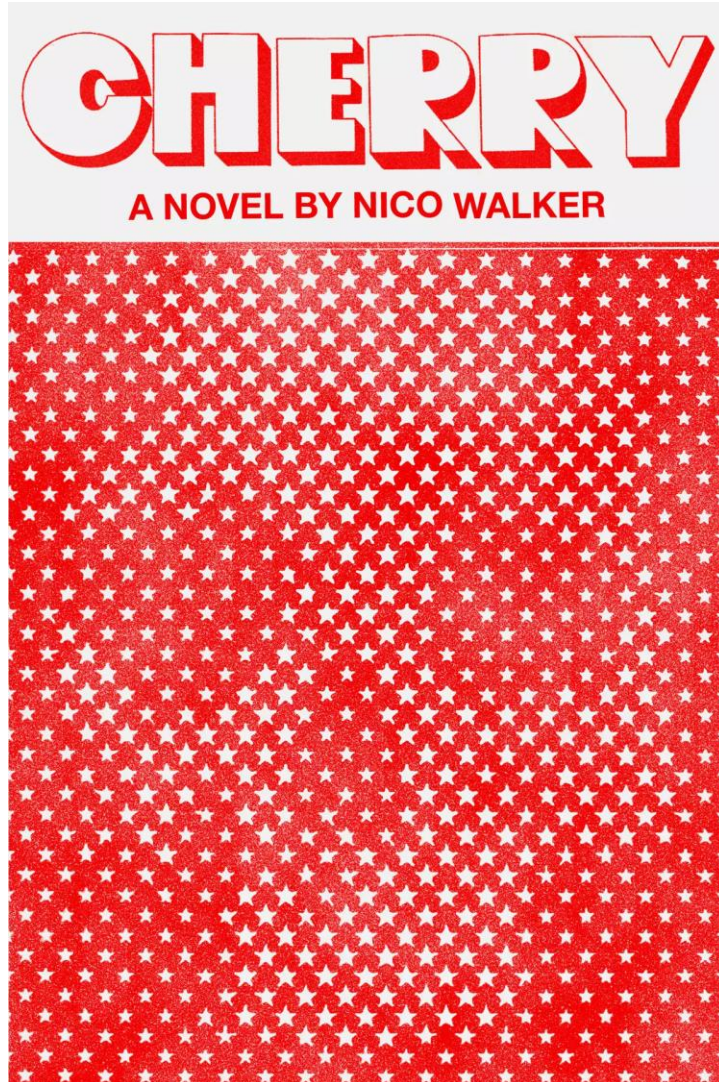


Military Resistance 1614



Comment: T

The chapters about Walker's war in Iraq are unlike anything else written by anybody else anywhere, so far.

If you have not read them, you know nothing about the hideous reality of that war, unless you were there and in it yourself.

“With an unforgettable voice, the narrator relates his hellacious military service in Iraq, PTSD, and descent into addiction with desperation and propulsive intensity, sustained by a dark humor and associative structure evocative of Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*.” —The National Book Review

“Walker tells the story in a biting staccato, by turns shrewd, heartfelt, and repellent. . . . Cherry’s descriptions of Army life are as acerbic and unsparing—and often darkly hilarious—as the boot-camp scenes from *Full Metal Jacket*.” —Mother Jones

“I’m so jealous about the writing in *Cherry* that it makes me sick. Nico Walker has written one of those perfect books in the most outrageous voice that I’ve come across in years. Wild and vulnerable and just talking to you in crystal perfect sentences. In a world of literary fakes and watered-down student voices, Nico Walker is like a new-found oracle of our living, breathing life. The world will call Nico Walker many things: drug addict, soldier, bank robber, and inmate. But they’re all fucking lies. After reading this, you’ll say only one thing: Nico Walker is one of the best writers alive.” —Scott McClanahan, author of *The Sarah Book* and *Hill William*

“The rare work of literary fiction by a young American that carries with it nothing of the scent of an MFA program. . . . The voice Walker has fashioned has a lot in common with the one Denis Johnson conjured for his masterpiece *Jesus’ Son*. . . . A novel of searing beauty.” —Vulture

“A raw coming-of-age story in reverse. . . . Cherry touches on some of the darkest chapters of recent American history.” —The New York Times

“One of the summer’s most exciting literary breakthroughs, *Cherry* is a profane, raw, and harrowingly timely account of the effects of war and the perils of addiction.” —Entertainment Weekly

“A buzzsaw of a novel. . . . Bracingly original.” —The Wall Street Journal

“Walker’s raw confessional novel, aptly compared to *Jesus’ Son* and *Reservoir Dogs*, is a devastating example of art imitating life.” —Esquire, “The Best Books of 2018 (So Far)”

“Heavily indebted to the profane blood, guts, bullets, and opiate-strewn absurdities dreamed up by Thomas McGuane, Larry Brown, and Barry Hannah, *Cherry* tells a story that feels infinitely more real, and undeniably tougher than the rest.” —The A.V. Club

“Unsparingly raw and utterly gripping. This is an astonishingly good novel, written by someone who clearly has a gift for storytelling. Walker’s characters, even minor players and walk-ons, are beautifully drawn. His dialogue rings achingly true. . . . A masterpiece.” —Booklist (starred review)

“Nico Walker’s *Cherry* is a wrenching, clear-eyed stare-down into the abyss of war, addiction and crime, a dark tumble into scumbaggery, but it’s also deeply humane and truly funny. That is one of the reasons I love it so much: it makes you laugh and ache at the same time, in the manner of the great Denis Johnson.” —Dan Chaon, author of *Ill Will*

“After page one, only the faint hearted will manage to put down this brilliant screech from a life of war, crime and addiction, a powerful book that declares the arrival of a real writer who has made art out of anguish.” —Thomas McGuane, author of Cloudbursts and Ninety-two in the Shade

“Heartbreaking, unadorned, radically absent of pretense, Cherry is the debut novel America needs now, a letter from the frontlines of opioid addiction and, almost subliminally, a war story.” —Lea Carpenter, author of Eleven Days and Red, White, Blue

“Someone once said there are only two things worth writing about, love and death. Nico Walker may know more about these two subjects than 99.9% of fiction writers working today. Read Cherry instead of the latest piece of fluff—it might be the only time when you truly feel a writer is actually baring their soul to you.” —Donald Ray Pollock, author of The Heavenly Table

“Harrowing, heartbreaking, and sadly funny. Cherry is a terrific book, a cool book, and Walker’s voice is keen and vigilant and uniquely his own.” —Joe Ide, author of IQ and Righteous

August 14 by Ron Charles, Critic, Book World; Washington Post [Excerpt]

With the same rueful smirk, he enlists in the Army “because I’d been saying I would.” The inane tests, the screaming sergeants, the empty slogans — none of it impresses him. “You just had to remember it was all make-believe,” he says. “We were pretending to be soldiers. The Army was pretending to be the Army.”

