

THE TRIALS OF PALESTINIAN BELIEVERS UNDER THE RULE OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

By: A Believer in Jerusalem

The story behind the story. On TV you've seen the results of the terrorists' bombs in the streets of Israel. What you don't hear about are the Muslims who are coming to faith in Jesus, against all odds and in the face of extreme opposition from their fellow Muslims.

We heard the testimony of a Palestinian young man who came to faith in Jesus. This resulted in warnings from Palestinian Authority police, and finally he was arrested and put in prison. He was asked to sign a document in which he renounced his Christian beliefs and to make a statement on PA television to that effect. He steadfastly refused to comply, and so began a horror story of unbelievable dimensions.

This young man was severely beaten by the Palestinian police and security forces. Over and over he was asked by his jailors to give up his non-Muslim beliefs. However, he steadfastly refused. Finally, in exasperation, his inquisitors threw him, bleeding, into a totally dark cell in the basement of a prison. There he remained for many months.

While this young man was suffering for his faith, other ex-Muslim disciples of Jesus were undergoing similar experiences in the Palestinian autonomy. The majority had been imprisoned by the time the Israeli army invaded the West Bank in spring 2002 and began looking for known terrorists.

Isolated in his prison cell, and in poor health, the young man did not lose hope. He continued to cry out to God. He even began to pray that Israel would invade the West Bank. When Israeli troops entered the territory where the prisoners were held, the prison's jailers fled. Two or three other prisoners managed to pry loose some of the stone blocks in the wall of their cell. They climbed up and out of their dungeon through

the small hole they had made. Running toward the Israeli troops with their hands in the air, they escaped from their nightmare.

The Palestinian young man and his fellow escapees quickly learned that the Israeli troops were about to shell the Palestinian headquarters that housed, in its basements, the prison where they had been kept. "No", the Palestinian escapees shouted, "there are many other prisoners locked in their cells in the building." "That can't be," the Israelis replied, "the PA has informed us that there are no personnel in the building." After further questioning of the escapees, the Israeli troops entered the building and brought out all the prisoners.

The Palestinian Authority had deceived the Israeli army liaison officers, apparently anticipating that the Israelis would destroy the building, burying scores of Palestinian inmates. Later, when the many bodies were pulled from the rubble of the building, the PA would have displayed them to the world media and claimed that the Israeli army had committed atrocities during its military operation in the West Bank.

Please pray for the disciples of Jesus who live in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Many Palestinian believers are thrown into prison and tortured under the guise of being collaborators. Pray that they will experience the Lord's peace and healing in their lives, and that they remain strong in the faith and will be a light and a testimony to those around them.

(Names and identifying details have been withheld to protect those involved from further danger)

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