

How Do You Solve A Problem Like Tamimi?

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Ahlam Tamimi is the photogenic Palestinian Arab woman, and murderer, who was the mastermind of the suicide bombing at the Sbarro Pizzeria in Jerusalem in 2001. She selected the place and time of the attack for maximum casualties (families with children, on an outing to have pizza), and drove the bomber to the site, where he set off a bomb, killing 15 people, seven of them children. Two of those murdered were American citizens; a third American citizen has been in a vegetative state ever since. Washington has made endless efforts to get Jordan to honor its extradition treaty with the U.S. and deliver Tamimi up to American justice, but so far Jordan has refused,

claiming the treaty has not yet been ratified. The Jordanian authorities can extradite her without a treaty, but they are scared of the reaction of their Palestinian population.

Ahlam Tamimi has been treated as a celebrity in Jordan; she even has her own television talk show, *Nasim Al-Ahrar* (Breeze of the Free), on the Hamas-affiliated Al-Quds TV. It deals with Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. She and her husband Nizar, another terrorist, have been doing well financially; they are celebrated, rather than shunned, for their terrorist murders.

Tamimi has never expressed any remorse for her act of mass murder: "I do not regret what happened. Absolutely not. This is the path. I dedicated myself to Jihad for the sake of Allah, and Allah granted me success. You know how many casualties there were [in the 2001 attack on the Sbarro pizzeria]. This was made possible by Allah. Do you want me to denounce what I did? That's out of the question. I would do it again today, and in the same manner."

Tamimi has also expressed satisfaction at the sizable death count, including those of the children, and recounted her earlier disappointment when initial reports stated lower counts. In short, this sweetly-smiling woman is a monster.

Now news comes that the government of Jordan has expelled Nizar Tamimi, the husband of Ahlam and himself a terrorist. The story of that expulsion, and its significance, is [here](#).

Jordan has reportedly expelled the husband of US-wanted terrorist Ahlam Tamimi.

Nizar Tamimi, 46, arrived in Qatar after the Hashemite Kingdom refused to renew his residency and asked him to leave within 48 hours, reported the pan-Arab publication Al-Quds Al-Arabi on Thursday [

Ahlam Tamimi, 39, has been accused of being the mastermind behind the Sbarro Pizzeria bombing in Jerusalem on Aug. 9, 2001, that killed 15 people, including seven children, and wounded 130 others. Among those killed were two American citizens, 15-year-old Malki Roth and 31-year-old Judith Greenbaum, who was pregnant at the time. A third American, Chana Nachenberg, has remained in a permanent vegetative state ever since.

Nizar Tamimi was sentenced to life imprisonment for being involved in the 1993 murder and subsequent burning of Chaim Mizrahi.

Chaim Mizrahi was an Israeli who in 1993 had gone to buy eggs from a Palestinian farmer with whom he was friendly. Instead, Ahlam Tamimi's cousin and future husband) Nizar Tamimi, and still another cousin, Said Tamimi, were waiting for Mizrahi. They stabbed him, stuffed him in the trunk of his car, and burned him alive. No wonder Ahlam Tamimi found Nizar Tamimi to be just the man for her.

Both Tamimis [Ahlam and Nizar] were released from prison in 2011 in an exchange between Israel and Hamas for captured Israel Defense Forces' soldier Gilad Shalit. They married after their release.

Jordan has argued that it cannot extradite Ahlam Tamimi to the United States, where she is on its "Most Wanted Terrorist" list, since she has Jordanian citizenship and a 1995 extradition agreement with the United States was not ratified by Jordan's government. The United States has offered a \$5 million reward for her capture and conviction.

The failure of the Jordanian government to ratify its extradition treaty with the U.S. merely means that Jordan is not obligated to, but it still can if it wishes, extradite Ahlam Tamimi to the U.S. That Jordan, which has received

billions of dollars in aid from the United States over the years, refuses to comply with Washington's request, should have consequences: no more aid to Amman until it hands over Ahlam Tamimi, who aside from the dozen Israelis whom she helped to murder, and the 150 who were wounded, is responsible for the deaths of two Americans, and the permanent vegetative state of a third. Even to start discussing this possibility should be enough to get Amman's attention. Or could it be that Amman, by expelling her husband, may have also rid itself of the problem of Ahlam?

