

The Price of Counterterrorism Information Gathering: Intelligence Informers in the Israeli Courts

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**Prof. Menachem Hofnung
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

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Research Description

What are the social and economic prices of using cohorts of local collaborators to ensure military control of hostile occupied territory?

Creating a counterterrorism intelligence infrastructure which incorporates information collected by a vast number of collaborators involves recruiting, training, operating, maintaining and securing safe refuge for agents if and when they are exposed. This research focuses on exposed collaborators in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, who are often secured safe refuge in Israel and granted Israeli residency permit or even citizenship. This resettling operation is long, painful and involves supporting infrastructure, financial grants, new work training and long term care. Due to the veil of secrecy applied to such operations, this research will draw primarily on available court cases and files, which will enable systematic analysis of legal information regarding this sensitive issue. These court files include hundreds of High Court petitions filed by Palestinians and former Lebanese citizens who seek to acquire the status of collaborator or, if already granted such status, to obtain various rights given to former accredited agents. In addition, the research will also collect and analyze data in lower courts criminal proceedings involving collaborators. This will be done through recently acquired permission to use Net-Hamishpat database.

The hypothesis of this research is that the entire operation which was initially justified under extreme conditions of national emergency has turned out to be a routine tool in a long, daily exercise of securing territorial expansion. The vast majority of information obtained from collaborators pertains more to the security of settlement activity in the West Bank rather than to matters of macro national security. As a result, while the information of this operation is not essential for the security of Israel in its fight against coordinated terror operations, the price to retain the operation is enormous. The unintended result of utilizing Palestinian collaborators to primarily secure Israelis in the West Bank leads to an effective relocation of certain segments of populations: while the Israeli settlement presence in the West Bank is strengthened, the weaker elements of the Palestinian society are relocated into Israel (primarily within the weaker municipalities) following their exposure as collaborators. The consequences to both Palestinian

and Israeli societies of employing collaborators in terms of social fabric, internal trust and individual hardships cannot be exaggerated, and as such this research may add another perspective to the understanding of the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the fight against terror.

b) Research Goals and Expected Significance

I will argue that the use of collaborators has been analyzed mainly from a military perspective, focusing on what threats are averted or moderated by obtaining secret information gathered from various sources including collaborators. This research will add two additional dimensions by asking what are the social and economic prices of relying on, and supplying safe refuge to, large numbers of collaborators? If those two neglected dimensions are brought into consideration, it could offer different perspectives regarding the analysis of the ramifications of long time rule over hostile territory.

Derived from the main focus on the social and economic costs of the collaborators industry, this research will focus on the following questions:

- 1) What is the type of information obtained by the Palestinian collaborators which contributes to Israel's security?
- 2) What are the unique conditions which have led to such influxes in the use of collaborators in the Israeli-Palestinian case?
- 3) What is the economic price in terms of ongoing payments, providing refuge, citizenship, financial, medical and social benefits within Israel to exposed collaborators?
- 4) What is the social price in terms ethnic relations, crime prevention, community relations of the use of collaborators and their absorption in Israel?

1) Working hypotheses

This research tests several hypotheses, attempting to shift the focus from a purely security-based point of view to a more societal aspect. Each question is designed to explore a different hypothesis:

- a. The vast majority of the information obtained by Palestinian collaborators' pertains to daily events and routines, contributing primarily to the intelligence needed for active control of the area and the local population rather than to macro-level security concerns

- b. Israel's need to defend citizens housed deep in hostile territory has produced a need for intelligence information regarding daily life and routine of the surrounding Palestinian population, extending far beyond the general intelligence needed when confronting armies away from civilian population
- c. The economic prices of maintaining the entire industry of Palestinian collaborators extends far beyond the immediate payment, and is linked directly to the quality of information supplied. While this facilitates the security apparatus in the obtaining of information, it also serves as incentive for lower-economic class individuals to attempt to join the collaborators industry, often supplying unsubstantiated false information in hopes of improving their economic situation
- d. Exposed collaborators who have been, sometimes along with their immediate or partially extended family, relocated to Israel, create severe social strains on the societal level. Often housed in Arab and lower socioeconomic regions in Israel, these relocations lead to rising ethnic tension, along with increases in crime and internal security concerns.

Methodology

This project suggests a combined quantitative-qualitative approach, utilizing multiple types of data-collecting methods in order to address the research questions.

