

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
September 6, 2012



[Read previous Middle East Notes here.](#)

Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

With summer drawing to a close the Middle East Notes will again be available weekly. This week's Notes make the summer CMEP Bulletins available to our readers, and gives priority to settlement expansion, apartheid labeling, destabilization of Jerusalem and the "not guilty" verdict in the death of Rachel Corrie.

1. **The CMEP Bulletins for August 31 and August 24** give more recent information about new violence in Israel, political maneuvering ahead of the UN session, hate crime in Jerusalem, a State Department Report on Terrorism including settler "price tag" terrorism, Republican retention of a two-state plank, and other items.
2. **Links for CMEP Bulletins for August 6, 11 and 17, and July 21 and 27**
3. **When facts about Palestine are seen as "anti-Semitic" slander:** Lawrence Davidson rebuts accusations of anti-Semitism about New York billboards presenting four aligned maps showing the absorption of Palestinian land by Israel from 1946 to the present.
4. **The blatancy of apartheid:** Philip Weiss in Mondoweiss asks, "Why can't Americans see the naked apartheid of Israel?"
5. **July-August 2012 Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories:** Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP) presents its July-August 2012 Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories. It also reports on the Levi Committee's recommendation of de facto annexation of the West Bank, and charts the settler population in East Jerusalem between 2000 and 2010.
6. **Map presentation: Israeli Settlements - An Obstacle to a Two-State Peace, 1947-2012:** Foundation for Middle East Peace has prepared a presentation of maps that illustrate the evolution of the conflict from the UN Partition Plan in 1947, and depict the growth of Israel's occupation and settlement project from the 1967 War to the present.
7. **Why is Israel singled out:** Joel Doerfler in Mondoweiss reflects on why Israel is singled out for human rights abuses when those of other governments are seemingly ignored.
8. **Status of Jerusalem:** In this joint statement, Pax Christi International and the World Council of Churches call for an urgent resolution to the issues destabilising Jerusalem, and applauds the UN Human Rights Council's attention for the numerous and disastrous violations of human rights in Jerusalem.
9. **Israel at no fault for death of Rachel Corrie:** Common Dreams reports that a district court in Haifa has rejected a civil lawsuit that claimed the state of Israel and its armed forces were at fault in the death of human rights activist Rachel Corrie.

1) Churches for Middle East Peace Bulletin, August 31, 2012

New Palestinian statehood bid at UN General Assembly this fall: [There were mixed signals this week about whether Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas will ask the UN General Assembly \(UNGA\) this fall to give recognition to a Palestinian state as a UN non-member state.](#) UNGA recognition of a Palestinian state, even if as a non-member state, would give Palestinians greater authority in UN bodies to bring complaints against Israel. This move is strongly opposed by Israel and the U.S.

It was said at first that Abbas would mention the idea of UNGA recognition in his speech to the UN, but [not move the question to a vote so as not to embarrass the U.S. and risk a cut off of U.S. assistance just prior to the U.S. elections.](#) Later statements left it unclear whether or not the Palestinian Authority would call for a vote on recognition in the UNGA. Abbas is under political pressure from his Palestinian constituencies to show positive results from cooperation with Israel and the U.S. on security measures in the face of continued Israeli occupation. But he is also under [strong countervailing political pressure from the U.S.](#) upon which the PA depends for political and economic assistance. Recognition of a Palestinian state by UNESCO last year was costly, as Congress suspended the annual contribution from the U.S. to UNESCO of several millions of dollars. The funding cut forced UNESCO to suspend a number of projects. ...

Violence continues, arrests made, new anti-hate education effort: [Israeli police arrested three adolescents](#) from the West Bank settlement Bat Ayin on Sunday for the firebombing of a Palestinian taxi that took place on August 16.

On Tuesday, [nine Jewish teenagers were indicted on charges for assault and incitement to racism and violence](#) after an August 16 beating in Jerusalem that nearly killed one Arab youth. Eight of the suspects are minors, but one is 19 years old and prosecutors will try him as an adult.