But there’s nothing make-believe about the blood that’s soon gushing across these pages. As an Army medic, he goes on missions that are vaguely explained, often impromptu, frequently disastrous. His fellow soldiers are regularly called upon to brutalize the local people. The Iraqis, for their part, are experts at planting IEDs in the roads. “I was supposed to pretend to be some kind of great healer,” the narrator says, but his medical expertise rarely involves more than scraping up bits of his friends and zipping them in bags. “I was not a hero,” he says.

Of course, we’ve heard these stories before, in superb fiction and nonfiction by other soldiers. But Walker, 33, brings a raw and casual brutality to the narrative of battle. His rambling collection of chaotic anecdotes involve drugs and porn, acts of cruelty and kindness, unending boredom pierced by spikes of terror. These juxtapositions convey the fundamental disorder of the American mission and its deleterious effect on the young people forced to implement it. His language, relentlessly profane but never angry, simmers at the level of morose disappointment, something like Holden Caulfield Goes to War: “I’m glad I missed the battle because it was probably bullshit-- and the Army just murdered your dog anyway.”

But Walker also channels an even older novelist who saw the carnage of war. His prose echoes Ernest Hemingway’s cadences to powerful effect like this: “By the time it was fall you could tell we were all a little off. In that state none of us could have passed in polite society; those of us who’d been kicking in doors and tearing houses up and shooting

people, we were psychotic. And we were ready for it to end. There was nothing interesting about it anymore. There was nothing.”

Ironically, that sense of sliding into the abyss accelerates when the narrator leaves the carnage of Iraq and returns to Ohio. Suicidally depressed, suffering flashbacks, blackouts and chronic insomnia, he grows so addicted that his entire life revolves around dope. “I was only ever afraid of one thing in my life,” he says, “that I wouldn’t be able to get heroin.” Under the pressure of that insatiable desire, the narrative becomes a swirl of buys, highs and crashes, punctuated by increasingly risky negotiations that leave him ripped off or in debt.

“Life was just slow death,” he says, “regrets and forgetting everything you ever had believed in.”

But I honestly don’t think I’ve been hypnotized just by this novel’s relentless horrors. No — it’s that unflappable voice. “Cherry” is written without an ounce of self-pity by an author allergic to the meretricious poetry of despair. In these propulsive pages, Walker draws us right into the mind of an ordinary young man beset by his own and his country’s demons. In the end, his only weapon against disintegration is his own devastating candor.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

SFAB Squadron Command Sergeant Major Killed In Insider Attack: Another Wounded



DVIDS

9.5.18 by: Meghann Myers and Michelle Tan, Army Times

The top enlisted soldier of a unit advising Afghan troops died Monday following an insider attack, the Defense Department confirmed Tuesday.

Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Bolyard, 42, of Thornton, West Virginia, was deployed with 3rd Squadron, 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, according to a release.

He died from wounds sustained from small arms fire in Logar province, Afghanistan. One other soldier was wounded in the same attack. Officials said that soldier was in stable condition.

The incident is under investigation, but Lt. Col. Martin O'Donnell, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition in Kabul, said in a telephone interview Tuesday that the senior NCO was killed by a member of the Afghan national police force, the Associated Press reported.

Bolyard, who was on his seventh deployment, according to the Army, is the second SFAB soldier to be killed during the 1st SFAB's maiden deployment to Afghanistan.

Cpl. Joseph Maciel, a 3rd Infantry Division soldier assigned to 1st SFAB's force protection element died in July in another apparent insider attack.

Bolyard, who joined the Army in June 1994, was an armor/cavalry scout senior sergeant who served as the squadron command sergeant major for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, of Fort Benning, Georgia, according to the Army.

His awards and decorations include six Bronze Star Medals, two of them with Valor, four Meritorious Service Medals, six Army Commendation Medals, nine Army Achievement Medals, the Iraq Campaign Medal with four Campaign Stars, the Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star and the Combat Action Badge.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

Taliban Militants Kill 8 Policemen With Insider Help In Takhar Province

September 06, 2018 By Khaama Press

The Taliban militants have set on fire the dead bodies of at least eight policemen who were killed in an attack on a check post in northeastern Takhar province

Provincial police spokesman Asir confirmed the incident and said the policemen were killed after the militant attacked their check post in Khwaja Ghar district.

Asir further added that the incident took place late on Wednesday night in the vicinity of Kandahar Qeshlaq area of the district.

According to Asir, the Taliban militants carried out the attack with the support of one of the policemen who had links with the militants.

He also added that the Taliban militants escaped from the area after attacking the killing the policemen and snatching the policemen arms.

The Taliban group spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid confirmed the attack and claims that nine policemen were killed in the attack.

Takhar has been among the relatively calm provinces in northeastern parts of Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime.

However, the security situation of the province has deteriorated during the recent years amid ongoing efforts by the anti-government armed militants to expand their activities in northern and northeastern parts of the country.

20 Killed In Double-Bombing On Wednesday Night In Kabul

September 05, 2018 By Khaama Press

Officials have confirmed at least 20 people were killed in a double-bombing on Wednesday night in Qala-e-Nazer in PD6 in Kabul.

The Kabul police chief's spokesman told TOLONews that a second explosion targeted first responders at the scene of Wednesday night's bombing in the city.

Officials confirmed the first explosion, just after 6pm, was a bombing and the second, about an hour later, had been a car bomb.

Sources said that the second bombing targeted police and civilians, including journalists, who had gathered outside the Moalem wrestling club in Qala-e-Nazer in PD6, which had been targeted about an hour earlier by a bomber.

