Israeli envoy protests UN refusal to classify murdered woman as terror victim

November 3, 2022

By Sara Serfaty

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-envoy-protests-un-refusal-to-classify-murdered-woman-as-terror-victim/>

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan protested a UN body’s refusal to classify the September killing of an 84-year-old woman as terrorism, despite the pronouncement police made shortly after her death.

Shulamit Rachel Ovadia was killed by blows to the head from a blunt object in the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon. Police said the killing was carried out by Mousa Sarsour, a Palestinian from the northern West Bank city of Qalqilya. He was found [hanged](https://www.timesofisrael.com/suspect-in-terror-killing-of-woman-84-found-dead-after-apparent-suicide/) the following morning in central Tel Aviv in an apparent suicide.

Erdan’s Monday letter to UN Secretary General António Guterres accused The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of “ignor[ing]” Israel’s classification of Ovadia’s murder as a terror attack, adding that the organization’s “unwillingness to swiftly condemn and appropriately label these acts of Palestinian terror only incentivizes the terrorists to continue their actions.”

“Ovadia’s only crime was being in the wrong place at the wrong time,” the letter said.

OCHA’s [report of the incident](https://www.ochaopt.org/poc/13-26-september-2022), released in late September, said that while Israel had classified Ovadia’s murder as “nationalistic” — meaning terroristic — it is “disputed by Palestinian sources and human rights groups.”

The report also noted that the UN office had requested an investigation and autopsy report.

Ovadia’s alleged killer Sarsour had reportedly suffered a [violent psychotic episode](https://www.timesofisrael.com/holon-killer-had-permit-to-enter-israel-despite-violent-psychotic-episode-report/) during which he threatened Palestinian medical staff examining him just a month before the attack.

He had also been questioned by police twice in the weeks leading up to the late September incident but was released after authorities found that his work permit was valid and there were no warnings listed against him, as he did not have any prior security offenses.

Ovadia’s death came less than two weeks after police said they had thwarted a terror attack planned by a Palestinian man found in Jaffa carrying a gun and improvised explosives in early September, with tensions running high since a wave of terrorist attacks began in May.