As two million Israeli children returned to school Monday, the education ministry instructed all junior high and high schools in Israel to conduct a [lesson on the Jerusalem attack](#). Many Israeli politicians blamed inadequate education on the subject of racism for the violence.

On Wednesday in a Palestinian village near Ramallah, [settlers sprayed racist graffiti on buildings and cars and attempted to set a vehicle on fire](#). Israeli police and army officials arrived at the scene to investigate but they have not made any arrests.

On Friday morning, [two rockets fired from Gaza by terrorists landed in the southern Israeli city of Sderot.](#) One of them hit a house, causing property damage and the other landed in an open field without exploding.

Verdict in case of death of Rachel Corrie: On Tuesday, August 28, an [Israeli judge ruled that the state was not responsible for the death of Rachel Corrie](#). The lawyer who filed the suit on behalf of her parents vowed to appeal to Israel's Supreme Court. Corrie was killed in 2003 when she stepped in front of a bulldozer that was preparing to destroy a Palestinian home in Gaza. Her sacrifice has become an inspiration to countless others who also work to resist the occupation.

Migron evacuation ordered: The [Israeli Supreme Court ruled against settlers](#) attempting to delay the evacuation of their homes in the West Bank settlement outpost of Migron. The judges wrote, "We order the petitioners be evacuated from the outpost not later than September 4, 2012 and that the buildings be removed no later than September 11, 2012. The appeal has been rejected." The court ruled two years ago that Migron was built on private Palestinian property.

Gaza growing: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) released a report this week highlighting the urgency for investments in Gaza's infrastructure. [The report warns that Gaza will have a half a million more people by 2020](#) and they will have even more trouble accessing essentials such as water, sanitation and education services if investments do not keep pace with growth.

CMEP Bulletin, August 24, 2012

Hate crime in Jerusalem seen as wakeup call: Last week's bulletin analyzed the [growing problem of settler violence](#) after a firebomb attack in the West Bank injured six Palestinians, including two children. Hours later in Jerusalem, another brutal hate crime was committed by Israeli youth that left an Arab teen in a coma. These events sparked a national conversation on ways to end the violence epidemic among extremist Israelis.

Late at night on August 16 in Jerusalem's crowded Zion Square, 40 young Israelis chased several Palestinian Arab youths from East Jerusalem while shouting "Death to Arabs" and other racial epithets. One of the Arabs, 17 year-old Jamal Julani, fell while trying to run away and at least ten Israelis [beat and kicked him until he was unconscious](#). While police say none of the hundreds of bystanders intervened to stop the beating, one young Israeli medical student saved Julani's life after the attackers ran off. The hero told *Yedioth Ahronoth*, "From the moment that Jamal was on the ground I was right there beside him, giving him CPR. He lost his pulse twice and I restored it." Julani remained in a coma for two days and is now recovering in the hospital.

By Monday, August 20, [seven Israeli teens were in custody](#) for what police and witnesses are calling an attempted lynching. *New York Times* writer Isabel Kershner reports that the event has led to "soul-searching and acknowledgment that the poisoned political environment around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has affected the moral compass of youths growing up within it."

Many prominent [Israeli politicians have denounced the attacks](#). Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a statement saying, "We will not tolerate racism, and we will not tolerate the combination of racism and violence. This is something we just cannot accept, not as Jews, not as Israelis."

Vice Prime Minister Moshe Ya'alon turned to social media to call the attacks "[hate crimes](#)" and "[terrorist acts](#)." Jerusalem expert Daniel Seidemann calls this condemnation a "[game-changer in terms of the discourse](#)." He writes, "[Ya'alon] will be standing in Likud primaries some time soon, and he probably caused himself electoral damage by this statement, and did it with open eyes. And he did it because in spite of his move to the right, because this violates his values, and worries him. My guess is he is not alone."