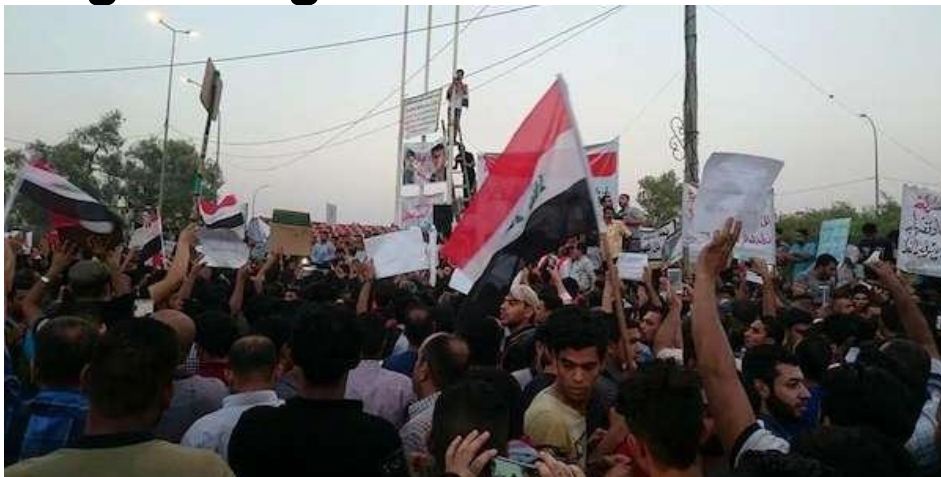
**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
RESIST THE OCCUPATION**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**“Iraq Rocked By Road Blockades,
Tent Occupations, And The
Invasion Of Oil Fields By
Thousands Of People, Especially
In The Country’s Oil-Rich South”**

**“Thousands Take To The Streets To
Protest The Increasingly Difficult
Conditions Of Their Lives”**

**“Iraq’s Trade Unions, Especially The Oil
Workers, Have Played A Central Role In
Organizing The Demonstrations”**



Protest in Basra. Global Research,

“The root of our problems in Iraq is the American government. After the occupation it pushed on us people who are not competent. U.S. pressure, and the intervention of international financial institutions in the administration of the state, have brought about the current crisis. After more than 16 years, all the political parties, including the Islamist and Shiite parties in the state administration, have failed.

July 31, 2018 By David Bacon, Lobelog

As uncertainty continues over the results of Iraq's May 12 election, the deterioration in social services that brought about the victory of the Sairoon coalition has impelled thousands of people to take to the streets to protest the increasingly difficult conditions of their lives.

Throughout July, Iraq was rocked by demonstrations, road blockades, tent occupations, and the invasion of oil fields by thousands of people, especially in the country's oil-rich south.

Thirteen people were killed in a series of at least eight protests in the first half of the month, and at least 47 others were wounded, including two children by gunfire and one beaten with rifle butts.

The government cut off Internet access for days in many parts of the country to make organizing the protests more difficult and impede the flow of information about the repression.

The protests started at the West Qurna 2 oilfield on July 8 and spread to other oil fields in the area, including the huge Rumaila field, and into the city of Basra itself.

From there they spread to other provinces and cities, including Baghdad, Kut, Amarah, Karbala, Najaf, Babil, Dhi Kar, Missan, and Muthanna.

An oil worker, Muhammad, told Human Rights Watch investigators that he saw one man, in a tent erected on the highway, struck and killed by a bullet. That road occupation continued for several days afterwards, while other street occupations were set up in Basra, which were then also attacked by police.

The Badr Brigade, headed by Hadi al-Amiri, a presidential candidate in the last election, was among the forces shooting demonstrators. Protesters demonstrated outside the organization's headquarters in Basra, and Badr Brigade paramilitaries then fired on the crowd, wounding two children.

Videos and photos led to the identification of other government forces responsible for the shootings, including federal anti-riot police, as well as the police for the oil fields.

People were beaten with clubs and pipes, and some were beaten after being taken into custody. A Humvee hit one person, and troops used teargas and water cannons in addition to bullets.

At least 81 people were arrested, and as of the end of July none had been released or charged.

Jabbar Mohammed Karam al-Bahadli, a lawyer petitioning for the release of those detained in the protests, was killed in a drive-by shooting on July 23 in Basra.

Power Outage

Demonstrations escalated when electrical service collapsed completely in several provinces, including Basra, Shi Qar and Missan, and partially in Nineveh and Kirkuk, on July 27.

Temperatures that day reached 120 degrees, not unusual for the Iraqi summer, and people had no power to run air conditioners or other cooling equipment. The government's Southern Electricity Transport Department blamed the outage on "a technical malfunction in the Nassiriya thermal station on Thursday afternoon (which) led to the disconnection in the southern area and the stoppage of generating stations, and put the high voltage lines out of service."

In mid-July government negotiators had promised to respond to demonstrators' demands, and the protest wave abated temporarily. But the electrical failure, compounded by more violence against protesters by authorities, produced a new round of demonstrations.

"It is expected that the electricity network will be restored to its normal status in the upcoming period of time," the Southern Electricity Transport Department said in its Thursday statement.

"Normal" 24-hour electrical service in southern Iraq, however, is basically non-existent.

In the West Qurna 2 field demonstrators mounted a sit-in on the highway. At first, local officials seemed willing to negotiate with them, but security forces then arrived to disband the protest encampment.

An Iraqi brigadier general then brokered an agreement with Lukoil, the Russian company that operates the field, to provide 200 jobs to local residents from Az al-Din Saleem. Nevertheless, demonstrators both at West Qurna 2 and at Zubair announced that they would continue their protests.

"Iraq's Trade Unions, Especially The Oil Workers, Have Played A Central Role In Organizing The Demonstrations"

Iraq's trade unions, especially the oil workers, have played a central role in organizing the demonstrations. Hassan Gomaa Awad Asadi, president of the Federation of Oil Unions in Iraq, explained the protests' origins in an email interview:

"The demonstrations in southern Iraq are not an accident.

"They are the accumulation of 16 years of rage. The southern regions in particular suffer from clear negligence by successive governments, although these areas are the richest in Iraq, where 75% of the oil is produced. Yet they suffer from marginalization and deprivation.

“The current government and the previous governments are responsible for the deteriorating conditions of electricity and water.

“The Iraqi people do not have the most basic rights of citizenship. Their demands are simple and just—to provide basic services. People have a legitimate right to public services, such as electricity and desalination of water.

“The government must provide job opportunities for the unemployed, who constitute a very high percentage of Iraqi society.

“Unfortunately we do not see any response. Instead, the state has threatened demonstrators with arrest, and even fired live ammunition at them.

“This has enraged the public, and today’s demonstrations in Basra are the result. Demonstrators have begun to escalate their demands, which now include the dismissal of the government.

“Participating in demonstrations is a legitimate right of the people, and the demonstrators are the sons and daughters of Iraq.

“The Federation of Oil Unions is very involved in these demonstrations. From the beginning Basra has been the spark of this movement, and our union has been a key player.

“We will not abandon the defense of our nation and our people. We believe that the people have the right to the oil wealth. This is what the Iraqi constitution says. And we are responsible to the people, so we are fighting to improve their situation.

“The demonstrations have spread into the oil fields, especially in the north of Basra, West Qurna 1 and West Qurna 2. The people most affected by this crisis live near the oil fields, so this is a message the angry masses have delivered to the government. We are able and willing to go anywhere to claim our legitimate rights.”

