

♦ [Cleric Offers Reward for Killing Cartoonist](#) ♦ [Fear Escalates on Foreign Control of Port:](#)**FRONTPAGE ARTICLES**[Make Comment](#) [View Comments](#) [Printable Article](#) [Email Article](#)

Font 6pt

Free Barghouti?

By [Frimet Roth](#)

FrontPageMagazine.com | February 21, 2006

Israel's hot and heavy courtship of the Palestinian terrorist [Marwan Barghouti](#) is no secret. It hardly matters now whether Israel buckled under US pressure, or was independently drawn to him. Because, even though Barghouti's party, Fatah, failed to trump Hamas, he did win the top Fatah slot in the newly elected Palestinian parliament.

Barghouti seemed destined for a bleaker future. In April 2002, he was arrested by Israeli forces. This was not his first brush with the law. He was imprisoned in the 1970's and the 1980's for terrorist activities. In 1987 he was deported to Jordan, where he remained until Israel allowed him back to the West Bank when the 1993 Oslo Accords were signed.

His luck seemed to have run out in June of 2004. It was then that a panel of three judges found him guilty on six counts, including involvement in the murders of an Israeli woman and a Greek Orthodox priest and direct responsibility for the murders of three Israeli men in a shooting attack in Tel Aviv. In addition, he was held responsible for the failed suicide bombing of the Malcha Mall in Jerusalem. Barghouti was acquitted of 37 other charges against him on the ground that they were carried out by the terror band, Tanzim. He is the official head of that Fatah off-shoot as he is of the other Fatah affiliate, the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade. The prosecution could not link him with the decisions to carry out those attacks, but Barghouti was sentenced to five consecutive life sentences and forty additional years in prison.

No sooner was he locked away than the Israeli government made a hasty about-face. In a brazen mockery of its justice system, it began indulging this mass murderer with endless perks. In the lead-up to January's Palestinian Legislative Council elections, Barghouti reveled in the sort of lifestyle no prisoner in any sane country could hope for. Political meetings between Barghouti and his cohorts were routine. One 30-minute phone call with PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas was allowed to be conducted from the warden's office. And there were regular visits from an assortment of Palestinian officials including Arab Knesset members.

And that wasn't the worst of it. Shortly before the elections, Israel Prison Service head, Yaacov Ganot, even approved a series of television interviews including one with Britain's Channel

SIGN UP TODAY FOR FRONTPAGEMAG E-MAIL UPDATES**KEEP FRONTPAGE RUNNING! HELP FPM NOW!****STUDENTS FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM****The First National Academic Freedom Conference.** [Read more.](#)**SYMPOSIUMS**

[Purifying Allah's Soil](#)
[The Munich Debate](#)
[The Southern Front](#)
[Indonesian Jihad](#)

INTERVIEWS

[John McWhorter](#)
[Ron Christie](#)
[Andrew Bostom](#)
[Phyllis Chesler](#)
[Pierre Rehov](#)

BLOGS

- [PowerLine Blog](#)
- [PolySigh](#)
- [The Anti-Chomsky Blog](#)
- [Snapshots](#)
- [Milt Rosenberg](#)

FPM WATCH DOG

[Borders Watch](#)
[Bush, Fox Join Forces on Border](#)

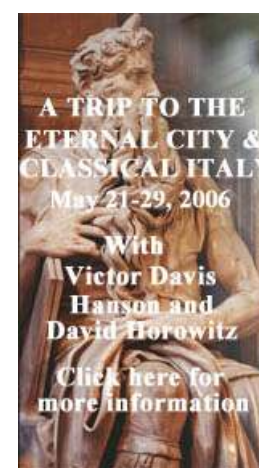
[Jihad Watch](#)
[News Updates](#)

[StopTheISM](#)
[StopTheISM.com](#)

[United American Committee](#)
[UAC.com](#)

[Campus Watch](#)
[About Campus Watch](#)
[Current News](#)
[Survey of Institutions](#)

[Media Watch](#)
[HonestReporting.com](#)
[David Limbaugh.com](#)
[CAMERA.org](#)

*****FREE*****

Website Reveals How Saavy Investors Are Buying **Real Estate** For Pennies On The Dollar...

AND

Immediately Reselling Those Properties At FULL Price!

**No experience necessary
 *Good or Bad Credit OK
 Little or NO Money Required

[Click Here For Details](#)

4. Barghouti took full advantage of the opportunity, proclaiming: "The Palestinian people, and it should be very clear, have got the full right to resist against the Israeli military operations in the occupied territories in any way." He continued: "I support the Palestinian intifada and Palestinian resistance." The implicit message of Israel's government, in pandering to Barghouti, was: "So do we."