Many Israelis are now wondering [how to ratchet down the violence and racism](#) that is becoming increasingly common. Ami Nahshon, president of the Abraham Fund Initiatives told the *Jewish Week*, "There is an atmosphere that feeds on itself, and the only answer is a definitive, proactive investment by Israeli leaders to close the gaps between Arabs and Jews, to teach tolerance to combat racism and to pursue and prosecute the offenders of hate crimes."

Please pray for the young man recovering from his injuries, for the young people arrested for their acts of hate, and for all Israelis and Palestinians affected by hate and violence.

State Department report on terrorism includes "price tag": The recently released [U.S. State Department's report on terrorist activities around the world in 2011](#) is receiving increased attention this year after including incidents of settler violence in the West Bank. The report mentions the Muslim cemetery vandalized in November and two mosque burnings in December as being a part of the "price tag" campaign waged by settlers in retaliation for actions taken by the government of Israel they perceive as weakening the settlement enterprise.

The report also details terrorist attacks perpetrated by Palestinian extremists. The most deadly incidences were the tragic murders of five Fogel family members by two young Palestinian men and an attack from terrorists in the Sinai that killed eight. There was also concern over the increase of rockets launched from Gaza. The report states that, "From January 1, 2011 to November 15, 2011, 716 projectiles fired from Gaza landed in Israel, according to the Israeli government" and mentions two fatalities, including a 16 year-old riding a school bus. It also notes that while Israel holds the governing organization in Gaza, Hamas, responsible for any attacks, "the majority of such attacks were conducted by PIJ [Palestinian Islamic Jihad], the Popular Resistance Committees, and other groups inside Gaza."

The report also notes that the Palestinian OAuthority has stepped up efforts to stop terrorism. According to IDF sources, the Palestinian Authority Security Forces have improved their capacity to stop terror and "there was a 96 percent reduction in the number of terrorist incidents in the West Bank over the past five years."

The State Department also points out that "Israeli security services continued the trend of relaxing movement and access measures in the West Bank." It does not mention whether any arrests have been made in the price tag attacks, only that Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres have condemned them. ...

Further reading

- The *Washington Post* provides an [update and background on last week's firebombing incident](#). Four Palestinians are still in the hospital including a six-year old child and his father, who remains unconscious. Many are still skeptical about the Israeli authorities' efforts to catch the perpetrators but reports indicate that police and intelligence officials have questioned several teenagers from the nearby settlement of Bat Ayin.
- The United Church of Canada, the country's largest Protestant denomination, approved a [boycott on products made in or linked to Israeli settlements](#) in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It does not apply to products made inside Israel proper and church members are not required to participate. According to the *Vancouver Sun*, in the past, the Canadian government has come out strongly against groups supporting boycotts and has not condemned settlements.
- Many Gazans who [planned to travel to Mecca](#) during the final ten days of Ramadan are stuck at home after the August 5 terror attack in Egypt's Sinai caused the Egyptian government to close the Rafah border crossing. The crossing was reopened several days before the conclusion of Ramadan, but only people with passports or residences in Arab or European countries, or Gazans with humanitarian needs are allowed through. The closure is hurting tour operators in Gaza who estimate a \$2 million loss from cancelled trips.
- His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, expressed [his best wishes to Muslims celebrating Eid El Fitr](#), the end of Ramadan. He called the holiday an opportunity "to strengthen the ties of goodwill and understanding among us as one people and one Arab nation who share common concerns and suffer the same sorrows and harbor the same aspirations while we all worship the One and same God."
- Israeli authorities report that ["more than a million" Palestinians entered Israel](#) during the 40 days of Ramadan. An official for Israel's defense ministry says the policy was a part of a series of confidence building measures to thaw the atmosphere for negotiations. Many Palestinians from the West Bank were able to pray at Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam, and take other trips inside Israel, including visiting the beach in Tel Aviv. The relaxed restrictions ended on Thursday.

