

Snipers ordered to shoot children, Israeli general confirms

[Ali Abunimah \(/people/ali-abunimah\)](/people/ali-abunimah)

[Rights and Accountability \(/blog/rights-and-accountability\)](/blog/rights-and-accountability)

22 April 2018

An Israeli general has confirmed that when snipers stationed along Israel's boundary with Gaza shoot at children, they are doing so deliberately, under clear and specific orders.

In a radio interview, Brigadier-General (Reserve) Zvika Fogel describes how a sniper identifies the “small body” of a child and is given authorization to shoot.

Fogel's statements could be used as evidence of intent if Israeli leaders are ever tried for war crimes at the [International Criminal Court \(https://electronicintifada.net/tags/international-criminal-court\)](https://electronicintifada.net/tags/international-criminal-court).

On Friday, an Israeli sniper shot dead 14-year-old [Muhammad Ibrahim Ayyoub \(https://electronicintifada.net/tags/muhammad-ibrahim-ayyoub\)](https://electronicintifada.net/tags/muhammad-ibrahim-ayyoub).

The boy, [shot in the head \(http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/gaza/1218-20-](http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/gaza/1218-20-)



Israeli Brigadier-General (Reserve) Zvika Fogel (Wikipedia ([https://he.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/פוגל_צבי#/media/%3A\(2\)קובץA](https://he.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/פוגל_צבי#/media/%3A(2)קובץA))).

[april-2018-wilful-killing-of-four-palestinians-including-a-child-and-injury-of-252-protesters-in-fourth-great-return-march-week](#)) east of Jabaliya, was the fourth child among the [more than 30 Palestinians \(https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/maureen-clare-murphy/israel-kills-child-and-crushes-bones-gaza\)](#) killed during the Great March of Return rallies that began in Gaza on 30 March.

More than 1,600 other Palestinians have been shot with live ammunition that has caused what doctors are calling “[horrific injuries \(https://www.map.org.uk/news/archive/post/828-horrific-injuries-reported-among-gaza-protesters\)](#)” likely to leave many of them with permanent disabilities.



Defense for Children

@DCIPalestine

Our initial investigation confirms Israeli forces killed 14-year-old Mahmoud Ibrahim Ayoub in Gaza today around 4:30 pm local time. He sustained a gunshot wound to the head & was later pronounced dead at Shifa hospital. [#GazaReturnMarch](#)

11:47 PM - Apr 20, 2018

144 371 people are talking about this

As [eyewitnesses and video \(https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/how-eu-pretends-not-see-israels-calculated-slaughter-gaza\)](#) confirmed, the child Muhammad Ayyoub posed no conceivable danger to heavily armed Israeli occupation forces stationed dozens of meters away behind fences and earthen

fortifications on the other side of the Gaza boundary when he was killed.

Even the usually timid United Nations peace process envoy [Nickolay Mladenov](https://electronicintifada.net/tags/nickolay-mladenov) (<https://electronicintifada.net/tags/nickolay-mladenov>) publicly declared that the slaying was “outrageous.”



Nickolay E. MLADENOV

@nmladenov

● It is OUTRAGEOUS to shoot at children! How does the killing of a child in #Gaza today help #peace? It doesn't! It fuels anger and breeds more killing. #Children must be protected from #violence, not exposed to it, not killed! This tragic incident must be investigated.

7:35 PM - Apr 20, 2018

1,851 1,920 people are talking about this

Targeting children

On Saturday, Brigadier-General Fogel was interviewed by Ron Nesiel on the Israeli public radio network Kan.

Fogel is the former chief of staff of the Israeli army's “southern command,” which includes the occupied Gaza Strip.

[Ahmad Tibi](https://electronicintifada.net/tags/ahmad-tibi) (<https://electronicintifada.net/tags/ahmad-tibi>), a Palestinian lawmaker in Israel's parliament, drew attention to the interview in a tweet.



Ahmad Tibi

@Ahmad_tibi

תת אלוף(מיל) צביקה פוגל ברשת ב כאן: מי שמתקרר לגדר כדי לבדוק למשל
אם יש שטחים מתים דינו מוות!
רון נשיאל המראיין : גם אם מדובר בילד לא חמוש? פוגל: כן , גם אם מדובר
בילד.

