

Nir Hasson Blog- Haaretz site

We Made A Mistake. It Happens.

Ahmad Sub Laban is an Ir Amim field researcher. He is one of four or five media sources on East Jerusalem issues. He is 35 years old, a father of two boys and a resident of the Old City. On Friday night he left his home to buy some milk and document the unrest in the alleys of the Muslim Quarter.

This is a condensed version of his words, a window into life in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem of late:

“I saw a young boy running and three soldiers chasing after him. They caught him and began beating him. I wanted to film but was afraid. I decided to return home. Knowing that there was tension, I did not run; I stood so the police would understand that I was not involved. But three border policemen grabbed me and said that I had thrown stones. I tried to tell them that I am a journalist and they began to beat me. One grabbed me by the neck and choked me, and then they took me to the police station. They took two young men along with me, 17 and 20 years old. They beat us the entire way, even with their M-16 rifle. At the station they put me on a chair and began to hit me. ‘Who threw stones? Why did you throw stones?’ I tried to say that I was a journalist, to say that I work for Ir Amim, but they continued to hit me. There were four border policemen and one regular policeman, who began to laugh. After ten minutes, another police officer arrived. He told them to take us outside, where they continued to beat us. I understood that it would be best to shut up. Anything I could say would not help, and I would just get beaten more. The worst part was not even having the right to speak. Because if you speak you are beaten. You feel like a small child.”

“After an hour, an officer arrived, and I heard him arguing with the policemen who had arrested us. He said that we had done nothing wrong. But after an hour and a half, they took us to Kishle police station. We remained there, handcuffed, for five more hours. The 17-year-old had been kicked in the groin and constantly had to urinate, maybe 15 times.

“At 5:30 AM, an investigator arrived and told them to take off my handcuffs. He said, ‘Listen, we’re sorry, we arrested you by mistake.’”

“But the worst was listening to my two year old son ask me, ‘Daddy, did the Jews take you?’ He had heard me shouting outside of the house and had seen the blood. I am trying to raise them as removed as possible from this conflict, but the authorities constantly push them right into the middle of it.”

The Jerusalem Police relayed that the three men were arrested but later released after an examination of security tapes showed that they had not been involved in stone throwing. The Police did not comment on the violence perpetrated by the police officers.