Activists say Israel's desecration of Palestinian's body is a war crime

Ramallah, February 26 (RHC)-- Human rights activists have expressed outrage after a video widely shared on social media showed an Israeli military bulldozer dragging the body of a Palestinian man killed by the regime's forces in Gaza, calling the action a crime against humanity and a blatant violation of international criminal law. "This is a war crime," tweeted the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel known as Adalah.

On Sunday, Israeli troops killed 27-year-old Mohammed Ali al-Naim, a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement, east of Khan Yunis, for allegedly trying to plant "an explosive device" near the fence separating Gaza from the Israeli-occupied territories.

The video went viral on social media over the weekend showing what appeared to be the lifeless body of the resistance fighter dangling from an Israeli military bulldozer as it removed the corpse. Two other men were shot and wounded while trying to retrieve Mohammed's body.

Adalah, which is dedicated to Palestinian legal rights in the occupied territories, further demanded in a letter that Israeli military immediately launch an investigation into the incident.

"In the letter, Adalah attorney Sawsan Zaher detailed a series of international laws—including the Rome Statute, the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment, and the Hague Regulations—which classify the Israeli military actions depicted in the video as war crimes and blatant violations of international criminal law, and international human rights, and humanitarian law," the NGO said in a statement.

A spokesman for the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas told Al Jazeera that the incident was reflective of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories and its treatment of Palestinian people. "There are hundreds of similar crimes that haven't been documented by the camera. Israeli occupation continues its crime without any legal or ethical deterrence," said Hazem Qassem.

In a statement reported by the Middle East Eye, Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum said Mohammed was unarmed. "Desecrating the dead body of a young unarmed man on the borders of the Gaza Strip in front of the cameras of the whole world is a heinous crime that adds to the occupation's list of crimes against our Palestinian people," said Barhoum.

Mohammed's mother, Mirvat, 56 said, "Isn't it horrendous enough that they killed my young man? What they did is a great crime against humanity." She said: "All I want is for them to bring my son back ... It's my right to see him for the last time and bid farewell to him and bury him near me to be able to visit him."

Some journalists and politicians denounced the Israeli military's conduct on Twitter Sunday:
Too painful to watch let alone experience this unhinged sadistic cruelty of the occupation and persistent #IsraeliCrimes https://t.co/nYb00UZB4q

Aida Touma-Sliman, a member of Joint List in Israel's parliament (Knesset), said the Israelis "steal a body, abuse it with a bulldozer, and still argue that the army is the most moral in the world." She said "hording bodies to bargain with is Israel's declared policy" since Naftali Bennett took office as Israel's minister for military affairs last year, describing him as "the minister of death and brutality."

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