“Alsaadawe And Other Iraqi Unionists Supported Sairoon, A Political Coalition In Iraq’s May 12 National Elections That Won The Most Deputies, With 1.3 Million Votes”

Protesters included a group in Garma, which accused the oil companies that operate the fields of contaminating the water and soil, and demanded “treatment of high water salinity that has killed the trees and plants and destroyed our land.”

The Al-Jazaeer Coalition, composed of over 12 tribes in Basra province, said in a statement distributed by the Baghdad News Agency that they experience “environmental pollution as a result of clouds of smoke” and “the destruction of agricultural land and the pollution of the water.” Exxon Mobil and the Russian company Lukoil operate the West Qurna 2 fields, BP handles the Rumaila field, the Malaysian Petronas is in charge of the Gharaf field , and the Italian ENI runs the al-Burjisiya field .

Rising water salinity is part of a broad and growing environmental crisis. The Iraqi government failed to protest effectively over the construction of dams in Turkey and Iran on the Tigris River. The reduction of water flow into Iraq has exacerbated the crisis.

This year the government even banned the cultivation of rice and corn because of the water shortage. "Thousands of people may be displaced and become migrants due to the scarcity," predicted the Iraq Civil Society Solidarity Initiative.

Hashmeya Alsaadawe, president of the Basra Trade Union Federation and head of the electrical workers' union, asked on Iraqi national television, "Against whom are these military troops and arms directed? To the unarmed citizens who call for their legitimate demands of a dignified life! They only need water, electricity, and job opportunities. Who should we address our demands to? The local government doesn't respond!"

Alsaadawe and other Iraqi unionists supported Sairoon, a political coalition in Iraq's May 12 national elections that won the most deputies, with 1.3 million votes.

It was followed by the Fatah Party of Hadi al-Amiri, whose base rests on militias with ties to Iran. Al-Amiri's Badr Brigade, however, has been accused of firing on demonstrators in the July protests. No party has been able to assemble a coalition with support from a majority of deputies and thus form a new government.

In addition, the vote count in several provinces has been challenged. The ensuing political paralysis has accentuated the frustration of Iraqis with the deterioration in electricity and water services and employment, for which the government is responsible.

"Union President Hassan Gomaa Awad Asadi Blamed The Problems In Iraq Ultimately On The United States"

Sairoon itself is the product of many years of street protests over these issues. In the Iraqi Spring of 2011, at least 45 people died and hundreds were arrested. In 2015, Iraqis began demonstrating every Friday, denouncing the corruption of sectarian political parties, holding them responsible for the crisis in electrical power, clean water, and employment.

Sairoon's program grew out of those rallies.

It called for an end to the system that divided political positions and government support along sectarian lines, a system imposed by the U.S. after its occupation of Iraq in 2011.

Basing a governmental structure on sectarian political parties led to a system of patronage and division of spoils, and consequently enormous corruption. The alliance's slogan in response was "To Build a Civil State, a State of Citizenship and Social Justice."

Union president Hassan Gomaa Awad Asadi blamed the problems in Iraq ultimately on the United States:

“The root of our problems in Iraq is the American government. After the occupation it pushed on us people who are not competent. U.S. pressure, and the intervention of international financial institutions in the administration of the state, have brought about the current crisis.

“After more than 16 years, all the political parties, including the Islamist and Shiite parties in the state administration, have failed.

“I do not think that the demonstrations are a consequence of the elections, although people are not immune from the electoral system. Rather, these events are an inevitable result of the government’s neglect and financial corruption in the state system. The parliamentary system in Iraq is a failure and corrupt to the bone, filled with politicians who pass laws just to advance their own self-interest. This is an inevitable result of the system of political quotas, which has caused us great harm.

“This corrupt system is responsible for the massive theft of public funds. This despicable conduct is basically stealing from the poor.

There is no accountability for how they are spent. Since 2003 the government has wasted more than \$48 billion dollars on the electrical grid alone, while the country lives in darkness.

Basra Protesters Torch Provincial Government Building: Demonstrations Escalate Over Government Killing Civilians Against Dictatorship: “Security Forces Have Been Using Tear Gas And Live Ammunition To Break Us Up, But That Is Making Us More Adamant To Continue”

4 Sept 2018 by Arwa Ibrahim, Al-Jazeera.com

Deadly clashes continued in Iraq’s southern oil hub of Basra after hundreds gathered to mourn the death of a protester killed a day earlier.

At least six people were killed and 12 injured in violent demonstrations near a provincial government building on Tuesday when protesters stormed the office and set it alight, sources on the ground told Al Jazeera.

Sources on the ground said members of the security forces had also been injured.

“The situation is continuing to escalate after the death of a protester yesterday,” said demonstrator Laith Abdelrahman. “Security forces are using live ammunition and tear gas to break up the demonstrations.”

Yasser Makki died in a hospital following clashes with security forces on Monday night, while six other people were hurt.

As the clashes continued, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi held an emergency cabinet meeting to discuss the unrest and ordered the Ministry of Interior to conduct an immediate investigation into the protests, state media reported.

Demonstrations have been ongoing for months in southern Iraq over poor government services, corruption, and a shortage of potable water

According to Abdelrahman, the government office caught fire after protesters hurled petrol bombs at security personnel.

“There is a big fire in the provincial government building, which has now become completely enveloped in flames,” he said.

Al-Abadi ordered an investigation into Makki’s death, while the local head of Iraq’s Human Rights Commission, Mahdi al-Tamimi, also called for a probe.

“Our orders are clear in banning the firing of live ammunition during demonstrations,” al-Abadi said in his weekly news conference, according to state TV.

Nabil al-Assadi, another demonstrator in Basra, told Al Jazeera that, despite attempts to break up the demonstration, protesters have not retreated.

“Security forces have been using tear gas and live ammunition to break us up, but that is making us more adamant to continue,” he said, adding they were demanding that the local chief of security step down.

“This extensive use of force against protesters, who are demanding legitimate rights, is unacceptable,” al-Assadi added.

Mustafa Saadoun, director of the Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights, said six people were killed on Tuesday and 12 wounded in the violence.

Twenty-three protesters have been killed since July 8 when the wave of demonstrations erupted across Iraq over electricity outages, unemployment, and official corruption.

“It is clear the government is using excessive force. It is also clear the use of live ammunition is direct and targeted. Many of those injured have been wounded in the head,” said Saadoun.

Although Prime Minister al-Abadi suspended the electricity minister last month - saying his government is taking measures against those responsible for poor services in Basra - protests have continued.