2) Recent CMEP Bulletins

[August 17, 2012 CMEP Bulletin: Settler violence in-depth and more](#)

[August 11, 2012 CMEP Bulletin: Terror activity in Sinai shifts alliances](#)

[August 6, 2012 CMEP Bulletin: Mitt Romney visits Jerusalem on diplomatic tour](#)

[July 27, 2012 CMEP Bulletin: Increasing numbers cause concern for West Bank](#)

[July 21, 2012 CMEP Bulletin: Obama's peace process attempts](#)

3) When facts about Palestine are seen as “anti-Semitic” slander

Lawrence Davidson, Jews for Justice for Palestine, August 1, 2012



The maps displayed on the “anti-Semitic” billboard

History on a billboard: For the past few weeks, those taking local trains from New York City’s wealthier suburbs into Manhattan have encountered a succinct billboard history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The lesson comes in the form of four aligned maps showing the absorption of Palestinian land by Israel from 1946 to the present, along with a declaration that “4.7 million Palestinians are classified by the UN as refugees.” In all respects, the ad is historically correct.

This was made possible thanks to the efforts of Mr. Henry Clifford, chairman of the area’s local Committee for Peace in Israel/Palestine, who purchased the billboard space so as to educate readers to what really is happening under the Israeli regime of occupation so generously supported by U.S. dollars.

Immediately the ads were labeled “anti-Semitic” by area rabbis and Jewish community leaders. Here is the reasoning of Dovid Efune, editor of the Manhattan-based Jewish newspaper, *The Algemeiner*: “*This is anti-Semitic because when people think of the Jews they think of the Jewish state. Jews have seen this happen many times. It always starts with messaging that says Jews are committing a crime.*”

Three things are to be said about Mr. Efune’s reaction:

- 1) On one hand, he seems not to care that the map display and UN statistic are accurate and what that means for the lives of millions of people.
- 2) On the other, and no doubt quite inadvertently, he does imply that what the ad reveals is criminal behavior.

3) Finally, if there is any truth to the assertion that “when people think of the Jews they think of the Jewish state” it is because Zionist propagandists have, for over 64 years, incessantly insisted on that identification. Those Jews who have publically denied the connection have been abused and libeled. So, to the extent that Jews in general are identified with Israel’s “committing a crime,” you can thank the Zionists for that.

Rabbi Joshua Davidson (no relation to this blogger), senior Rabbi of Temple Beth El in northern Westchester, NY, says the map ad presents “a distorted and skewed view of a complicated conflict.” Actually, that is untrue. The ad simply puts forth historical truth. In addition, the conflict really is not as complex as Zionists say it is. It is the consequence of a rather straightforward, post-World War I, imperialist land grab that, in the case of Palestine, is on-going even now. It was and continues to be justified by religious mythology on the one hand and the history of anti-Semitic persecution on the other. The land grab was originally abetted by the British imperial politicians, some of whom imagined that they were helping to fulfill biblical prophecy, and others who saw a Jewish homeland in Palestine as a way of solving the “Jewish problem” in Europe. The Palestinians, being seen as inferior natives, were then — and are now — still pushed aside.

[Read the entire piece on the Jews for Justice for Palestine website.](#)

[4\) The blatancy of apartheid](#)

Philip Weiss, Mondoweiss.net

July 28, 2012

I’m no stranger to Israel and Palestine, still what shocks me about coming here is how blatant the system of unfairness is. Why is this not utterly familiar to me? I wonder. Why don’t Americans see this every day in the news? What kind of fairyland image are we getting of this place, and why? Or as the Canadian Christian pilgrim said to me last night leaving Qalandiya checkpoint, “What endless humiliation. And why is it such an open secret back home?” So everything here brings me back to the American denial, our blinkered media, and to American Jewish identity and the lies that American Jews have told one another for generations.

