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At the Supreme Court sitting as the High Court of Justice

HCJ 5839/15 HCJ 5844/15

Before:	His Honorable Justice Vice President E. Rubinstein His Honorable Justice U. Vogelman His Honorable Justice Y. Amit	
The Petitioners in HCJ 5839/15:	 Sidr Tamimi al Atrash Tamimi Qneibi Qneibi Taha al Atrash Taha Taha Lota Salzberger 	
The Petitioners in HCJ 5844/15:	 Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous HaMoked: Center founded by Dr. L V E R S I 	-
The Respondent in HCJ 5839/15:	Commander of the IDF forces in the West Bank	
The Respondents in HCJ 5844/15: 1. Military Commander of the West Bank Area 2. Legal Advisor for the Judea and Samaria Area Petition for Grant of <i>Order Nisi</i>		
Session date: Heshvan 1, 5775 (October 14, 2015)		
Representing the Petitioners in HCJ 5839/15: Representing the Petitioners in HCJ 5844/15:		Adv. Andre Rosenthal
		Adv. Michal Pomeranz
Representing the Respondents:		Adv. Avi Milikovsky, Adv. Aner Helman
Ter January 4		

Judgment

Vice President of the Court E. Rubinstein:

A. These two petitions concern a demolition order against the apartment of the assailant [M.] al-Hashalmun, who, in the heinous attack on October 11, 2014, at the bus stop at the Alon Shvut juncture,

murdered the teenage girl Dalia Lemkus, may she rest in peace, and injured, in an attempt to kill, two other people; he was sentenced in the military court on March 26. 2015, to two consecutive life terms and to pay damages in the sum of over ILS four million. On August 19, 2015, the assailant's family (the Petitioner in HCJ 5844/14) was given notice of intent to seize and demolish its apartment under Regulation 119 of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, 1945. A short objection notice was given and an extension was requested – and on August 24, 2015, objections were in fact filed by the family and by the Petitioners in HCJ 5839/15, who are the neighbors of the assailant's apartment – and these were rejected on August 25, 2015. After the demolition order was signed on August 29, 2015, the petitions were filed on August 30, 2015 – and a temporary injunction and later an interim order were issued by Justice *Barak-Erez* (on August 30, 2015, and September 10, 2015, respectively).

B. The petitions cited both general arguments about the legality of using Regulation 119 and the effectiveness of such deterrence, as well as specific arguments concerning the belated notice – some nine months after the commission of the crime – and about the concern that the demolition would damage also the apartments of the innocent neighbors.

C. The Respondents' response, supplemented by an affidavit by the GOC Central Command, stated that the fundamental authority regarding demolition had already been decided in the judgment in HCJ 8031/14 HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual v. Minister of Defense, (December 31, 2015), and that the timing in this matter is given to the discretion of the authorities according to HCJ 4747/15 Abu Jamal v. Home Front Commander (July 7, 2015). As to the safety of the demolition, a letter from an IDF official, dated September 8, 2015, stated that the demolition in this case would be performed manually, electrically and mechanically, without damage to the construction and without detonation (as was clarified in the hearing), and also that the demolition was not expected to cause damage to the adjacent apartments or to the residential building; and that despite the dangerous operational reality, the mapping of the location strove for precision, to eliminate incidental damage, and "the demolition will be carried out under the supervision of a construction engineer from the fortifications branch who will be present at the site to ensure the demolition is carried out according to the above stated." Ahead of the hearing, the Petitioners in HCJ 5839/15 asked to submit a draft of the [engineer] opinion whereby, in another house demolition (following HCJ 8066/14), damage was caused – among other things – to the adjacent apartment which was damaged in various ways.

D. In the hearing before us, one of the questions that was raised concerned the legal situation in the event that, despite the effort not to damage the neighbors' apartments, for example, such damage does in fact occur – will entitlement to tort compensation exist then or not; and this question was raised over the concern that the Respondents' might argue that this was "combat action".

E. Having examined the material and heard the parties, it seems that we cannot accept the petitions, in accordance with the following:

F. First, in the scope of these petitions, we cannot revisit the matter of principle considered in HCJ 8091/14, and which has now been raised – as stated in the petition – for further hearing (HCJFH 360/15 *HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual v. Minister of Defense*).