Quantitative methods: While the majority of information regarding the collaborators industry remains classified, more and more information is being released as a result of petitions made to Israel's High Court of Justice by collaborators who have been exposed, and the subsequent publication of the court proceedings and judgments passed.

Building upon this data base, the first stage of this project will involve an analysis of the large body of court proceedings, allowing for the construction of an initial scheme detailing the manner in which collaborators are employed. We should gather information on, what is offered to collaborators, what classifications of compensation exist, what are grounds for approval/disapproval of support, and how many people are resettled in Israel as a result of the proceedings (even if their petitions are rejected by the court). Aimed at gathering as much quantitative information regarding the dimensions of the collaborators industry, the coding plan for the court cases involves two main sections:

- 1) Background information regarding the case:

- Names of petitioners
- Respondents
- Lawyers involved on either side
- Institutions involved on either side

The information derived from this section is used primarily as background and for further expansion of the data. For example, through repeated names of lawyers or institutions involved it was possible to greatly expand the pool of cases analyzed. Additionally, specific respondents and petitioners, such as municipalities, will allow for further exploration of the regions collaborators have been relocated, facilitating the qualitative examination below.

2) Aimed at measuring the costs associated with the collaborators industry, the variables include:

- The legal remedy asked in the petition: recognition, resident status, support package, family unification, absorbing second-degree family members, medical assistance, other requests;
- Legal cause: promises made by authorities, discrimination, the existence of signed agreement between the collaborator and the State of Israel, personal danger in Palestinian areas;
- Measure of success: complete acceptance of the petition, partial acceptance, failure by erasing the petition (case may be litigated again in a new petition), total failure (court decision rejecting the petition in a binding ruling).

This coding system will allow for the drafting of measurements regarding the scope of costs, primarily economic but also social, associated with the industry. The submissions of both sides to the court reveal mass amounts of information, allowing for the continuous expansion of the quantitative measurements, as well as facilitating the next stage of the study. Following the establishment of the quantitative schema, the gathered information will serve as the base for the qualitative analysis.

Qualitative methods: Following the quantitative analysis and measurements, the next stage of the data collection will focus on substantiating and elaborating the information obtained from the coding of the court cases, along with exploring the more sensitive social costs associated with the collaborators industry. This will be examined through a series of qualitative methods. Based on the findings from the first part of the analysis, and following a more in-depth qualitative analysis of the court proceedings themselves, interviews will be conducted with collaborators, lawyers,

and former security personnel. This information will be buttressed by questioners drawn, aimed at further substantiating the findings and increasing the general N of the qualitative analysis.

This stage of analysis will contain two parts:

1. Aimed at substantiating the quantitative analysis, the qualitative methods will include:
 - Conducting interviews with lawyers, security officials and people who have been involved in the collaborators industry and who can offer insight regarding the type of information obtained from collaborators, as well as assist in establishing the economic prices attached to this information
 - Buttressing and substantiating information found in the court cases by qualitative analysis of secondary sources published both by Israel and by former collaborators.
2. Aimed at further exploring the research questions, the qualitative methods will include:
 - The mapping out of the areas in which collaborators have been mainly resettled, with the aim of detecting patterns and trends regarding this process. This stage, while crucial for the following interviews and field work in the municipalities, will assist in the detection of the underlying causes and assumptions guiding the resettling of exposed collaborators in different areas in Israel
 - In-depth qualitative analysis of the court cases, allowing for implications, nuances, and other relevant clues to be brought forth and added to the expanding data and information.
 - Conducting interviews and field work in municipalities which have had collaborators relocated to them. Exploring the challenges that are faced and looking into the fabric of social life and interaction among the inhabitants
 - Conducting interviews specifically in Arab regions which have had Palestinian collaborators mixed in with the population, focusing on the ethnic tensions on the one hand and on the integration levels on the other.

BUDGET

The request is for a budget of \$1000 for one year. The main bulk of the budget, \$8000 is to be paid for research assistants (altogether 33% of a yearly salary for MA student) who should document and do the coding for the legal cases. In the second stage of the research the assistants will be asked to help in mapping the areas in which former collaborators are located. The third phase of the research is intended for in-depth interviews. Another \$1000 is allocated to cover field trips for interviews. \$1000 is for Computer hardware, software and peripherals.