

Terror Convictions Don't Fit NPR's Narrative – So They Left Them Out

THE LIE

Israel imprisoned an ordinary “Palestinian man who became a novelist.”

THE TRUTH

Bassam Khandaqji was serving three life sentences for assisting the PFLP in a suicide bombing that killed three Israeli civilians.

BACKGROUND

- Major Western media have profiled Palestinians released from Israeli prisons by highlighting their achievements, while frequently failing to note that many were convicted for serious terror offenses, including lethal bombings.
- On November 24, 2025, NPR published a feature about Bassam Khandaqji, focusing on his literary recognition and recent release, presenting his story primarily through the lens of his development as a novelist, omitting the fact that he was imprisoned for his involvement in a deadly suicide bombing in Israel in 2004.

TRUTH EXPLAINED

Explained

- **Bassam Khandaqji assisted in the 2004 PFLP suicide bombing at Tel Aviv's Carmel Market**, helping lead the 16-year-old bomber into Israel using a journalist ID card obtained through his university studies. **The bombing killed Tatiana Ackerman (32), Leah Levine (64), and Shmuel Levy (65), and wounded over 30 civilians.**
<https://www.gov.il/en/pages/suicide-bombing-at-carmel-market-1-nov-2004>
- **NPR's own interview confirms Khandaqji acknowledged he “dispatched the bomber to Tel Aviv,”** yet the headline framed him only as a novelist and omitted his terror conviction. <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/24/nx-s1-5580249/a-palestinian-man-who-became-a-novelist-while-in-an-israeli-prison-is-now-free>
- **In a similar situation, Agence France-Presse published photo captions describing Marwan Barghouti as a “veteran fighter” and “Palestinian Mandela,”** without noting he was convicted in an Israeli civilian court of **five murders, one attempted murder, and involvement in additional terror attacks.** Media analysts requested corrections because the captions omitted the central fact explaining his imprisonment.
<https://www.camera.org/article/afp-captions-whitewash-convicted-murderer-marwan-barghouti-as-fighter/>
- **Another example involves Al Jazeera correspondent Anas al-Sharif:** Israel publicly released intelligence showing he was a **Hamas military operative**, listed in Hamas payroll and personnel files, who used an Al Jazeera press badge as operational cover. Several media profiles focused exclusively on his role as a journalist and did not include his documented affiliation with Hamas.
<https://paris.mfa.gov.il/en/pages/IDF-Eliminates-Hamas-Terrorist-Masquerading-as-Al-Jazeera-Journalist>

QUOTES

- “Bassam Khandaqji is not just a ‘Palestinian man who became a novelist.’ He is a convicted terrorist.” – HonestReporting
- “Khandaqji allegedly used a journalist identification card... to help the suicide bomber enter Israel from the West Bank.” – *Times of Israel* (April 29, 2024)
- “Three people were killed and over 30 wounded when Amar Al-Far, 16, from the Askar refugee camp in Nablus, detonated a bomb at the popular Carmel Market in Tel Aviv.” – *Times of Israel* (April 29, 2024)

TAKEAWAY

- Whitewashing terrorism turns a killer into a character. Change the headline, and you change how the public understands the crime.

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