

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Israeli Military Investigator Admits Failures in the Military Investigation of Rachel Corrie's Killing

Today March 17, 2010 the Haifa District Court saw a fourth 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 Corrie, an American human rights defender from Olympia, Washington, 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.

An Israeli military police investigator, who was part of the team that investigated Rachel's killing, testified today. In his testimony he stated that:

- He never inspected the site where the killing occurred; nor did he ever sit inside the D9 bulldozer to see for himself the view the driver had and what the field of vision was.
- He admitted that the Israeli military's D9 bulldozer regulations state that the D9s should not be operated with civilians in close proximity. He failed to question the bulldozer driver about these regulations or make them part of the military police investigation file.
- He received a court order authorizing Rachel's autopsy under the condition that an official from the U.S. Embassy be present, and at the time informed the court that the condition would be upheld. Subsequently, he made no effort to ensure that this condition was upheld, nor does he know if anyone else did, stating he did not consider the follow-up his responsibility. He also failed to forward the final autopsy report to the court, even though this was required, stating that his commander did not require him to do so and that he simply "did not pay attention" to the court order. Dr. Hiss ultimately performed the autopsy without an American Embassy official present.
- To his knowledge, no ISM member was arrested the afternoon of March 16 for interfering with Israeli military activities.

American eyewitness Gregory Schnabel, the fourth and last eye-witness called to testify, also testified today, providing his account of the killing of Ms. Corrie. Gregory testified that he saw Rachel climb to the top of the pile of dirt being pushed by the bulldozer and that she was visible to the driver. He also testified that a bulldozer had come close to himself and another ISM member that afternoon, stopping just short of hitting them, which led him to believe that the demonstrators were visible to the driver.

The trial will resume on Sunday, March 21, 2010, at 9 a.m. at the district court in Haifa.

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