A few impressions of the blatancy. I flew into Ben Gurion [Airport] from Newark and my flight was mostly Jewish. There were no Palestinians or Arabs on the flight, as far as I could see. The sense was reinforced at Ben Gurion. I saw no women wearing hijab, the customary form of dress in this part of the world. The shuttle I rode into Jerusalem had ten passengers, mostly American Jews, two binational Israeli American girls, a Christian tourist and an international aid type. This last passenger was dropped at Qalandiya checkpoint to go on to Ramallah. “Is this a hospital?” the orthodox girl in the front row asked. A reminder that the Palestinian reality is sealed off from Israelis, and also that Qalandiya is a vast bureaucratic complex in benign disguise, a border crossing that keeps the subject population Over There. “A lot of the Arabs throw rocks, that is why they put this up,” an older Jew who fought in the [1948] war explained to his wife as we passed along the wall.

After I checked into my hotel in the Old City, I ran into Jeff Halper of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. He pointed out the flags above on a dwelling in the Muslim Quarter and said that I was witnessing the process of the Judaization of the Old City and of East Jerusalem generally, Jews cordoning off the holy city. My picture is of Muslims going to the Al Aqsa mosque to pray under these flags. They are reminded of who is boss at every turn.

I have been through Qalandiya twice in the last day and cannot convey what a dreary oppressive experience this is. Long lines of people made to walk in a wide muddy circle past the never-ending re-arranged concrete walls, one of which has Fuck You as an eloquent graffiti. The soldiers stand at huge

concrete cubes that the bulldozers have placed just so, a couple-hips'-width apart, and stop us at three points on our way in. Women and men are separated, in a fashion that has ghoulish echoes of the worst moments of Jewish history.

Oh but now we have power, now we are in history. This is what thrills American Jews and neocons, our moment. Powerful people do screwed up things.

But all the while my heart is with the Palestinians around me. The men are all gleaming and bathed and fresh. It is Ramadan. They wear nice clothes. They meet your eyes in a welcoming fashion but no one is ingratiating. It is too humbling for anyone to say anything, where are you from? Welcome, which they say in ordinary circumstances. While in the Old City, in the Ramadan crowds that inch packed and dangerous toward the mosque, there are always men at the side spraying water on as you walk by. Tossing it from bottles, spraying it with sprayers, to cool you down. A lovely gesture of community, in which I am included.

I know there is a strong Jewish community a few hundred yards away. It has its own beauties and fellowship and loving embrace. But pardon me if I can't find my way there right now. I was raised as a Jewish outsider in America, and my spirit gravitates toward the outsiders here.

The largest impression of all: These people have no freedom of movement. It takes hours to make a 10 mile trip, and none of the thoughtful city planning that Jews get in West Jerusalem is extended to the Palestinians. No, they must be constrained at every turn, and choked, so they want to fly away. I would fly away. I'd move to the Gulf, I'd go to Europe, I'd give up.

And again what I find staggering is that we have so little understanding of this reality in the west. I am witnessing apartheid. I cannot think of any other term that so describes the systematic separation of people by race /ethnicity/religion, and the subjugation of one ethnicity to another. Whatever the glories of Zionism in Jewish history, a case I'm more than willing to make, this is where it ground itself out, a boot in the face of a civilized people.

So yes I blame the media. I blame the Times for running Richard Goldstone's farcical claim that apartheid is a slander rather than Stephen Roberts's clear-eyed piece in the Nation that this is apartheid on steroids. I blame the Israel lobby for enforcing blindness to these conditions, I blame the politicians for accepting the blinders. I blame the Philadelphia Inquirer for saying the other day that a one state future is "untenable," when what is happening before our eyes is atrocity on atrocity. I blame the Jewish community for lying about what is happening here endlessly, destroying our intellectual inheritance, in the belief that it is good for the Jews. It is a disaster for Jews. It is a disgrace that Americans will one day have university courses and museum exhibits to try to explain to one another when the next generation wakes up to this madness and responds with appropriate fury.

5) July-August 2012 Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories Foundation for Middle East Peace

The July-August 2012 *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories* is now available. It can be viewed [online](#) or in [PDF](#) format.

