



Statement Condemning the Murder of Muhammed Bhar

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The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is horrified and heartbroken by the cruel IDF murder of Muhammed Bhar, a 24-year-old Palestinian man who had Down's Syndrome and autism.

The IDF's treatment of Mr. Bhar is not the exception. It is but one of countless similar genocidal atrocities committed by Israel, which our founder, Dr. Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, calls life force atrocities. Life force atrocities aim to destroy the spirit of the group by instrumentalizing family and community bonds, targeting and desecrating community symbols, including the most vulnerable people within a community, and perpetrating sadistic rituals of cruelty that become permanent wounds within the target group's psyche – and also permanent wounds on the body of humanity. Life force atrocities are found in every genocide.

The pattern of life force atrocities in Israel's assault on Gaza is one of the most direct forms of evidence of genocidal intent.

Given this pattern of behavior, the IDF must be considered a genocidal institution. Support for the IDF and for Israel's unending slaughter in Gaza is support for genocide. There is no way around this fact.

We remind the genocide deniers who support this monstrous behavior that the scar of complicity is permanent and can never be removed.

Mr. Bhar died alone, surrounded by Israeli soldiers, as his heartbroken and terrified family members were forced at gunpoint to leave him with his tormentors. The last words his family heard from him were his words to the dog that was killing him. He was saying to the dog, "enough my dear enough" while patting his head with his free arm and trying to free himself from the dog's attack.

Two of Muhammed's brothers were arrested and have not been heard from since. When the family was able to return to its home a week later, they found Muhammed's body near his favorite chair, surrounded by his own blood.

His 70-year-old mother told the BBC: "This scene I will never forget... I constantly see the dog tearing at him and his hand, and the blood pouring from his hand... It is always in front of my eyes, never leaving me for a moment. We couldn't save him, neither from them nor from the dog."