G. Second, it appears that even if there is no room for intervention in this specific case regarding the time on which the Petitioners were notified of the intention to demolish, and even if the elected time in such matters is generally in the purview of the authorities' discretion (the abovementioned HCJ 4747/15),

this matter is still subject to reasonableness, proportionality and common sense, and appearances are also of importance. It seems that insofar as an intention to demolish exists, it must be communicated at the closest possible date to the criminal act in question. Under the overall circumstances of the present case, intervention on this matter is not called for, as noted, and in any event this argument alone does not suffice to tip the scales; but in looking ahead, our comments should be heeded, even though the exact date of notification is fundamentally in the hands of the authorities.

H. Third, regarding the demolition itself: we have made a note of the Respondents' declaration as to both the manner of the demolition action and the meticulous care over the process, monitored by an engineer. We wish to emphasize this point, and request that every effort be made to fulfill what has been promised regarding the demolition, with all its components, certainly and particularly with regard to the apartments of the neighbors who are not involved in the difficult affair, and great attention is required in this matter.

I. Finally, insofar as there is excess damage – beyond the parameters presented – to the neighbors' apartments, we hold that the door is not shut with regards to compensation, all, of course, in consideration of the relevant circumstances, both as to the essence of the demolition or the circumstance under which it will be carried out.

J. Taking into account these comments, we have decided not to accept the petitions. There is no order on costs.

K. This being said:

Both my fellow panel members have added various comments on a broader level. Having read the opinion of my colleague Justice Vogelman, I wish to add that my colleague honestly reveals his skeptical opinion as to the actual deterrence in using Regulation 119, even though he respects that which arises from the Court's case law. We strove to give expression to the considerations on either side of the matter in HCJ 8091/14, so I will not elaborate here and will remain on the concrete level; and the reader is referred to that judgment, with all the complexity and difficulties of the problem and, and see, inter alia, paragraphs 16-18 of my opinion there as well as the opinions of my colleagues. As I noted in paragraph 16, "it may be simpler and easier to stand on the side of the Petitioners rather than on the side of the Respondents"; yet our duty is to see the big picture in the reality in which we live, including the legal reality. I wish to add that, like my colleague Justice Vogelman, I too am aware – and so is my fellow Justice Amit, of course – of the horrors of the present time, that morning and evening we yearn not to wake up in the morning to hear, or be informed at the end of the day, God forbid, that more families are weeping over their dead and wounded, Heaven help us. And yet, the notice to the Petitioners of August 2015 about the pending demolition preceded the current murky and grim wave, it is therefore difficult to view the decision contested by the petitions as deriving from it. My colleague Justice Amit poses questions concerning the big picture, to which answers are fundamentally found – I believe – in the operative sense, in the final conclusion of HCJ 8091/14, and the rest is left for the reader to explore.

Vice President of the Court

Justice U. Vogelman:

I have perused the opinion of my fellow Justice Vice President of the Court *E. Rubinstein* and I join the conclusion he has reached regarding HCJ 5839/15 and also the pronouncements in paragraphs H and I of his opinion. I hold a different view regarding HCJ 5844/15, and on this I wish to make several comments concerning the general question of house demolition.

1. Regulation 119 of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, 1945 (hereinafter: *the Regulations*) gives the Respondents the authority to seize, demolish and seal off the homes of those suspected of involvement in hostile activity of the alternative types listed there. The authority granted by this Regulation, which are a piece of British Mandate legislation, is employed both within the State of Israel and within the Judea and Samaria Area. In Israel the validity of the Regulation is not under constitutional challenged under Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, because it is a "law in force prior to the commencement of the Basic Law" (Article 10 of this Law), but our case law has recognized that it must be interpreted – as any law pre-dating this law – in accordance to the Basic Law. Therefore, employing the authority under the Regulation required and still requires meeting the tests of proportionality (see, e.g., HCJ 8091/14 HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual v. Minister of Defense, paragraph 18 (December 31, 2014) (hereinafter: *HaMoked*)). And what would be proportionate in relation to use of this authority? This Court has held in the past that the choice to demolish the entire house, as opposed to sealing a room or demolishing a certain part of the house, does not necessarily indicate that the chosen means is unbalanced; it has also been ruled that there is no requirement to show that those living in the house knew about the suspect's terrorist activity (and see citations *ibid*.). Thus was ruled many years ago, and thus was reaffirmed by this Court recently (the references are numerous and are cited in the opinion of Vice President E. Rubinstein's opinion in HaMoked, and in the State's Response here, and there is no need to repeat them).

