

The Funeral of Nizar Banat: 'Out, Out, Out, Get the Dogs of the PA Out'

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Nizar Banat was one of the fiercest critics of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President-For-Life who is now in the sixteenth year of his four-year term. Banat had for several years railed against the corruption and nepotism in the PA; he was keenly aware that Abbas had managed to amass a \$400 million fortune from the aid money that foreign donors intended to be spent on ordinary Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Banat knew, too, that Abbas kept himself in power by rewarding his cronies with well-paid government jobs for themselves and their relatives. He knew that Abbas had built himself a \$13 million palace in Ramallah, where he kept a \$50 million plane, for his private use, out back.

Nizar Banat was having an effect, with his biting criticism of Abbas and his cronies on social media that attracted an ever larger following among the Palestinian public. Banat became especially vitriolic after Abbas announced earlier this year that both Palestinian parliamentary and presidential elections would be held later in the year. Banat promptly announced his own candidacy for Parliament, only to see his hopes dashed when Abbas, having come to the realization that whether his opponent was Mohammad Dahlan, or Marwan Barghouti, or Ismail Haniyeh from Hamas, he – Mahmoud Abbas – was certain to lose badly, announced that the elections would not be held after all. Abbas gave as his flimsy excuse the fact that Israel would not allow “Palestinians in east Jerusalem to vote.” This was false. The Israelis had no objection to Palestinians – i.e., non-citizens of Israel – living in east Jerusalem, from taking part in the PA elections, provided they voted physically just outside the city limits of Jerusalem. It didn't matter; Abbas was not going to hold the elections under any circumstances; he's 85 and intends to remain in office to provide more millions for his extended family. After all, by the time of his own death, his mentor Arafat had stolen about \$2 billion in Palestinian aid money; two Hamas leaders, Khaled Meshaal and Mousa Abu Marzouk, have acquired at least \$2.5 billion apiece in similar fashion; it would not be fair for Abbas to be forced into retirement until he can increase his own take by a few hundred million more.

Last year, Nizar Banat was kept for a few days in a Palestinian prison. This was a warning that he should stop his public criticism. He ignored the warning, and continued to post his anti-Abbas videos. Then an unidentified gunman shot into his house. Another warning, also ignored. Banat continued with his campaign against Abbas on social media. More threats arrived; Banat went into hiding. To no avail: 20 PA goons found him, arrived at his hiding place in the middle of the night, beat him repeatedly with metal rods, and dragged him away. He may by that time have already been dead, or he may

have died soon after from the beating. In any case, Mahmoud Abbas had finally rid himself of his most prominent and articulate critic.

The funeral for Nizar Banat was held in Hebron, his home city. Thousands turned out, to mourn and to shout for the removal of Mahmoud Abbas. That story is here: “‘Get out Abbas’: Thousands protest at funeral of activist who died in PA custody,” by Aaron Boxerman, [Jihad Watch](#).