However, reportedly, the Jordanian move to expel Nizar Tamimi could cause his wife to join him in Qatar, which does not have an extradition treaty with the United States...

One assumes that Ahlam Tamimi will not want to be separate from her husband, and will join him in Qatar. The Jordanian government will then have rid itself of a problem. As long as Ahlam Tamimi was in Jordan, the Americans would keep after Amman to extradite her to the U.S., and keep upping the economic threats, of slashing aid, when Jordan refused. The Jordanians would not have wanted to expel Ahlam to Qatar; she is much too popular a figure, with her television talk show, and such an attempt could lead to street demonstrations. But by expelling her husband they can create the conditions that should lead to her voluntary exile to Qatar.

There are a few reasons why Qatar might be more amenable to extraditing Ahlam Tamimi to the U.S. than Jordan is. First, there is demography. 70% of the Jordanian population is Palestinian, either registered as "refugees" or known to be descendants of Palestinians and therefore, continue to be counted as Palestinians – a very large and devoted fan club for Tamimi. Qatar, by contrast, has only 100,000 Palestinians out of a population of 3 million, and any street demonstrations against her being sent to the U.S. are likely to be small and easily suppressed.

Second, Qatar also wants to curry favor with the U.S. Doha wants the Americans to maintain their current presence with 10,000 military, both the Air Force and the Army, at Al-Udeid Air Base. Qatar sees that American presence as a guarantee of its security, should the Gulf Arab states now aligned against it – especially Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. – ever threaten to invade.

Third, Qatar has cultivated strong ties with American universities. Six of them have branch campuses in Qatar's Education City complex. These are Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar, Weill-Cornell Medical College in Qatar, Texas A & M University in Qatar, Carnegie-Mellon University in Qatar, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, and Northwestern University. These six American campuses are the centerpiece of Qatar's plans to improve its offerings in higher education.

Fourth, economic ties between Qatar and the U.S. are constantly increasing. The U.S. is Qatar's most important foreign investor and its single largest source of imports, as well as a major customer for its hydrocarbons.

Qatar would prefer not to antagonize the U.S. by refusing an American request to hand over the likes of Ahlam Tamimi. There is no telling what the American response would be if it did so: Washington could cut back its military personnel at Udeid Air Base. It could make it harder for Qataris to study in the U.S., and for American universities to open, or continue to operate, those highly lucrative campuses in Doha; it could make it harder for Americans to invest in Qatar; Washington could decrease its purchases of oil from Qatar, and supplant them with oil from the U.A.E. or Saudi Arabia. Why should Qatar risk damage to its relations with the mighty U.S. , by refusing to hand over Ahlam Tamimi, if it doesn't have to worry – unlike Jordan – about domestic unrest from local Palestinians?

I suspect that Ahlam Tamimi will move to Qatar to be with her husband, cousin, and fellow murderer Nizar. She likely overestimates her popularity in Qatar, where Palestinians are at most one-fiftieth the number in Jordan, and underestimates the close ties with the U.S. – economic, educational, military – that the Qataris do not wish to damage in any way. She may rely on the fact that Qatar has no extradition treaty with the U.S., unaware that a nation-state has a right, though not an obligation, to extradite anyone it so chooses. As soon as she lands in Doha, the Qataris may surprise everyone – including an aghast Ahlam Tamimi – by bundling her off to Washington on the next military plane leaving Al-Udeid. That would win Doha many points in Washington, and likely happen too quickly for the relative handful of Palestinians in Doha to mount a public protest – something they may not want to do anyway, lest the Qatari authorities have them arrested and expelled from Qatar for their “attempted damage to public order.” Altogether, for Amman that passed the buck, for Doha that sent her packing, and for Washington that will likely have Ahlam Tamimi in custody for the rest of her unappetizing life, a satisfactory conclusion.

Firts published in