2. For this reason, and this reason only, I would normally be inclined (though not in this case, as I shall explain) to take the view that implementation of the existing common law leads to the conclusion arrived at by my colleague Vice President *E. Rubinstein* in the present case, that is: to reject the petitions. For this reason – to wit: were this not the practiced judicial precedent, my own opinion would have led me to the conclusion that employing the authority under Regulation 119 when no sufficient proof has been provided that the suspect's family members were involved in the hostile activity – was disproportionate. The disproportionality in this case rises from the fact that the means chosen – the demolition of the house – does not maintain a proper relation to the benefit gained by it. In other words: even if we assume that the demolition of the house is beneficial for achieving what has been identified as the goal of this regulation – deterrence – the outcome of the action is not comparable with the benefit it contains. And what is at issue?

3. First, it is the deterrence which the Regulation in question seeks to achieve. Deterring assailants from participating in atrocities – and we are now living in a turbulent and evil time of a murderous terror wave, but it is also true in "normal" times – has a great benefit. In effect, if the demolition of some assailant's house deters some other assailant from harming human life, then we may say that the chosen means has achieved perhaps the greatest conceivable benefit. Except that there may be room to ponder whether this deterrence is in fact achieved through the exercise of the authority granted to the Respondents under Regulation 119. It would seem that the military officials have done so, who, although they believed that there was a link between the demolition of assailants' houses and deterrence, chose to note that on overarching level there is a tension between deterrence and "the price of the demolitions"; and they even concluded that "the tool of demolition in the framework of the element of deterrence is 'worn out'" (see slides 17, 20 and 22 of the computer presentation prepared by the committee headed by

Major-General Ehud Shani which examined this subject in 2004-2005, which was included as Supplement No. 1 in the petition in *HaMoked*). As a result the security authorities decided – a decision which they later revised – to cease practicing house demolition activity for deterrence purposes as a method in the Area (while reserving it for extreme cases) (see *ibid*., paragraph 6 of the opinion by Justice *E. Hayut*). The same has been stressed by this Court when it emphasized that although it is impossible to prove "how many terrorist attacks have been prevented, and how many lives saved as a result of deterrence actions of sealing and demolishing houses" (HCJ 2006/97 *Ganimat v. GOC Central Command*, PD 51(2) 651, 655 (1997) (in the words of Justice *E. Goldberg*) (hereinafter: *Ganimat*)), still "State agencies should examine from time to time the tool and the gains brought about by the use thereof, [...] [and] bring [...] data which point at the effectiveness of house demolition for deterrence purposes, to such an extent which justifies the damage caused to individuals who are neither suspects nor accused" (*HaMoked*, paragraph 27; And also paragraph 6 of Justice *E. Hayut*'s opinion).

4. Against this benefit, with the doubts raised about it, the severe outcome of the action must be weighed. It is one thing to demolish the house of someone who sought to annihilate us when he has lived there alone; it is another thing to demolish the building in which his family or other occupants live who were not involved in his malicious plan, and whose home crushes down on them through no fault of their own. Justice *M. Cheshin* (as was his title at the time) described it well:

"If we demolish the bomber's apartment we will simultaneously destroy the home of this woman and her children. We will thereby punish this woman and her children even though they have done no wrong. We do not do such things here. Since the establishment of the State – certainly since the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty – when we have read into Regulation 119 of the Defense Regulations, we have read into it and invested it with our values, the values of the free and democratic Jewish state. These values will lead straight to the olden days of our people, and our own days are the same as those days: 'They shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. Every man that eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge''' (*Ganimat* (minority opinion)).

5. I, too, join these sound words. I will add that, in my view, the damage of house demolition should not be regarded as financial or property damage only (compare to *HaMoked*, paragraph 26 of Vice President *E. Rubinstein*'s opinion; paragraph 21 of Justice *N. Sohlberg*'s opinion), and also considering that this damage in itself should not be discounted, given that a person's home "is not only a shelter over his head, but also a means of placing a person in the social and physical space [...] his private life and social interaction" (HCJ 7015/02 *Ajuri v. IDF Commander of the West Bank*, PD 56(6) 352, 365 (2002); CA 8398/00 *Katz v. Kibbutz Ein Tzurim*, PD 56(6) 602, 623 (2002); see also HCJ 1661/05 *The Gaza Coast Regional Council v. The Prime Minister*, PD 59(2) 481, 561-563 (2005). And these words primarily relate, as stated, to the innocent family members, about whom it was not claimed that they were in any way_involved in the criminal action of the assailant, in cases where the military commander orders the demolition of the entire house (as opposed to its partial demolition or sealing).