Public anger in Iraq has also increased at a time when politicians are struggling to form a new government. An inconclusive first parliamentary session finished on Monday as two rival blocs continue to vie for power.

In recent weeks, protests have also focused on water contamination in Basra as thousands were admitted to hospitals in the southern province.

Deepmala Mahla, country director for the NGO Mercy Corps, said the situation was extremely dire.

“There is a health crisis which stems from water contamination, and there have been thousands of cases of people going to hospital with symptoms as a result,” she told Al Jazeera.

Tests showed faecal contamination was high while chlorine levels were low in water supplies, she said.

“There is an acute shortage in the quantity and quality of suitable drinking water in the south of Iraq. These conditions are worrying, making the stakes very high and the risk of a cholera outbreak possible,” Mahla said.

Iraq’s government said it is investigating the water supply in Iraq’s second-largest city.

MORE:

**Iraqis Driven To The Streets By Corruption And Misrule Set Fire To Ruling Class In Basra:
“Crowds Attacked Offices Of The State-Run Iraqiya TV And Set Fire To The Headquarters Of The Ruling Dawa Party, The Supreme Islamic Council And The Badr Organisation”**

“Protesters Also Torched The Offices Of A Powerful Shia Armed Group, Asaib Ahl Al-Haq, And Those Of The Hikma Movement”

9.7.18 AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

Protesters stormed the Iranian consulate in southern Iraq’s city of Basra, setting it on fire as part of deadly demonstrations against lack of services and jobs in which several government buildings have been ransacked and torched.

Demonstrators on Friday broke into the consulate building in Basra, shouting condemnation of what many Iraqis perceive as Tehran’s interference in their country’s politics.

The consulate was reportedly empty when the crowd burst in.

In comments to Iranian state news agency Fars, Bahram Ghassemi, Iran’s foreign ministry spokesperson, denied that Iranian nationals were being told to leave Basra.

Iraqi security officials announced a citywide curfew in Basra, a city of two million people, warning that “anyone present in the street” would be arrested.

Several protesters have died, mostly in clashes with the security forces, since Monday.

Residents say they have been driven to the streets by corruption and misrule that allowed infrastructure to collapse, leaving no power or safe drinking water in the heat of summer.

According to Marwan Kabalan, director of policy analysis at Doha Institute, the protests show a growing dissatisfaction with Iran’s influence in Iraq.

“Those who have been running the country for the last 15 years have actually been Iranian allies,” Kabalan told Al Jazeera.

“The people are protesting against these elites that are backed by Iran and they’re protesting against Iranian influence in the south of Iraq,” he added.

“Iran has also cut the electricity supply recently, claiming Iraq has not been able to pay for the electricity, which is another reason people have directed their anger towards Iran,” Kabalan said.

Public anger has grown at a time when politicians are struggling to form a new government after an inconclusive parliamentary election in May.

Residents of the south complain of decades of neglect in the region that produces the bulk of Iraq’s oil wealth.

The storming of the consulate on Friday came hours after Iraq's most revered Shia cleric called for a political shakeup in capital Baghdad, and a halt to violence against the protesters.

Ayatollah Ali Sistani placed blame for the unrest with political leaders and said a new government should be formed.

"The failings of Iraqi political leaders in recent years have caused the anger of people in Basra," Sistani said.

"This reality cannot change if the next government is formed according to the same criteria adopted when forming previous governments. Pressure must be exerted for the new government to be different from its predecessors."

The Iraqi parliament's interim leader, meanwhile, has summoned legislators to an emergency session on Saturday to discuss the unrest.

Basra has been the epicentre of protests that have rocked Iraq since July, with anger fuelled by pollution of the water supply that left 30,000 people in hospital

In recent days, crowds have attacked the offices of the state-run Iraqiya TV and set fire to the headquarters of the ruling Dawa Party, the Supreme Islamic Council and the Badr Organisation, whose leaders are all vying to form Iraq's ruling coalition.

Protesters also torched the offices of a powerful Shia armed group, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and those of the Hikma Movement, and stormed the house of the acting head of the provincial council.

Rights activists have accused security forces of opening fire on the demonstrators, while the government has blamed provocateurs in the crowds and say the troops were ordered not to use live rounds.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Insurgent Attacks Focus On Somali Military, African Union Forces:

“Ongoing Insurgency Against Somalia’s Weak Central Government”

“The US Campaign Has Not Had A Major Effect On Slowing Shabaab’s Insurgency”

September 3, 2018 BY BILL ROGGIO AND CALEB WEISS, [Excerpts] The Long War Journal.

Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of The Long War Journal. Caleb Weiss is an intern at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a contributor to The Long War Journal.

Shabaab has managed to launch 418 attacks of different types during the six-month timeframe in support of its persistent and ongoing insurgency against Somalia’s weak central government and allied African Union forces.

Of the 418 attacks, 75 percent took place in southern Somalia, with 30 percent occurring in and around the capital of Mogadishu.

Four percent of Shabaab’s claimed attacks took place in the neighboring country of Kenya, which has increasingly become a battlefield over the past several years.

Shabaab has used military assaults in nearly 40 percent of its claimed attacks. IED or roadside bombings made up 24 percent of Shabaab’s attacks.

The target of Shabaab’s operations is predictable: nearly 54 percent of its attacks focused on the Somali National Army (SNA) and aligned militias, while 28 percent targeted the African Union Mission in Somalia, or AMISOM.

The information was gathered from Shabaab’s monthly operational reports. In total, 418 claims were compiled for this study. Out of these, only 167 claims (roughly 40 percent) were verified by independent sources, meaning that 60 percent cannot be confirmed. Moreover, Shabaab does not often release photo evidence for many of its attacks, further complicating verification.

Based on the nature of the insurgency and the relative scale of some claimed attacks, FDD’s Long War Journal assesses Shabaab’s claims to be credible. That said, Shabaab often inflates the numbers of killed or wounded in its operation, so data regarding casualties was left out of the study. Shabaab’s statements still indicate the types of operations and claimed areas of operation of the organization in East Africa.

The claims were broken down into categories of “types of operations,” “targets,” “locations,” and “regions.” The Somali military and police, as well as the Puntland Security Forces and intelligence, were combined into “Somali Security Forces,” while the Somali intelligence agency, NISA, remained separate. Attacks on Somali government employees or buildings were categorized under “Somali government.”

It should be noted that Shabaab refers to the Somali National Army as “pro-government militias” in its statements.

While the Somali government does rely on a multitude of friendly militias in various regions, unless specifically named in the statement, all claims regarding “pro-government militias” were coded under the SNA.

Additionally, African Union forces, or AMISOM, and claims regarding SNA joint patrols with US Special Operations Forces (SOF) each had their own categorization.

