

Top Sweden newspaper says IDF kills Palestinians for their organs

Report ties claims to New Jersey crime syndicate, prompts accusations of anti-Semitism from rival newspaper.

By Morten Berthelsen and Barak Ravid | Aug. 18, 2009 | 12:00 AM

Tweet 11

A leading Swedish newspaper reported this week that Israeli soldiers are abducting Palestinians in order to steal their organs, a claim that prompted furious condemnation and accusations of anti-Semitic blood libel from a rival publication.

"They plunder the organs of our sons," read the headline in Sweden's largest daily newspaper, the left-leaning *Aftonbladet*, which devoted a double spread in its cultural section to the article.

(Click [here](#) for the original article in Swedish)

The report quotes Palestinian claims that young men from the West Bank and Gaza Strip had been seized by the Israel Defense Forces, and their bodies returned to the families with missing organs.

"Our sons are used as involuntary organ donors,' relatives of Khaled from Nablus said to me, as did the mother of Raed from Jenin as well as the uncles of Machmod and Nafes from Gaza, who all had disappeared for a few days and returned by night, dead and autopsied," writes author Donald Boström in his report.

Boström's article makes a link to the recent exposure of an alleged crime syndicate in New Jersey. The syndicate includes several American rabbis, and one Levy Izhak Rosenbaum, who faces charges of conspiring to broker the sale of a human kidney for a transplant.

(Click [here](#) for the opinion piece in Swedish)

Boström also cites an incident of alleged organ snatching from 1992, during the time of the first Palestinian intifada. He says that the IDF seized a young man known for throwing stones at Israeli troops in the Nablus area, who was shot in the chest, both legs, and the stomach before being taken to a military helicopter which transported him to "a place unknown to his loved ones".

Five nights later, Boström says, the young man's body was returned, wrapped in green hospital sheets.

"The sharp sounds from the shovels were mixed with the occasional laughter from the soldiers who were joking with each other, waiting to go home. When Bilal was put into his grave, his chest was revealed and suddenly it became clear to the present what abuse he had been put through. Bilal was far from the only one who was buried cut-up from his stomach to his chin and the speculations about the reason why had already started," he writes.

But the liberal *Sydsvenskan* - southern Sweden's major daily - had harsh criticism for the rival paper, running an opinion piece under the headline "Antisemitbladet" (a play on the name *Aftonbladet*).

"We have heard the story before, in one form or the other. It follows the traditional pattern of conspiracy theory: a great number of loose threads that the theorist tempts the reader to tie into a neat knot without having been provided with any proven connection whatsoever," writes leading columnist Mats Skogkär of *Sydsvenskan*.

"Whispers in the dark. Anonymous sources. Rumors. That is all it takes. After all we all know what they [the Jews] are like, don't we: inhuman, hardened. Capable of anything," the opinion piece says. "Now all that remains is the defense, equally predictable: 'Anti-Semitism' No, no, just criticism of Israel."

The Foreign Ministry reacted angrily on Tuesday to the report. Ministry spokesperson Yigal Palmor said the newspaper's decision to publish the story is "a mark of disgrace" for the Swedish press.

"In a democratic country, there should be no place for dark blood libels out of the Middle Ages of this type," Palmor said. "This is an article that shames Swedish democracy and the entire Swedish press."

A Foreign Ministry official said that Israel's embassy in Stockholm have communicated a harsh condemnation to the Swedish government and the newspaper itself.

Mikael Tossavainen contributed to this report