

West Bank: Settlers attacked Bana's village. Then a soldier shot her through her window

Thursday 26 September 2024, by [ZIV Oren](#) (Date first published: 23 September 2024).

After Israeli settlers assaulted Palestinians with rocks and Molotov cocktails, soldiers raided Qaryut and killed a 13-year-old as she stood in her bedroom.



The bed of 13-year-old Bana Laboum, was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in her room in the village of Qaryut, occupied West Bank, September 15, 2024. (Oren Ziv)

The [killing of Aysenur Ezgi Eygi](#), a 26-year-old Turkish-American activist, in the West Bank town of Beita on Sept. 6 rightly garnered extensive international attention. But there was another fatal shooting by Israeli forces that day — only two hours after Eygi's killing, and just a few miles away — which barely received any coverage at all: that of Bana Laboum, a 13-year-old Palestinian from the village of Qaryut, who was shot dead while looking out of her bedroom window.

At around 3 p.m., Israeli settlers, who residents say were armed with rocks and Molotov cocktails, approached the houses on the outskirts of Qaryut. The young people from the village, which is located near Nablus in the northern occupied West Bank, went out to confront the settlers, before Israeli security forces arrived and the settlers left. But rather than leaving Qaryut, the soldiers then began chasing the Palestinian youths. "They entered the village, firing tear gas and stun grenades and a single shot of live ammunition — the one that killed my daughter," Bana's father, Amjad Laboum, told +972 during a visit to the village last week.

According to Amjad and other eyewitnesses from Qaryut, and as confirmed by a short video taken by a resident which +972 has seen, the Israeli forces — who appear to have included officers from the Border Police — were standing at the end of a small alley about 100 meters from the Laboum family's house when one of them fired the shot. From the vantage point where they were positioned, next to a concrete wall, it is possible to see the small window of Bana's room, which she shared with some of her siblings.

Amjad was standing on his porch at the time, around 4 p.m., while the rest of the family were upstairs. "I saw four or five soldiers moving from place to place, but then one knelt down and aimed his weapon," he recounted. "We thought he fired at the boys in the street. If I understood that he wanted to shoot at the house, I wouldn't have left my children inside. We thought they were safe there."



Amjad Laboum looks out of the window through which his 13-year-old daughter, Bana, was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in their home in the village of Qaryut, occupied West Bank, September 15, 2024. (Oren Ziv)

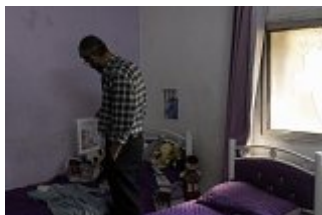
Amjad didn't see the soldier open fire, but when he heard the gunshot and the shattering of glass he ran up to his children's room. "Bana stumbled toward me and collapsed, bleeding from her chest" he said. "I held her, and we rushed her in an ambulance to a clinic in [the nearby town of] Qabalan and from there to the hospital in Nablus. But she had already taken her last breath on the street outside our house.

"The geography of the area doesn't allow for mistakes: it was intentional," Amjad asserted. "The sniper had a difficult angle, but he fired directly at the window. There was daylight, and it wasn't in an open place. I want justice for my daughter in order to protect other children. I don't want any [parent] to face such a situation."

'They think that by killing the little ones they will break the adults'

Painted lilac, Bana's room consists of four single beds with matching linens. Hers was in the corner next to the window. Since her killing, the bed has become a kind of memorial to Bana, with her family placing pictures of her beside her school uniform and beloved stuffed animals. "She was supposed to start ninth grade," Amjad said. "There was always a smile on her face."

In the living room, Amjad gestured to the TV screen, where Al Jazeera was broadcasting live from Gaza. "We've been seeing what's happening there for 11 months now," he said. "I'm sorry for the harsh words, but Gaza gave us strength. At least I buried my daughter whole; in Gaza, children are buried in pieces."



Amjad Laboum at the bed of his 13-year-old daughter, Bana, who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in her room in the village of Qaryut, occupied West Bank, September 15, 2024. (Oren Ziv)

Qaryut's 3,000-strong community has long borne the brunt of the Israeli occupation. In 1978 and 1983, respectively, Israel seized land from the village by military order to build the settlements of Shilo and Eli. The Palestinians of Qaryut were cut off from most of their agricultural land, and later from the road connecting Nablus and Ramallah. "Today, we are not allowed to access our lands," Amjad lamented. "We used to have 27,000 dunams, and now there are only 3,500 left."