[U.S. proxy occupation forces would be accurate, but too accurate. T]

Of the total 418 claimed operations, 125 occurred inside Mogadishu and its suburbs. The next highest was Afgoye with 28, followed by Bosaso (22), Baraawe (19), Qoryoley (17), and Beledweyn (16). Many claims also took place in or near Merca, Mahadaay, Kismayo, Hosingow, and Baidoa. The rest were sporadic claims in various locations across Somalia and Kenya.

The vast majority of claims, however, took place rather axiomatically within southern Somalia — that is, the regions of Banadir (125), Lower Shabelle (111), Bay (29), Lower Juba (26), and Middle Shabelle (23). Shabaab’s main areas of influence, operations, and strongholds are all within these areas of southern Somalia. The other areas of southern Somalia, namely Gedo, Lower Juba, and Bakool, also had claimed operations but in relatively small numbers.

The central Somali regions of Hiran and Mudug, which is in the semi-autonomous Puntland region, had a combined share of 39 claims. Further north in Puntland, the Bari region saw 23 claimed operations, the majority of which were in or near the capital, Bosaso.

Sixteen claims took place inside Kenya, with the majority in Mandera County. However, Lamu, Garissa, Wajir, and Tana River Countries also had Shabaab claims. All but three were able to be independently verified.

The most common type of operations were assaults, which consists of clashes, raids, and military assaults, with a total of 166 of the claims. This was followed by IEDs (101), assassinations (67), and then attacks with hand-grenades (43).

Shabaab also claimed five public executions of its own members for alleged spying, which were coded under “internal attacks.” In nine instances, the jihadist group claimed capturing territory, which is under “ground offensive.”

Ten bombings were claimed by the group, which were mainly used in large-scale assaults on Somali government or military sites, as well as AMISOM bases.. All 10 bombings were independently verified.

Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming majority of claims (224), were against the Somali security forces, while AMISOM was the second most targeted entity with 117. The Somali government was the next highest with 23, which was followed by NISA (19). Several claims were against joint SNA-US SOF patrols or US personnel directly. Three of these instances were reported by local Somali media.

Only one claim specifically named a pro-government militia, the Ethiopian-backed Liyu Police. The militia mainly operates in Ethiopia's Somali and Oromia regions but it also conducts operations inside Somalia both independently and alongside Ethiopian troops. Population centers, or towns taken over by Shabaab, targets within Kenya, and claims against its own members make up the other claimed targets.

The Islamic State's fledgling operations within the country vastly pales in comparison to Shabaab's.

While the Islamic State's branch in Somalia receives considerable media attention, it only claimed 23 attacks within the same timeframe as the data for Shabaab. These were largely assassinations of Somali intelligence or military personnel in Afgoye, however, two IEDs were also claimed within this time.

Shabaab emerged as the major jihadist group in Somalia after its predecessor, the Islamic Courts Union, was defeated by a US-supported Ethiopian offensive that began in late 2006. After Ethiopian forces withdrew, Shabaab took control of Mogadishu and many other major cities and towns in southern and central Somalia.

Shabaab has been resurgent in Somalia since losing ground to a combined African Union (AU) and Somali offensive in 2011.

The jihadist group has slowly but methodically retaken several towns and villages that it lost in both central and southern Somalia – often after AU or Somali forces withdrew. In addition, Shabaab remains a potent threat against both African Union and Somali military bases in central and southern Somalia.

It also retains the ability to strike within heavily fortified areas of Mogadishu, as seen time and time again.

The US military has targeted Shabaab's network throughout all of Somalia since 2006, when it began supporting the Ethiopian offensive.

The US campaign has not had a major effect on slowing Shabaab's insurgency.

Shabaab continues to control rural areas and small towns in southern and central Somalia despite military operations by the African Union and the Somali government.

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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

There is no democracy without socialism and no socialism without democracy.
-- Rosa Luxemburg

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Dead Soldiers



Military Cemetery Minn-St. Paul 2018 Photo by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: September 03, 2018
Subject: Dead Soldiers

Dead Soldiers

(Military Cemetery Minn-St. Paul 2018)
I wonder how many committed suicide,
or died prematurely from stress related
illnesses?
Secrets behind bars...

Mike Hastie
Army Medic Viet Nam
September 3, 2018

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact hastiemike@earthlink.net)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie

U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

The Transients: [Winner 2018 Working People's Poetry Competition]

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, who sent this in.]

The Transients: By Gregg Shotwell

I

After my son died in the war
I wore his hat and vest,
his leather bracelets,
his ring, his dog tags, his jacket.
I clutched everything I could

Of his vanishing spirit.
I wore his vestments
like a swathe
on a wound that wouldn't heal.
Commemoration was my mission.

II

Death is not a stranger
but grief is an orphan.
I had no desire to let go
of a sinking compulsion.
I dove into the undertow.

III

Diaspora never ends
Every transient understands
time past and time future
do not divert, relocate,
or disperse.

Every wanderer confronts
a moral judgment:
Who are you to defy order?
Who are you to deny conformity?
The Gilded Moral

Give to the poor
what they feel the poor
do not deserve.
Transients haunt
the streets of America
Worthless, disposable, but
permanent and irrevocable,
while the profit zombie defiles
every torso in his way
as he slouches toward the heart of America.

IV

I wore the vestiges
of my son's death
like a cape of commitment
to transients -- those people
America can't conceive profitably.

V

The aberrant aren't refuted,
they are re-enfranchised like tintypes
of anonymous indigents
who lurk on the crossroads
of America's dispossessed history

Dead and displaced
in antique boutiques.
Blank stares of the forsaken
beg reprieve on the stakes
of Time and Rue Morgue Ave.

VI

America cannot tolerate on its face
shame, massacre, genocide . . . neglect.
Losers have their place in the order.
In my isolation
I recognized my standing.

I wore my grief until my face

was inscrutable as ancient languages
etched in stone with tools crude as pain.
One face among many faces passing
across the plains of America's desolation.

VII

Faces of transients
older than the memories they contain,
lines chiseled around the mouth and eyes
with blunt voices and words of disdain.
Faces scuffed like soles.

Faces that live up to names they are called.
Faces that can't fake it at all.
Faces that lack all expectation.
Faces that spit and expect spit back.
Faces that cry like ice when they crack.

Slugged faces.
Shut up faces.
Faces that turn faces away.
Faces afraid they'll be called on to say
who they are and why

They have arrived here now.
Faces that gave up long ago
and go on just to say, I told you so.
Faces dumb as barrels.
Faced dull as door knobs.

