

Ahed Tamimi and a Slap That Was Heard Around the World by WAMM Newsletter Staff

One Palestinian teenager's actions throws the spotlight on the plight of all incarcerated Palestinian children, as well as all Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, especially those accused of resisting in any way.

Israeli Defense Minister Lieberman issued a statement worthy of history's worst racists: "Whoever goes wild during the day will be arrested at night." True to Lieberman's word about arrests, during the night of December 18, 2017, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) burst violently into the home of the Tamimi family in the Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh and arrested the 16-year-old daughter, Ahed Tamimi. Her arrest was in retaliation for slapping a soldier with her bare hand when she tried to defend her family's home against the armed IDF who were invading their yard. Ahed's 14-year old cousin, Muhammad Tamimi, had just been shot in the head at close range with a rubber-coated metal bullet by soldiers; he was very seriously injured and lost part of his skull. The incident not only draws world attention to Ahed's arrest, but also to how Palestinian children can be wounded or killed by the IDF for stone throwing, or in other cases for just existing on coveted land. It reveals not only the illegality and injustices done to children but of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, itself.

Even after her arrest, apparently the Defense Minister wasn't through expressing his ire toward the teenage girl who dared defy his military. When popular Israeli songwriter Shira Geffen compared Ahed to Nazi-defying heroines, Lieberman mustering all the dignity one could expect from such a high-ranking official with so much power at his command, said the comparison was "infuriating and nauseating", asked the songwriter be banned from radio, and referred to Ahed as "the bimbo who attacked a soldier". (The Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, is one of many sources reporting his statements.)

Israeli Education Minister Bennett, among other Israeli officials, had already called for severe punishment for Ahed, saying she should get life imprisonment. Prominent Israeli journalist, Ben Caspit, recommended this treatment of her and a female cousin who was also arrested: ***"In the case of the girls, we should exact a price at some other opportunity, in the dark, without witnesses and cameras."***

Apparently outraged that Ahed's mother, Nariman, had posted a video of the slap that went viral (categorized as "incitement"), Lieberman vowed revenge on the whole family, as is often the case with children who are arrested. When Nariman Tamimi went to inquire about where her daughter was being detained, the military arrested her as well. Because Ahed and her family have been active in resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestine, they are a particular target of the Israeli government.

Ahed has been held in prison since her arrest and her trial began in secret in a closed Israeli military court. But the slap she gave the IDF soldier has resounded around the world.