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Justice denied for Eyad al-Hallaq



On Thursday 6th July, an Israeli court acquitted of 'reckless manslaughter' the unnamed Israel Border Police officer who killed Eyad al-Hallaq. This disgraceful decision comes just over three years since Eyad was gunned down in cold blood on the 30th May 2020.



On that Saturday morning, Eyad, who was autistic with a moderate to severe learning disability, left his home in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Wadi Joz to walk to the El Quds centre run by the organisation, Israel Elwyn. Although he had made this journey many times, he had only recently started to do it unaccompanied.

'For more than two years,... [Eyad] was accompanied by an escort who would walk him to school every day. The escort explained to him how to walk on the sidewalk, how to stop at a crosswalk, how to cross the street. She even took him to the local police station and introduced him to the officers there.'

'On his first days at the centre the teacher stopped with Hallaq next to the police guard post at Lions Gate. She tried to explain to him that he had nothing to fear; they wouldn't do him any harm, she promised. She also explained to the police officers that he was disabled and was attending the therapeutic institution where she worked...

[Eyad] passed the police post every day for six years, apparently without any problems. In his pocket he carried a certificate issued by the centre, stating in Hebrew and in Arabic that he was a person with special needs, as well as a National Insurance Institute card confirming that he had a 100-percent disability.'

In other words, Eyad al-Hallaq was a familiar figure to the Border Police, someone who had been introduced to them and whose presence in the area had been explained to them on several occasions.

On his way that morning, he passed a group of Israeli Border Police officers, who challenged him to show what he was carrying (nothing more, in fact, than a face mask and a pair of rubber gloves), causing him to run away in panic. As can be seen in [a CCTV recording](#), the officers ran after him shouting, 'Terrorist, terrorist!' It happened that one of the carers from the Elwyn Centre was already a short distance ahead, and she too began to run in fear for her life. Both she and Eyad took cover in a bin store close to the Lions Gate.

Eyad had already been wounded by a bullet in his leg, and was lying on the floor when the police arrived. His carer, Warda Abu Hadid, pleaded with the police, repeatedly telling them, 'He's disabled! He's disabled!' Eyad lay there, terrified, before one of the Border Police officers opened fire from close range, shooting four bullets, two of which hit Eyad in the chest, killing him.

According to the ruling of the Jerusalem district court, the officer standing trial for reckless homicide 'made an honest mistake thinking he was dealing with an armed terrorist who posed a real danger', noting that the officer had expressed remorse for his error. The court described the incident as a tragic mistake, noting that the officer made a split-second decision in a dangerous situation.

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Exclusive: Officer who mistakenly killed autistic Palestinian gets promotion

If convicted, the officer involved in the deadly shooting of 32-year-old Eyad Hallaq could face up to 12 years in prison.



By Itzik Saban — Published on 01-02-2023 17:08 — Last modified: 01-02-2023 17:11

However, according to a report this February in *Israel Hayom* the officer charged with Eyad's killing has been promoted, despite an internal police investigation, released after the verdict, concluding that 'the officer had defied instructions to stop shooting and had acted in a *reckless* manner'.



Eyad's family, and especially his mother, Rana, are determined to continue their quest for justice. But what can you say, on this evidence, about the Israeli justice system except that it's shameless and shameful?

The *Guardian* newspaper, which carried [a report](#) of the verdict on Thursday, should also hang its head in disgrace for blatantly swerving its responsibility to report the full facts of the case, and simply repeating the official Israeli press release.

For a proper account of the case you can find a report by Gideon Levy and Alex Levac, published in *Haaretz* in June 2020, [here](#). There's also a moving description of the impact of Eyad's killing on the family by +972 Magazine [here](#). *Al Jazeera* published a fuller account of the case and the verdict on Thursday, which you can find [here](#).