9:19 AM - Apr 21, 2018

158 179 people are talking about this

A [recording of the interview](https://www.kan.org.il/radio) (<https://www.kan.org.il/radio>)

</player.aspx?ItemId=29159>) is online (it begins at 6:52). The interview was translated (<https://www.shunra.net>) for The Electronic Intifada by [Dena Shunra](https://electronicintifada.net/tags/dena-shunra) (<https://electronicintifada.net/tags/dena-shunra>) and a full transcript follows this article.

The host Ron Nesiel asks Fogel if the Israeli army should “rethink its use of snipers,” and suggests that someone giving orders “lowered the bar for using live fire.”

Fogel adamantly defends the policy, stating: “At the tactical level, any person who gets close to the fence, anyone who could be a future threat to the border of the State of Israel and its residents, should bear a price for that violation.”

He adds: “If this child or anyone else gets close to the fence in order to hide an explosive device or check if there are any dead zones there or to cut the fence so someone could infiltrate the territory of the State of Israel to kill us ...”

“Then his punishment is death?” Nesiel interjects.

“His punishment is death,” the general responds. “As far as I’m concerned then yes, if you can only shoot him to stop him, in the leg or arm – great. But if it’s more than that then, yes, you want to check with me whose blood is thicker, ours or theirs.”

Fogel then describes the careful process by which targets – including children – are identified and shot:

“I know how these orders are given. I know how a sniper does the shooting. I know how many authorizations he needs before he receives an authorization to open fire. It is not the whim of one or the other sniper who identifies the small body of a child now and decides he’ll shoot. Someone marks the target for him very well and tells him exactly why one has to shoot and what the threat is from that individual. And to my great sorrow, sometimes when you shoot at a small body and you intended to hit his arm or shoulder, it goes even higher.”

For “it goes even higher,” Fogel uses a Hebrew idiom also meaning “it costs even more.”

In this chilling statement, in which a general talks about snipers targeting the “small body of a child,” Fogel makes crystal clear that this policy is premeditated

and deliberate.

While presenting unarmed Palestinian children as dangerous terrorists worthy of death, Fogel describes the snipers killing them in cold blood as the innocent, vulnerable parties who deserve protection.

“We have soldiers there, our children, who were sent out and receive very accurate instructions about whom to shoot to protect us. Let’s back them up,” he says.

Lethal policy

Fogel’s statements are no aberration but represent Israeli policy.

“Israeli officials [made it clear \(https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-army-gears-up-for-gaza-mass-protest-1.5957896\)](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-army-gears-up-for-gaza-mass-protest-1.5957896) that the open-fire regulations would permit lethal fire at anyone attempting to damage the fence, and even at any person coming within 300 meters of it,” the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem [stated \(https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/201804_if_the_heart_be_not_callous_eng.pdf\)](https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/201804_if_the_heart_be_not_callous_eng.pdf) in a recent analysis of Israel’s illegal targeting of unarmed civilians who pose no threat.

“Nevertheless, all state and military officials have steadfastly refused to cancel the unlawful orders and continue to issue – and justify – them,” B’Tselem added.

B’Tselem has called on individual soldiers to [defy such illegal orders \(https://www.btselem.org/firearms/20180404_why_soldiers_must_refuse_to_fire_at_unarmed_protesters\)](https://www.btselem.org/firearms/20180404_why_soldiers_must_refuse_to_fire_at_unarmed_protesters).

Following its [investigation \(https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israeli-leaders-ordered-calculated-killings-gaza-protesters\)](https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israeli-leaders-ordered-calculated-killings-gaza-protesters) of the “calculated” killings of unarmed demonstrators on 30 March, the first day of the Great March of Return rallies in Gaza, Human Rights Watch [concluded \(https://twitter.com/OmarSShakir/status/981103033827430401\)](https://twitter.com/OmarSShakir/status/981103033827430401) that the lethal crackdown was “planned at [the] highest levels of the Israeli government.”

Two weeks ago, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court issued an [unprecedented warning \(https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/icc-warns-israeli-leaders-over-gaza-killings\)](https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/icc-warns-israeli-leaders-over-gaza-killings) that Israeli leaders may face trial for the killings of unarmed Palestinian protesters in the Gaza Strip.

Potential defendants would be giving any prosecutor a gift with such open admissions that killing unarmed people in an occupied territory who pose no objective threat is their policy and intent.