Faces bleak as bent nails.
Faces that scratch your eyes out
with a glance.
Faces that won't let you forget.
Faces that don't have a chance

And don't know it yet.
Faces deserted like scenes of a disaster.
Faces in control of the pain.
Faces like windows wet with rain.
Faces you can read yet never explain.

Faces that grieve.
Faces that grovel.
Faces blunt as a grave digger's shovel.
Faces in mirrors.
Faces on fire.

My face as I face

the nakedness
of America's grief
and tremble like a thief
in the light.

Outreach To The Troops 1907: “The Work Of The Socialist Youth Is Not In Vain”

**“During The Strikes At Dunkirchen,
Creusot, Loguivi, Monso-Le-Min The
Soldiers Ordered Against The
Strikers Declared Their Solidarity
With The Workers”**

**“The Young Socialist Workers Are
Working With All The Enthusiasm And
Energy Of The Young To Have The Army
Side With The People”**

Anti-militarist literature is delivered to soldiers in the barracks and handed out to them in the streets; soldiers find it in coffee-houses and pubs, and everywhere else they go.

October 8, 1907: Vperyod [Forward], Issue #16. By V.I. Ulyanov. [The writer used the pen name “Lenin” to keep the government from terrorizing his family.]

It will be recalled that the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart discussed the question of militarism and in connection with it the question of anti-militarist propaganda. The resolution adopted on the point says, in part, that the Congress regards it as a duty of the working classes to “help to have working class youth brought up in a spirit of international brotherhood and socialism and imbued with class consciousness”.

The Congress regards this as an earnest of the army ceasing to be a blind instrument in the hands of the ruling classes, which they use as they see fit and which they can direct against the people at any time.

It is very hard, sometimes almost impossible, to conduct propaganda among soldiers on active service. Life in the barracks, strict supervision and rare leave make contact with the outer world extremely difficult; military discipline and the absurd spit and polish cow the soldier.

Army commanders do everything they can to knock the "nonsense" out of the "brutes", to purge them of every unconventional thought and every human emotion and to instill in them a sense of blind obedience and an unthinking wild hatred for "internal" and "external" enemies.... It is much harder to make an approach to the lone, ignorant and cowed soldier who is isolated from his fellow-men and whose head has been stuffed with the wildest views on every possible subject, than to draft-age young men living with their families and friends and closely bound up with them by common interest.

Everywhere anti-militarist propaganda among young workers has yielded excellent results. That is of tremendous importance. The worker who goes into the army a class-conscious Social-Democrat is a poor support for the powers that be.

There are young socialist workers' leagues in all European countries. In some, for instance, Belgium, Austria and Sweden, these leagues are large-scale organisations carrying on responsible party work. Of course, the main aim of the youth leagues is self-education and the working out of distinct and integrated socialist outlook. But the youth leagues also carry on practical work. They struggle for an improvement in the condition of apprentices and try to protect them from unlimited exploitation by their employers.

The young socialist workers' leagues devote even more time and attention to anti-militarist propaganda.

For that purpose, they try to establish close ties with young soldiers.

This is done in the following way. Before the young worker has joined the army, he is a member of a league and pays membership dues. When he becomes a soldier, the league continues to maintain constant contacts with him, regularly sending him small cash aids ("soldier's sous" as they call them in France), which, however small, are of substantial importance to the soldier.

For his part, he undertakes to provide the league with regular information about everything that goes on in his barracks and to write about his impressions. Thus, even after he joins the army, the soldier does not break off his ties with the organisation of which he was a member.

An effort is always made to drive the soldier as far away from home as possible for his service. This is done with the intention of preventing the soldier from being tied with the local population by any interest, and to make him feel alien to it.

It is then easier to make him carry out orders: to shoot at a crowd. Young workers' leagues try to bridge this alienation between the soldier and the local population.

Youth leagues are connected with each other. When he arrives in a new town, the soldier, a former member of a youth league at home, - is met by the local league as a welcome visitor, and he is at once brought into the circle of local interests and helped in every possible way.

He ceases to be a newcomer and a stranger. He is also aware that if any misfortune befalls him he will receive help and support. This awareness adds to his courage, he gains assurance in his behaviour in the barracks, and is bolder in standing up for his rights and his human dignity.

Their close ties with young soldiers enable the youth leagues to carry on extensive anti-militarist propaganda among the soldiers.

This is done mainly with the aid of anti-militarist literature, which the youth leagues publish and circulate in great quantities, especially in France, Belgium and also in Switzerland, Sweden, etc.

This literature is highly diverse: postcards with anti-militarist pictures, anti-militarist army songs (many of these songs are very popular among the soldiers), "soldier's catechism" (in France it was circulated in more than 100,000 copies), all sorts of pamphlets, leaflets, appeals; weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers and magazines for soldiers, some of them illustrated.

Barracks, Recruit, Young Soldier, Pju pju (a pet name for the young recruit), and *Forward* are very widely circulated. For example, in Belgium the newspapers *Recruit* and *Barracks* have a printing of 60,000 copies each. Especially many magazines are published at the time of the draft.

Special issues of soldiers' newspapers are mailed to the homes of all recruits.

Anti-militarist literature is delivered to soldiers in the barracks and handed out to them in the streets; soldiers find it in coffee-houses and pubs, and everywhere else they go.

Recruits receive special attention. They are given a ceremonial send-off.

During the recruitment, processions are staged in the towns. In Austria, for instance, recruits walk through the town dressed in mourning and to the strains of funeral marches. In front of them rolls a decorated red carriage.

All the walls are plastered with red posters which say in large letters: "You will not shoot at the people!"

Evening parties with ardent anti-militarist speeches are held in honour of the recruits. In short, everything is done to awaken the recruit's consciousness, to ensure him against the evil influence of the ideas and emotions which will be instilled into him in the barracks by fair means and foul.

The work of the socialist youth is not in vain. In Belgium, there are almost 15 soldiers' unions in the army, which are mostly affiliated with the Social-Democratic Labour Party and are closely allied with each other. In some regiments, two-thirds of the soldiers are organised.

In France, the anti-militarist mood has become massive. During the strikes at Dunkirchen, Creusot, Loguivi, Monso-le-Min the soldiers ordered against the strikers declared their solidarity with the workers....

As time goes on, there are more and more Social-Democrats in the army and the troops become increasingly less reliable.

When the bourgeoisie has to confront the organised working class, whom will the army back?

The young socialist workers are working with all the enthusiasm and energy of the young to have the army side with the people.

RECEIVED FROM READERS

Azzoun: The Palestinian Village Filling Zionist Occupiers Jails With Children

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

10 August 2018 by Tessa Fox, Middle East Eye

AZZOUN, Palestine - A month before his arrest, 30 Israeli soldiers came to Yasin Shbeita's house in the middle of the night, saying they had their captain's authorisation to kill him.