[No occupation, no problem: Netanyahu committee recommends moving toward de facto annexation:](#)

In June, the top-level Commission to Examine the Status of Building in Judea and Samaria hand-picked by Netanyahu in March rejected the international consensus, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's own statements supporting an end to occupation and the creation of a Palestinian state. The committee's recommendations illustrate the extent to which the demands of Israel's growing West Bank settler

population are supported by critical sectors of Israel's judicial, political, and administrative institutions.
[Read more on the FMEP website.](#)

6) Map presentation: Israeli Settlements - An Obstacle to a Two-State Peace, 1947-2012

The Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP) has prepared a presentation of maps that illustrate the evolution of the conflict from the UN Partition Plan in 1947, and depict the growth of Israel's occupation and settlement project from the 1967 War to the present.

Israeli Settlements - An Obstacle to a Two-State Peace, 1947-2012 may be used by students, teachers, public speakers, journalists and authors, and others.

You are welcome to download this presentation, which is in PDF format, for reference or for use in presentations. For more information or alternative file formats, contact the FMEP office at 202-835-3650.

[Click here to download the presentation.](#)

7) Why Israel is "singled out"

Joel Doerfler, Mondoweiss.net

August 13, 2012

In the recent debate over the proposed boycott of Israeli goods by the Park Slope Food Coop, it was asserted that critics of Israeli human rights abuses are unjustly "singling out" the Jewish state. They are "ignoring" the human rights abuses committed by other governments and eliding the criminal actions of the Palestinians.

One hears the same argument wherever and whenever the subject of the Israel-Palestine conflict is brought up. What about Syria? Iran? North Korea? Myanmar? Zimbabwe? What about Hamas? Why is Israel the target of condemnation when others engage in far worse depredations?

To say that Israel is being "singled out" is to say that it is being unfairly vilified for doing the same sorts of, presumably "bad," things that other states are doing; it's to grant, in other words, that Israel is doing something "wrong." But the implied acknowledgment of Israeli misdeeds by those making this argument is a discursive feint; Israeli transgressions, if specified at all, are glossed over as nothing but garden-variety misdemeanors. Indeed, it's not that Israel is being "singled out" that's driving those deploying this discourse to apoplexy. It's that Israel is being accused of pursuing criminal policies at all. Israel, they believe, is a victim, not a perpetrator. It's a beacon of civilized democracy in an ocean of Oriental despotism and barbarism. It's a "light unto the nations," boasting "the most moral army in the world" and the gay-friendliest city on the planet.

Those who assert that Israel is being "singled out" aren't interested in assessing where to rank Israel on the scoreboard of global human rights violators. They're just setting listeners up for an old familiar punch-line: Why is Israel being "singled out?" Because the world hates the Jews. Why do some Jews harp on Israel's depredations? It's because they hate themselves.

The charge of "singling out" is at once disingenuous and obfuscatory. It's another way of saying that substantive criticism of Israel (not to mention organized political and economic action, including boycott and divestment, in support of such criticism) amounts to anti-Semitism. It's intended to stifle criticism -- and indeed, honest discussion -- and thereby distract attention away from the real-life conditions in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza: from the house demolitions; the land theft; the "administrative

detentions;" the *de jure* and *de facto* deprivation of elementary rights of assembly and speech; the relentless settlement building; the roadblocks, checkpoints, and general interruption of free movement; the theft and wildly unequal distribution of water; the containment wall built on Palestinian territory; the settler violence against Palestinian individuals and property; the use of banned weaponry; the collective punishment of the entire Palestinian people; the bantustanization of the West Bank; the violations of international law; the blockading of Gaza; the manifest racism; and the daily harassment and indignities consciously and systematically imposed on an occupied populace. ...

