



27 July 2018

Factsheet

The Palestinian Authority's (PA) payments to the families of victims and detainees

The much-misrepresented and very contentious issue of these so-called 'martyr payments' has once again been raised in the Australian federal Parliament and media over the last few months. The Palestinian Authority (PA) does pay the families of Palestinians who are killed or imprisoned by Israel if these persons were significant income providers for their families. These payments are therefore a form of compensatory social welfare, not incentives to commit acts of political violence. Similar payments are available to the families of victims of cancer and car accidents.

These payments:

1. Are a form of social welfare based on the family's loss of (most often) their main, or one of their main, breadwinners.
2. Are uniform in nature – it doesn't matter whether the income provider dies in an act of violent resistance, or is incarcerated for non-violent activities intended to subvert the occupation, if his or her family are left in a financially insecure position as a result, and if they are deemed eligible by the PA, then they will receive this form of state assistance.
3. Show that the PA refuses to implement a policy of collective punishment whereby the families of these men and women would be held accountable for their kin's actions (incidentally, the criminality of all these actions is determined by Israel). The distinction between not denying access to education, healthcare, and at least a modest quality of life for those bearing no responsibility for these acts and incentivising terrorism is manifestly clear. It is thus worth noting that many acts of violent resistance are committed unbeknown to or against the wishes of family members.
4. These same families almost invariably become the targets of punitive 'security' measures by Israel, including the denial of travel and work permits that only exacerbates their financial hardship, especially considering the already limited access to full-time employment in the OPTs.