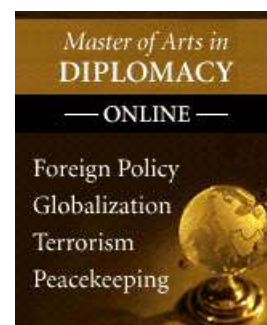
Note that every one of the above privileges was personally sanctioned by prison head Ganot. At the same time, Ganot insisted that Barghouti did not "run the PA from his jail cell." With such charitable treatment of terrorist leaders, it's no wonder that Israel is loosing the battle against Palestinian terrorism. After all, why wouldn't a Palestinian opt for the terror route when he knows that, at the very worst, he can jump-start his political career from an Israeli prison cell? Indeed, Israel's various counterterrorism tactics -- the construction of the security fence, the periodic arrests of Palestinian terrorists, the occasional targeted assassinations of terrorist leaders -- are all neutralized by its molly-coddling of Barghouti.

Even more disturbing is a question posed by pundits from both ends of the political spectrum when Barghouti was arrested. Why, in this case, did Israel reject the option it has chosen for scores of other terror leaders: assassination? It is unlikely that Israel's government first recognized Barghouti's value as a political pawn only after his conviction. Rather, his arrest, trial and conviction seem to have been intended as the prelude to his release.

This scenario should surprise no one. Clear and ample warnings have come from an assortment of Israeli politicians. As early as November, 2004, Israeli Interior Minister Avraham Poraz intimated to the press that a major prisoner release was on the cards perhaps "...including Barghouti." Two months ago, Israel's Minister for Transport, Meir Shitreet, said: "If a permanent peace deal is reached with the Palestinians, and if terrorism in the region ceases totally... we can, of course, discuss a pardon." (A pardon for five murders?) He added, "Never say never." Last month, Internal Security Minister Gideon Ezra told the *Jerusalem Post* that the government had no intention of releasing Barghouti "in the *near* future." (emphasis added) Further hinting at a future release is the fact that the official spokesman for Israel's Prison Service, Ian Domnitz, has repeatedly referred to Barghouti as a "security prisoner." Clearly, our politicians expect to release Barghouti in the not-too-distant future.

Probably this is an easy decision for them. Enjoying as they do constant armed protection at the public's expense, they seem to have forgotten just what sort of a prisoner Barghouti actually is. They have also ignored a once iron-clad principle that terrorists "with blood on their hands" will never be released. This "red line" has not been mentioned in the context of Barghouti. Without fuss or fanfare it has effectively been obliterated.

Along with many others, my husband and I find these developments intolerable. Our daughter, Malki, was murdered by Hamas terrorists. Some of them -- according to courtroom sworn testimony -- were personally sheltered by Barghouti. For us, the romance between Barghouti and our government is an affront to Malki's memory and evidence that her death and our grief matter little to Israel's officials.



But beyond that, our officials need to realize that to court Barghouti is to court disaster. A democratically elected Hamas is the same Hamas that murdered Malki and hundreds of other precious Jews. Its charter and stated goals have not changed one iota. It is also the same Hamas with whom Barghouti has had a long and close working relationship. This partnership has attracted little media attention. Alastair Crooke, former senior British Intelligence official, disclosed recently that: "The close relationship of mutual respect between Hamas and Marwan has long roots that pre-date the Intifada. Neither, as far as I am aware, has made a policy statement of substance without advising the other in advance... This relationship," he concludes "...will be the key to the next phase of Palestinian politics."


Barghouti's future role in that "next phase" is a subject of frequent media speculation. Last week, for instance, *The Independent* (UK) predicted that "...Mohammed Dahlan and the popular jailed West Bank leader, Marwan Barghouti might pursue the 'Kadima' option..."

The groundswell of pressure to free Barghouti is pervasive. His wife gives frequent interviews to the international media and is supported by Palestinian officials and some Israeli organizations. None of them denies his bloody past, or his self-confessed role as the architect of the current Palestinian intifada. None of them can point to any sign that Barghouti has forsaken his bloody ways. Yet they all make the outlandish claim that he is a "moderate"; that once released, he can help balance the new Hamas majority. In a recent newspaper ad, for example, Israel's leftist Gush Shalom Peace bloc chirped: "...the release of Barghouti can create a new dynamic for peace..."

Some news networks have reported on a possible swap of Barghouti for Jonathan Pollard, who is serving a life sentence in the U.S. for spying on behalf of Israel. Such a deal would weaken the opposition. That camp would be torn between its commitment to seeing Barghouti punished and its loyalty to Pollard. Israelis must now allow that offer to tempt them.

Two years ago this government entrusted Barghouti to Israel's criminal justice system. It is high time for him to serve out his sentence in the manner envisaged by those judges without any interference from our politicians. How encouraging it would be for justice to prevail over short-sighted politicians in this region. It so rarely happens.

[Click Here to support Frontpagemag.com.](#)

 [Make Comment](#)  [View Comments](#)  [Printable Article](#)  [Email Article](#)

[Home](#) | [Blog](#) | [Horowitz](#) | [Archives](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Search](#) | [Gopostal](#) | [Store](#) | [Links](#) | [CSPC](#) | [Contact](#) | [Advertise with Us](#)

Copyright©2005 FrontPageMagazine.com | [Privacy Policy](#)