The question remains whether anything will finally pierce the shield of [impunity](https://electronicintifada.net/tags/impunity) (<https://electronicintifada.net/tags/impunity>) that Israel has enjoyed for 70 years.

Full Transcript

Brigadier-General (Res.) Zvika Fogel interviewed on the *Yoman Hashevua* (<https://www.kan.org.il/radio/player.aspx?ItemId=29159>) **program of Israel's Kan radio, 21 April 2018.**

Ron Nesiel: Greetings Brigadier General (Res.) Zvika Fogel. Should the IDF [Israeli army] rethink its use of snipers? There's the impression that maybe someone lowered the bar for using live fire, and this may be the result?

Zvika Fogel: Ron, let's maybe look at this matter on three levels. At the tactical level that we all love dealing with, the local one, also at the level of values, and with your permission, we will also rise up to the strategic level. At the tactical level, any person who gets close to the fence, anyone who could be a future threat to the border of the State of Israel and its residents, should bear a price for that violation. If this child or anyone else gets close to the fence in order to hide an explosive device or check if there are any dead zones there or to cut the fence so someone could infiltrate the territory of the State of Israel to kill us ...

Nesiel: Then, then his punishment is death?

Fogel: His punishment is death. As far as I'm concerned then yes, if you can only shoot him to stop him, in the leg or arm – great. But if it's more than that then, yes, you want to check with me whose blood is thicker, ours or theirs. It is clear to you that if one such person will manage to cross the fence or hide an explosive device there ...

Nesiel: But we were taught that live fire is only used when the soldiers face immediate danger.

Fogel: Come, let's move over to the level of values. Assuming that we understood the tactical level, as we cannot tolerate a crossing of our border or a violation of

our border, let's proceed to the level of values. I am not Ahmad Tibi, I am Zvika Fogel. I know how these orders are given. I know how a sniper does the shooting. I know how many authorizations he needs before he receives an authorization to open fire. It is not the whim of one or the other sniper who identifies the small body of a child now and decides he'll shoot. Someone marks the target for him very well and tells him exactly why one has to shoot and what the threat is from that individual. And to my great sorrow, sometimes when you shoot at a small body and you intended to hit his arm or shoulder it goes even higher. The picture is not a pretty picture. But if that's the price that we have to pay to preserve the safety and quality of life of the residents of the State of Israel, then that's the price. But now, with your permission, let us go up one level and look at the overview. It is clear to you that Hamas is fighting for consciousness at the moment. It is clear to you and to me ...

Nesiel: Is it hard for them to do? Aren't we providing them with sufficient ammunition in this battle?

Fogel: We're providing them but ...

Nesiel: Because it does not do all that well for us, those pictures that are distributed around the world.

Fogel: Look, Ron, we're even terrible at it. There's nothing to be done, David always looks better against Goliath. And in this case, we are the Goliath. Not the David. That is entirely clear to me. But let's look at it at the strategic level: you and I and a large part of the listeners are clear that this will not end up in demonstrations. It is clear to us that Hamas can't continue to tolerate the fact that its rockets are not managing to hurt us, its tunnels are eroding ...

Nesiel: Yes.

Fogel: And it doesn't have too many suicide bombers who continue to believe the fairytale about the virgins waiting up there. It will drag us into a war. I do not want to be on the side that gets dragged. I want to be on the side that initiates things. I do not want to wait for the moment where it finds a weak spot and attacks me there. If tomorrow morning it gets into a military base or a kibbutz and kills people there and takes prisoners of war or hostages, call it as you like, we're in a whole new script. I want the leaders of Hamas to wake up tomorrow morning and for the last time in their life see the smiling faces of the IDF. That's what I want to have happen. But we are dragged along. So we're putting snipers

up because we want to preserve the values we were educated by. We can't always take a single picture and put it before the whole world. We have soldiers there, our children, who were sent out and receive very accurate instructions about whom to shoot to protect us. Let's back them up.

Nesiel: Brigadier-General (Res.) Zvika Fogel, formerly Head of the Southern Command Staff, thank you for your words.

Fogel: May you only hear good news. Thank you.

