

Soldier jailed for killing Palestinian

Tel Aviv

An Israeli military court yesterday sentenced a soldier to 18 months in prison for shooting dead a wounded Palestinian assailant who lay on the ground, sparking criticism from rights groups.

Defence lawyers announced an appeal and right-wing Israeli ministers immediately called for a pardon, while the Palestinian government and the victim's family condemned the sentence as too lenient.

Judge Maya Heller handed down the sentence a month after Elor Azaria, 21, was found guilty of manslaughter for killing Abdul Fatah al-Sharif in March last year.

He also received 18 months



Palestinians holds placards during a demonstration following a verdict in the trial of the Israeli soldier Elor Azaria

in suspended sentences and was demoted from sergeant to private.

He has already spent more

than 10 months confined to an military base but this is not included as time served.

The March 2016 shooting in

the occupied West Bank city of Hebron was caught on video by a rights group.

It showed Sharif, 21, lying wounded on the ground, shot along with another Palestinian after stabbing and wounding a soldier.

Azaria then shoots him in the head without any apparent provocation.

Outside the court, around 100 right-wing demonstrators protested against the trial.

The reaction from Palestinians and rights groups, was anger and disappointment.

A spokesman for the Palestinian government said the sentence was a "green light to the occupation army to continue its crimes". -(AFP)

By Invitation



Zuhair A. Tawfiqi

Respect to the Kingdom's Flag

As it is known, every Country has its own flag that represents its entity. The flag's design and colours reflect the Country's history and vision and its essence. For the dear readers' information, the Republic of Tunisia has the oldest flag (1831), while the Republic of Iraq has the relatively newest flag (2008).

I do not want to discuss the history of flags today, since that sort of information is readily available for all readers, moreover I would like to highlight the personal value of flags for each Country. I would like to discuss the respect and admiration provided to flags being the true symbol of a Country's spirit. As you are all aware, they are exchanged by Country Leaders, Diplomatic figures, presented at sport events and various other events that require official protocol.

Therefore, and as you all know, flags have their own holistic value and substantial respect, given its tribute to any Country's values, culture and citizens. We all witness how flags are treated with utmost care and respect.

On a daily basis, I witness the Kingdom of Bahrain's flags placed on many buildings being official entities and other local and community entities. That is actually wonderful, and we should encourage this sort of love and loyalty to our beloved Country.

However, what is not acceptable is to place the flags that are not properly maintained or torn or those which are in abysmal condition. This will actually reflect negatively on the Country's image and entity and is frankly unacceptable. It baffles me to see this repeatedly in several locations in which a lot of them are official and governmental entities.

I am not really aware which entity is responsible for making sure that the Country's flags are represented in the best possible manner. To my knowledge, there is no such governmental figure that takes that responsibility. Hence, I personally believe that the times has come for the concerned and related entities to specify and appoint someone to be responsible of this crucial issue. I hope that my article will serve its purpose in always maintaining and raising our beloved Country's proud and esteemed reputation!

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)

Trump critic McCain meets Saudi king



Saudi King Salman (R) meeting with US Senator John McCain Riyadh

Influential American Senator John McCain, a critic of President Donald Trump, held talks with Saudi Arabia's King Salman yesterday, official media said.

McCain, who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, arrived in Riyadh after talks on Syria with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Saudi Press Agency gave no details of McCain's meeting at Salman's office, except to say that the friendly ties between their two countries were discussed.

McCain's visit comes two days before Syria's government and the opposition gather in Geneva tomorrow for a new round of United Nations-brokered talks.

After his talks in Syria, the Republican senator from Arizona said on his website that Erdogan "described a proposal to establish safe zones in Syria and retake Raqa that should receive serious consideration by the United States".

'No concessions on two state policy': Egypt, Jordan

Cairo

Egypt's President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and King Abdullah II of Jordan agreed yesterday there could be no concessions on establishing a Palestinian state, the presidency said after talks in Cairo.

The meeting between the leaders

of the two Arab countries that have signed peace treaties with Israel came after US President Donald Trump's administration suggested it would not insist on a Palestinian state for a Middle East peace agreement.

"The two sides discussed ways to push the stagnant



Jordan's King Abdullah II (L) and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi

Middle East peace process, especially in light of US President Donald Trump's administration coming to power," a presidency statement said.

A two-state solution "with a Palestinian state... with east Jerusalem as its capital is a nationalist principle that cannot be conceded".

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