In December 2021, settlers [broke into the home](#) of an elderly couple in the village, demolished their belongings, and beat them severely. Just four months later, a settler was [documented](#) brandishing a

gun during an attack on residents working their land. And for the past two years, settlers have received military protection to [visit a spring](#) in Qaryut every Friday — an area that Palestinian residents have been prevented from accessing entirely since the start of the Gaza war.

And it's not just settlements, which are illegal under international law, that are suffocating the village. Qaryut and the nearby villages of Jalud and Qusra are also surrounded by some of the most extreme Israeli outposts in the West Bank, which are illegal even under Israeli law, though they are nevertheless often connected to state infrastructure.

On the day of Bana's killing, Mohammed Musa, a 28-year-old father of two from Qaryut, was severely wounded by Israeli settlers who raided the village from the direction of Shilo and Eli. "We heard there was a settler attack, so I went down to my sister's house on the edge of the village," he told +972. "I saw the settlers, who had used their shirts to cover their faces. Some were carrying rocks, others Molotov cocktails."



Mohammed Musa, who was attacked by Israeli settlers in the village of Qaryut, occupied West Bank, September 15, 2024. (Oren Ziv)

As the settlers approached another family's house, Mohammed saw that one of them was about to light a Molotov. "I immediately thought we would have another [Dawabsheh incident](#) [referring to the [settler firebombing of a home](#) in the Palestinian village of Duma in 2015, which killed 18-month-old Ali Dawabsheh and both of his parents]. I went over to stop him, and then another settler behind him threw a large rock at my head, knocking me to the ground."

Mohammed was taken to hospital in Nablus, where he remained for three days and underwent facial surgery. He hasn't been able to work since. "I lost 10 teeth, and since then I can only drink juice or soup," he told +972. "Each tooth replacement costs NIS 1,600 [around \$400]. I don't know where I'm going to get the money."

Despite the lethal escalation in military and settler violence, Amjad emphasized that he and the other villagers will never cower to their oppressors. "They think that if they kill the little ones, they will break the adults — but that's not true," he said. "We are a very calm village, and we never have problems. I've never attacked anyone. What did they achieve by killing my daughter? Did I leave my house, my village? On the contrary."

The Israeli army has not yet opened an official investigation into Bana's killing. Soldiers tried to enter the Laboum home while Amjad and the family were still at the hospital in Nablus, but his neighbors stopped them. "No one [from the army] spoke to us," he said. "I didn't hire a lawyer. It's futile. After losing my daughter, nothing else matters."

In a statement to +972, a Border Police spokesperson said that "a Border Police force came to deal with the disturbances only after [Bana] was shot," and referred us to the IDF Spokesperson. The IDF spokesperson noted only that "after the Military Advocate General's Office's examination of the circumstances of the incident, an investigation by the Military Police is expected to be launched."

P.S.

• +972. September 23, 2024:

<https://www.972mag.com/bana-laboum-qaryut-israeli-soldiers-settlers/>

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A version of this article was first published in Hebrew on Local Call. Read it [here](#).

• Our team has been devastated by the horrific events of this latest war – the atrocities committed by Hamas in Israel and the massive retaliatory Israeli attacks on Gaza. Our hearts are with all the people and communities facing violence.

We are in an extraordinarily dangerous era in Israel-Palestine. The bloodshed unleashed by these events has reached extreme levels of brutality and threatens to engulf the entire region. Hamas' murderous assault in southern Israel has devastated and shocked the country to its core. Israel's retaliatory bombing of Gaza is wreaking destruction on the already besieged strip and killing a ballooning number of civilians. Emboldened settlers in the West Bank, backed by the army, are seizing the opportunity to escalate their attacks on Palestinians.

This escalation has a very clear context, one that +972 has spent the past 13 years covering: Israeli society's growing racism and militarism, the entrenched occupation, and an increasingly normalized siege on Gaza.

We are well positioned to cover this perilous moment – but we need your help to do it. This terrible period will challenge the humanity of all of those working for a better future in this land.

Palestinians and Israelis are already organizing and strategizing to put up the fight of their lives.

Can we count on your [support](#)? +972 Magazine is the leading media voice of this movement, a desperately needed platform where Palestinian and Israeli journalists and activists can report on and analyze what is happening, guided by humanism, equality, and justice. Join us.

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