"I don't want to put you in prison for months or years, I want to kill you and get rid of you right now," one soldier said, according to Shbeita. Just 16 at the time, the soldier's threat left Shbeita in fear for his life.

"I was afraid they would come and kill me at any time," Shbeita told Middle East Eye.

On 11 April, the Israeli soldiers came back. Raiding his house at night, they violently arrested him.

The soldiers dragged Shbeita out of his home in Azzoun – a village in the northern occupied West Bank – and tossed him to Israeli border control police.

The teen said the police then began hitting him and pushed him towards a military jeep at the end of his driveway.

“Each soldier passing by me was kicking and slapping me,” Shbeita said, while pointing to where he was beaten up.

Shbeita’s dramatic experience is a common one, especially in Azzoun, which has the highest number of child arrests in the West Bank per capita, according to its municipality’s communications officer, Hassan Shabtta.

Azzoun is surrounded by five illegal Israeli settlements and also lies adjacent to the separation wall.

“The Israeli army enters Azzoun 398 times a year - by day or night - and puts checkpoints inside the town. This creates pressure inside the people. They’re exploding,” Shabtta told MEE.

In the face of such an overwhelming military presence, Shabtta said many young boys in the village often go to the main road and throw stones.

In a statement to Middle East Eye on Wednesday, an Israeli army spokesperson maintained that Azzoun “is treated no differently to other places in the area”. “Unfortunately, in recent years many minors, including very young ones, have been involved in violent events, including terror offences and other crimes,” the army added.

Ahmad Rayan, 15, also lives in Azzoun and has already been imprisoned twice.

His mother, Salam Rayan, told MEE a story almost identical to Shbeita’s of how her son was most recently arrested on 30 July.

She said around 12 Israeli soldiers came to their house around 2am, and after bursting through the front door, took Ahmad Rayan from his bed.

According to Defense for Children International (DCI), each year approximately 500-700 Palestinian children between the ages of 12 and 17 are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system.

Israel’s detention of minors has been highlighted recently by the case of Ahed Tamimi, a Palestinian teen jailed for eight months for slapping an Israeli soldier.

Yet Tamimi’s case is unique in its media attention.

No reports came out in the media the day after Shbeita was taken from his home, even though he was the same age as Tamimi when she was arrested.

Shbeita told MEE he and other young prisoners are “angry about the media”.

“Why Ahed Tamimi and no one else? There are a million other Ahed Tamimis in prison, she’s like any other prisoner.”

Nabi Saleh, where Tamimi comes from, is a West Bank village well known for its resistance against the Israeli occupation, thanks to residents’ proactive approach to using social media.

In contrast, little is known by the world about the repeated Israeli raids on Azzoun.

“Where cases involve minors, their age is taken into account in the process of law enforcement,” the Israeli army told MEE.

But according to a report released by UNICEF in 2013, “ill-treatment of children who come in contact with the [Israeli] military detention system [is] widespread, systematic and institutionalized”.

This ill treatment runs from the moment of arrest through to the child’s prosecution, conviction and sentencing.

The majority of children are charged with throwing stones.

Once children are in Israeli military custody they are transferred in the back of a military jeep between different bases and police stations in settlements for interrogation.

Children like Shbeita complain of mistreatment.

“I was taken to a military camp blindfolded. I couldn’t sleep, didn’t eat - not even water,” Shbeita said.

“I tried to sleep and put my head down at one point. A soldier came and hit a metal bar on the desk to wake me up, took off my blindfold and started interrogating me. That first session lasted from 3 to 8am.”

“They were showing videos and pictures of random people. They were telling me it was me and kept saying, ‘Either you confess to it or we’ll put you in prison - in the dark - or we’ll kill you’,” Shbeita recalled.

Under various international laws, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the interrogation of children must be conducted in the presence of a lawyer and guardian. The process must also be recorded using audio-visual equipment.

According to the 2013 UNICEF, “no child has been accompanied by a lawyer or family member during the interrogation.” Those MEE spoke to had the same experience.

Lacking any friendly supervision or support, the children can be exposed to enormous pressure and subject to paranoia under interrogation.

“They ask them questions for a very long time and the child is like, ‘I’m done with this,’ he gives up and tells them ‘I threw one stone’. They think it will be over if they say something,” Salam Rayan explained, based on her child’s first experience of detention.

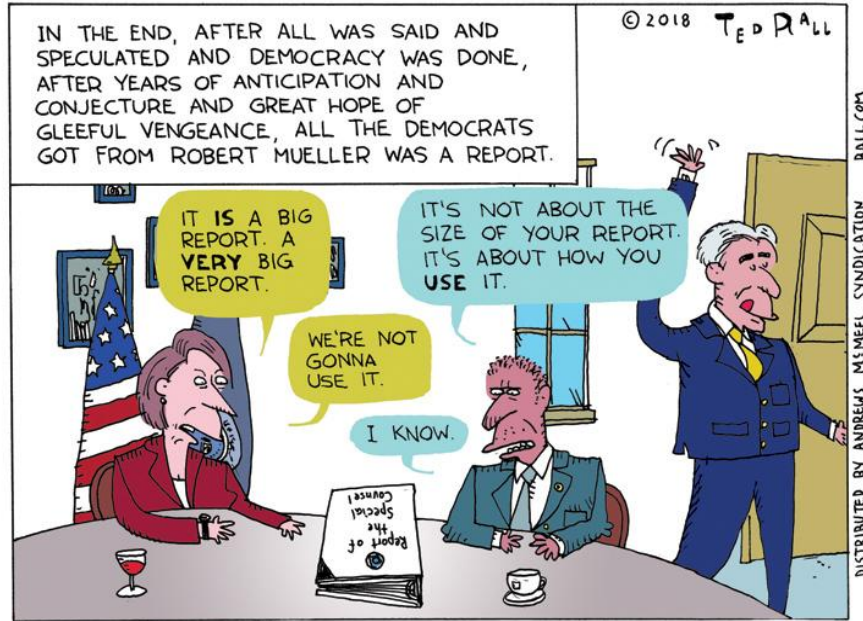
If the child ends up confessing they are forced to sign a form written in Hebrew, a language they do not understand.

Once Shbeita was transferred to a prison cell, he was “hit brutally” on his arms and legs.

“The other prisoners told the guards I needed to be taken into medical care but instead I was taken to a solitary confinement cell,” Shbeita said.

“It’s so dark, you don’t know if it’s day or night. There’s sewage on the floor, one toilet and a small bed.”

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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