

# Suleiman Khater

## Hero of the Sinai – Martyred by Mubarak

Suleiman Khater is better known to his countrymen as the hero of the Sinai. His being sentenced to life imprisonment and subsequently murdered by Mubarak's thugs, sparked mass protests not only against this vile act, but against all that the Egyptian regime represents.

The authorities feared that they had an Egyptian 'Mandela' on their hands, whose continued imprisonment would be a continuous thorn in their side. However, they miscalculated the magnitude of what Suleiman Khater represented. Kuwaiti newspapers reported: «Diplomats were astounded at the extent of the reaction triggered by the case of this simple policeman.» Other sources reported general surprise at the intensity of feelings expressed by the masses. Defense Minister Abdel Halim Abu Ghazaleh had the audacity to say, «A soldier killed seven innocent tourists. He felt remorse and killed himself. What's so strange about that?»! What is strange, however, is the belittling and underestimation of the nationalist sentiment that prevailed only four days after the Zionists had bombarded the PLO headquarters in Tunis, killing over 70 Palestinians and Tunisians.

### Who was Suleiman Khater?

Suleiman Khater was 25 years old, a third-year law student. He was born in Akyad, and grew up in the farming village of Beit Rifi. He was the fifth child in a household of 12, and shouldered responsibility for the family after the death of his father in 1979. Three years later, he had to leave home to do his military service. Inherently patriotic and religious, the family unquestioningly accepted their son's absence as his duty. They trusted in God to support them in their need.

Suleiman was due to end his period of service in October 1985. Little did he realize that fate had appointed him, who had never been affiliated to any political group, to spell out with fire the message of the Arab masses to every enemy and traitor, only one day before he was to be discharged from service. On October 5th, Suleiman Khater shot seven Zionists who had trespassed into the Egyptian security zone in the Sinai, disregarding calls to halt and spitting at the Egyptian flag in blatant scorn.

### How it happened

During his last three months of service, Suleiman was posted as a guard at Ras Birka on Egypt's eastern borders, overlooking the Gulf of Aqaba, a sensitive and strategic site. Three other policemen were posted with him. (They were later prevented from testifying at Suleiman's trial so that the fabricated story of his «temporary insanity» would hold water.) The four had strict orders to fire on anyone trying to ascend the hill to their outpost, if the cry to halt went unheeded. According to Suleiman, «I saw a group of people ascending to our

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outpost. I called on them to halt. They didn't. Then I opened fire as I had orders to do.» Later in court, he said, «I did my duty and am at peace with myself.»

Suleiman was a member of the police force, a civilian institution. According to the Egyptian constitution, he should have been tried by a civilian court. Instead, the authorities submitted the case to a military court.

Despite the tempestuous mass protest at Suleiman's trial and sentencing, the Egyptian regime continued to demonstrate its humiliating subservience to the Zionist state. The regime made repeated public apologies for the killing of the Israelis, promised compensation and made follow-up reports on the case to the Zionist authorities. A petition demanding Suleiman Khater's release, signed by 100,000 was ignored by the regime.

Needless to say, the trial was a comic tragedy, dramatized by the ludicrous and reactionary legal procedure. The victim was Suleiman Khater whom the court sentenced to life «for premeditated murder» in total defiance of all logic. In the court, Suleiman challenged: «Is it a crime to shoot our enemy? Should I have left our borders undefended?» and finally, «Kill me to please the US and the Israelis - I killed them to defend Egypt and the Arabs!»

Mubarak's henchmen were only too willing to comply in their own way. At 10 a.m. on January 7th, Suleiman's family had come to visit him, but were told that he was «undergoing medical treatment.» At the same moment, the hero of the Sinai was being viciously murdered in his cell at the military prison's hospital.

### Yet Another Khater

#### Two Israeli soldiers killed in the Jordan Valley

On January 29th, Israeli war planes raided Ain al Hilweh refugee camp in South Lebanon, unloading their cargo of bombs, killing and terrorizing the Palestinian residents of the camp... But that night, a blow was dealt to Israeli terror and occupation. A heroic soldier in the Jordanian Army, Nasser Abdel Aziz, ambushed an Israeli patrol near Metola settlement in the Jordan Valley. Two enemy soldiers were killed and two others wounded, before Nasser was martyred by the gunfire of another Israeli patrol. Nasser, a 20 year old from Irbid, said no to Israeli occupation and terror.

His statement was delivered with the most precious possession he had - his life.

Nasser, like Suleiman Khater in Egypt, refused the chains of imperialism that are imposed on our Arab people through Israeli occupation and US puppets in the region. With his rifle, Nasser delivered the message of all the oppressed Arab people: that we will live a free life or die an honorable death. The Lebanese woman freedom fighter, Sana Mhedali, Suleiman Khater and now Nasser are only the start of what is to come. The struggle of the Arab masses will continue until Zionism is destroyed and a popular democratic Palestinian state is established.