along a street towards the area where Palestinian youngsters were clashing with army forces, and Muhammad Salameh with his back turned in the direction of the security forces that shot him.

B'Tselem will transfer all the material at its disposal to the Military Police Investigations Unit, demanding an investigation not only into the soldiers' conduct in the incident, but also into the responsibility of senior officers who were present at the scene for the killing of civilians by lethal force. B'Tselem will also demand an investigation into the military's highly incorrect version of the incident conveyed to the media.

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