🔗 [Great March of Return \(/tags/great-march-return\)](/tags/great-march-return) [war crimes \(/tags/war-crimes\)](/tags/war-crimes) [Zvika Fogel \(/tags/zvika-fogel\)](/tags/zvika-fogel) [Muhammad Ibrahim Ayyoub \(/tags/muhammad-ibrahim-ayyoub\)](/tags/muhammad-ibrahim-ayyoub) [violence against children \(/tags/violence-against-children\)](/tags/violence-against-children) [Ahmad Tibi \(/tags/ahmad-tibi\)](/tags/ahmad-tibi) [sniper \(/tags/sniper\)](/tags/sniper) [B'Tselem \(/tags/btselem\)](/tags/btselem) [Human Rights Watch \(/tags/human-rights-watch\)](/tags/human-rights-watch) [International Criminal Court \(/tags/international-criminal-court\)](/tags/international-criminal-court) [Dena Shunra \(/tags/dena-shunra\)](/tags/dena-shunra)

💬 Comments



[Doesn't this constitute war crimes \(/comment/75711#comment-75711\)](/comment/75711#comment-75711)

🔗 [\(/comment/75711#comment-75711\)](/comment/75711#comment-75711) Sage24 replied on Mon,

04/23/2018 - 09:23

These zionists keep showing their sadistic brutality, and consistently break international laws, acting like they are above all of it. Had this been Iran, the US/Israel/Saudi Arabia axis of evil would have bombed them, and made raised hell at the UN. Why are these western nations going against their own human rights policies, that they demand from other rogue nations, to keep giving this evil nation a free pass, overtime? In fact they keep rewarding it with billions of dollars and the shiniest of weapons, that they use on powerless, unarmed civilians, and kids.

[Can we move against this Fogel? \(/comment/75736#comment-75736\)](#)

 ([/comment/75736#comment-75736](#)) [Christopher Brickhill](#)

(<https://christopherbrickhillonpalestine.wordpress.com>) replied on Mon, 04/23/2018 - 14:10

I do not want to devote time to commenting in detail on what this inhuman beast has said, other than saying that he is on another planet. Nothing he has said shows that he has any comprehension of what it is right to do.

The next step must be to prosecute him, and the hoard of Israelis, that have no issue with his actions, nor what he says.

So how do we do this?



[at least he's not being coy \(/comment/75751#comment-75751\)](#)

 ([/comment/75751#comment-75751](#)) tom hall replied on Mon,

04/23/2018 - 14:57

The general's comments are so twisted that if you were to unwind them, they wouldn't come out as words but yelps and snarls. Nevertheless, one of the important arguments cited by him in defense of the indefensible is the military chain of command's direct involvement in these shootings. He implicates commanders up the line in an attempt to characterize the killings as carefully considered, rational decisions reached at high levels according to an established set of criteria and conveyed in the form of orders to junior personnel such as snipers. Thus, in trying to exonerate the assassins, he condemns the entire service. It's clear he doesn't possess a developed concept of law or even humanity. The racist ideology and sadism of his outlook should play an evidentiary role in his eventual prosecution. These officers and the government they serve must be held accountable for their atrocious conduct. Human rights groups should familiarise themselves with the travel plans of Israeli officials and apply for arrest warrants whenever and wherever they set foot outside Israel.



[Killing of civilians \(/comment/75761#comment-75761\)](#)

 ([/comment/75761#comment-75761](#)) Kamal Aron Chenoy replied on

Mon, 04/23/2018 - 15:56

As a Mizrahi Jew I am sickened and saddened by the killing of unarmed Palestinian children and adults in Gaza by Israeli snipers. If they are not killed then like Palestinian teenager Ahd Tamini a 16 year old is sentenced to a jail term. The international support to Palestine is grossly insufficient. The Arab, US and European support is grossly inadequate. The PA, Hamas and other groups/parties must unite, then others will follow. With very best wishes, Kamal (India).

 [IDF Chief Says Israel Is Becoming Like Nazi Germany \(/comment/75766#comment-75766\)](#)

 [\(/comment/75766#comment-75766\)](#) Edward Huguenin replied on

Mon, 04/23/2018 - 19:12

IDF Chief Says Israel Is Becoming Like Nazi Germany, Refuses to Back Down

The outgoing IDF chief has doubled down on his highly controversial comments he made comparing modern-day Israel with that of 1930's Nazi Germany.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/i...> (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/idf-chief-says-israel-is-becoming-like-nazi-germany-refuses-to-back-down/5600782>)