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March 15, 2010

Eye Witness Testifies: Israeli Military Investigator Tried to Influence My Statement

Today, March 15 2010, the Haifa District Court saw the third day of testimony in the civil lawsuit filed by Rachel Corrie's family against the State of Israel for her unlawful killing in Rafah, Gaza. Rachel was crushed to death on March 16, 2003 by a Caterpillar D9R bulldozer. She had been nonviolently demonstrating against Palestinian home demolitions with fellow members of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land using nonviolent, direct action methods and principles. Today's only testimony came from British citizen Alice Coy, a nurse, who was an eyewitness to the killing. The state spent most of the day trying to establish that contrary to all eyewitness accounts and human rights reports, the Israeli Military had no intention of demolishing homes in the area on the day Rachel was killed. Ms. Coy testified that:

- She first visited Israel in order visit Israeli family members.
- When the Israeli Military interviewed her on April 1st about Rachel's killing, the soldier who documented her testimony refused to record her statement that she believed the bulldozers were going to destroy civilian homes.
- She believed the Israeli Military was planning to demolish homes on the day Rachel was killed because the Israeli Military had been demolishing homes on the Philadelphi Corridor in the days and weeks prior, and because they had already begun to demolish a house earlier that day by damaging its porch.
- She had spoken with many Palestinian families in the area where Rachel was killed whose homes had been demolished by the Israeli Military.
- She believed the bulldozer driver who killed Rachel could see her.
- She described her view of her work with ISM as promoting peace for the whole region.

The home Rachel Corrie was protecting, that of Dr. Samir Nasrallah, was in fact demolished by the Israeli Military later that year.

According to an October, 2004 Human Rights Watch report, *Razing Rafah: Mass Home Demolitions in the Gaza Strip* (<http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11963/section/11>), between 2000 and 2004, the Israeli Military demolished over 2,500 Palestinian houses in Gaza, nearly two thirds of which were located in Rafah, resulting in more than 16,000 people – over 10% of Rafah's population – losing their homes. The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, in its 2004 report *Through No Fault of their Own*, found that contrary to Israel's claim that prior warning is given before a home is demolished, in cases of punitive demolitions, occupants were given prior notification in a mere 3% of the time.

The Human Rights' Watch report further documented that most of the destruction in Rafah occurred along the Israeli-controlled border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt known as the Philadelphi Corridor, the area where Rachel was killed. During regular nighttime raids and with little or no warning, Israeli forces used armored Caterpillar D9 bulldozers to raze blocks of homes, incrementally expanding a "buffer zone" that is currently up to three hundred meters wide. The pattern of destruction strongly suggests that Israeli forces demolished homes wholesale, regardless of whether they posed a specific threat, in stark violation of international law.

The trial will resume on Wednesday, March 17, 2010, at 9 a.m. at the district court in Haifa.

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