[Read the entire piece at Mondoweiss.net.](#)

8) Status of Jerusalem, a joint statement from Pax Christi International and the World Council of Churches

Pax Christi International (PCI) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) have submitted a joint written intervention before the 21th session of the Human Rights Council taking place at the United Nations in Geneva, September 10-28, 2012. Read the statement in PDF format: [Status of Jerusalem.](#)

Pax Christi International and the World Council of Churches call for an urgent resolution to the issues destabilising Jerusalem, and applauds the Human Rights Council's attention for the numerous and disastrous violations of human rights in Jerusalem and the Council of the European Union's recommitment to forging a lasting peace.

Jerusalem has a special status, given its pluralistic and religious importance. The on-going violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the city threaten its peaceful future, and due to its special status, violations in the city do not only affect its residents but the global community at large. To reach a peaceful future, the five components of the city (three religions and two peoples) must be taken into consideration and given satisfaction, and due respect guaranteed to national or religious differences.

In UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of 1947, the international community decided that Jerusalem should have special status and a "corpus separatum" was designated for the whole area of greater Jerusalem that would be under UN trusteeship. However, as a consequence of the war of 1948, Jerusalem became divided between the Western part that was controlled by Israel and the Eastern part that was controlled by Jordan. In the war of 1967, Israel occupied the Palestinian Eastern part of Jerusalem, together with the rest of the Western side of the Jordan River. Israel claimed Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel and annexed the East-Jerusalem, contrary to international law. ...

[Read the entire statement on Pax Christi International's website.](#)

9) [Israel at no fault for death of Rachel Corrie](#) Common Dreams, August 28, 2012

A district court in Haifa has rejected a civil lawsuit that claimed the state of Israel and its armed forces were at fault in the death of American human rights activist Rachel Corrie. Corrie was crushed by an Israeli Defense Force bulldozer in 2003 while trying to prevent the destruction of Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip.

"I reject the suit," Judge Oded Gershon said in the briefly worded verdict. "There is no justification to demand the state pay any damages."

The lawsuit accused the Israeli military of either unlawfully or intentionally killing Rachel or of gross negligence. The suit was filed by Rachel's parents, Cindy and Craig Corrie, who requested only \$1 in damages and legal expenses. Both were present for the reading of the verdict. "I am hurt," Corrie's mother said at a press conference after the verdict was announced. "From the beginning it was clear to us that there was... a well-heeled system to protect the Israeli military, the soldiers who conduct actions in that military, to provide them with impunity at the cost of all the civilians who are impacted by what they do," she said. "I believe this is a bad day not only for our family, but a bad day for human rights, for humanity, for the rule of law and also for the country of Israel." She added: "I believe this is a bad day not only for our family, but a bad day for human rights, for humanity, for the rule of law and also for the country of Israel."

The family's lawyer, Hussein Abu Hussein, responded to the verdict by saying: "While not surprising, this verdict is yet another example of where impunity has prevailed over accountability and fairness. Rachel Corrie was killed while non-violently protesting home demolitions and injustice in Gaza, and today, this court has given its stamp of approval to flawed and illegal practices that failed to protect civilian life. In this regard, the verdict blames the victim based on distorted facts and it could have been written directly by the state attorneys." Abu Hussein made assurance that the ruling would be appealed to Israel's Supreme Court.

Human rights advocates bemoaned the verdict, with some calling for an intensification of the international divestment campaign against Israel and private companies who profit from the continued occupation of Palestinian lands and the destruction of Palestinian homes.

"At the time of her death, Rachel was trying to prevent the destruction of Palestinian homes by Caterpillar bulldozers," [said](#) Riham Barghouti, a member of the We Divest National Coordinating Committee. "Israel's illegal policy of destroying Palestinian homes in the occupied territories, sometimes extending to entire villages, remains as urgent an issue today as it was when Rachel was killed. In Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and Hebron Hills, Palestinians continue to live with the daily threat of their homes and property being confiscated or demolished by Israeli authorities."

Caterpillar, the U.S. company that supplies the Israeli military with bulldozers like the one that killed Corrie, [has] long been a target of activists hoping to call attention to the interplay between private corporations and the ongoing military occupation of the West Bank and blockade Gaza.