



## Israel's Attacks on United States Human Rights Defenders since 2003

- On March 16, 2003, **Rachel Corrie** was killed by an Israeli soldier operating a Caterpillar D9 bulldozer as she stood in front of the home of the Nasrallah family, where she had previously stayed, to protect it from demolition while the Nasrallahs were inside. Despite Rachel's florescent jacket, eyewitness testimony that she was visible to the driver, and the fact that fellow activists jumped and waived at the soldiers, yelling for them to stop, the soldier operating the bulldozer drove over her. Despite the promise by the Israeli Prime Minister to the US government to conduct a thorough, credible and transparent investigation, the investigation failed to meet internationally recognized norms.
- On March 20, 2003, Israeli soldiers in Nablus shot US citizen **Eric Hawanith** with three rubber-coated steel bullets during a demonstration, wounding him in the chest and leg. He was rushed to the hospital by Palestinian paramedics, who were being shot at by Israeli forces as they attempted to provide Hawanith with first aid.
- On April 7, 2003, 24-year-old peace activist and US citizen **Brian Avery** was shot in the face by Israeli soldiers. His face was shattered, forcing him to undergo a series of surgeries. The night of the shooting Avery and another activist heard gunfire and went outside to see if any of the local medical teams needed assistance. Avery wore a florescent vest with "Doctor" written in English and Hebrew on the front and back. Avery was shot when an Israeli armored personnel carrier approached them.
- March 13 2009, 37-year-old **Tristan Anderson**, an activist from Oakland, California, was critically injured when Israeli soldiers fired a tear gas canister directly at his head during a weekly nonviolent protest in the West Bank village of N'alain. The impact of the teargas canister that was shot directly at his head from a close range caused several condensed fractures to his skull and caused his eye socket to collapse. The injury resulted in the removal of a large portion of his frontal lobe.
- On May 31, 2010, 18-year -old **Furkan Doğan** was killed when he was shot five times by Israeli soldiers. All of the entry wounds were to the back of his body, except the shot to his face, which was delivered at point-blank range. Furkan was among sixteen US citizens who were part of a flotilla carrying more than 700 unarmed civilians seeking to bring humanitarian aid and rebuilding supplies to break the blockade of Gaza. While still in in international waters the flotilla was overtaken by Israeli commandos who killed nine passengers including Furkan.
- On May 31, 2010, 21-year-old **Emily Henochowicz** lost her left eye and several bones in her face were crushed after Israeli forces shot her in the face by a tear gas canister while taking part in a peaceful protest in the West Bank against the Israeli assault on the Gaza-bound flotilla. Israeli border police fired tear gas canisters directly at the protesters.
- On May 1, 2011, 60-year-old **Sandra Quintano**, a US citizen from Michigan, suffered two broken wrists and a large gash on her head when assaulted by an Israeli soldier while attending a protest against home demolitions in the West Bank.
- On May 13, 2011 a 25 year-old US student, **Christopher Whitman**, was shot in the head during a peaceful demonstration with a high velocity tear gas canister, which removed a sizable area of his hair and skin.
- On May 15, 2011, 23-year old US citizen **Munib Al-Masri** was shot by an Israeli military sniper with live ammunition while on Lebanese soil at a protest on the border. He was critically injured when the bullet damaged his spleen, kidney and spine.

The presence of human rights defenders is critical in areas experiencing widespread human rights violations, such as the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Attacks on human rights defenders are a serious violation of international law. Under the international human rights system, governments are responsible for the protection of human rights defenders, and the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders has concluded that, "[f]ighting impunity for violations committed against defenders is crucial in order to enable defenders to work in a safe and conducive environment." Despite the US government's responsibility to take serious and meaningful measures to demand accountability for the killing or injury of its human rights defenders by Israel and ensure protection of its citizens, the US has showed an alarming amount of deference to Israel and has repeatedly failed to take serious action.