6. The result of balancing the scales against each the other – the benefit against the human rights violation attendant to the realization the Regulation's aim – is that, at least in the absence of involvement by the household members, the drastic harm to the rights of the uninvolved tips the scales and outweighs the opposite considerations. The demolition of the home is therefore done with authority, but the flaw lies in the level of discretion: in such a case, the action is unbalanced. And all this in a nutshell, since is not the precedent set forth by this Court. Therefore, although I would suggest to reconsider the judicial precedent so as to explore the full breadth of issue regarding both domestic law and international law, so long as this precedent stands, I bow my head before the opinion of the Court. "Only thus can the Court

effect its leadership" (see Yoram Shachar "Solidarity and Inter-Generational Dialectics in the Supreme Court – the Politics of Precedent" *Bar Ilan University Law Review* 16, 161-162 (2000) [Hebrew]; see in detail on the question of deviation from current precedent, Aharon Barak, *The Judge in a Democracy* 240-247 (2004) [pp. in Hebrew]). Indeed, "[...] following the path of judicial precedent on this matter is not easy" (*HaMoked*, paragraph 1 of Justice *E. Hayut*'s opinion), but deviating from the judicial precedent of this Court, which it has recently reaffirmed by several panels – is not desirable, lest this court of justice *become a court of Justice – a maxim that has not lost nothing of its poignancy, which Justice E. Hayut* rightfully recalled in *HaMoked*; and also famous is Lord Eldon's saying that "It is better that the law should be certain than that every judge should speculate upon improvements in it."

7. Thus far in general, and now to the case at hand, which I consider differs from the mainstream of the cases discussed in our judgment; his, due the heavy delay which occurred in the conduct of Respondent 1. This, in my view, necessities a different approach to this affair; as I shall explain. The attack, due to which the demolition of the house is sought, with its disastrous outcome, was perpetrated by the assailant on November 10, 2014. Only on August 19, 2015 – many months later – was the assailant's family notified of the Respondent's intent to seize and demolish the apartment where the assailant had lived with his family. Many months had passed therefore from the date of the attack and until Respondent served notice of his intent to demolish the house. The passage of time raises the concern – so goes the claim – that behind the Respondents desire to go ahead with the demolition prompted by this attack, are security incidents which occurred later on. These incidents, though their gravity is indisputable, are external to the assailant's conduct. Consequently, according to this argument goes, is that the assailant's family is not only to suffer from a crime it did not itself commit, but also for other crimes committed by others who are not the assailant who came from their midst. Justice *D. Dorner* (in a minority opinion) addressed this point in one of the cases:

"One of the requirements, which have not been disputed until now, for the exercise of the authority, is the existence of a causal relation between the terrorist attack and the demolition. Although the demolition of a house is not a punitive measure in the full sense of the word but a deterring measure, the same should not be instituted except as a direct response to a terrorist attack which was performed by the terrorist who carried out the attack who resided in the house. In the case at bar, the Respondent 'froze' the demolition decision and turned it into a *quasi* 'conditional' sanction. The 'condition', so it turns out, was the performance of additional terrorist attacks, by terrorists who lived in other towns and belonged to other families. Pursuant to the performance of such further terrorist attacks, the Respondent seeks to demolish the petitioners' houses. In my opinion he is not entitled to do so, since the demolition authority should not be exercised pursuant to terrorist attacks which are not those which were performed by the terrorist who lived in the house" (HCJ 1730/96 *Salem v. Commander of the IDF forces*, PD 50(1) 353, 364 (1996)).

8. In the case at bar, the Respondent's written response does not expand on the reasons for such a significant delay in exercising the authority, and in any event it does not – at the stage of the proceedings – exclude the claim that the authority was exercised due to other attacks which are not the ones perpetrated by the assailant who lived in the house. On this basis, if my opinion were heard, we would have ordered that an *order nisi* be issued on the petition in HCJ 5844/15 and would have rejected the petition in HCJ 5839/15.

Justice

Justice Y. Amit:

1. The tool of house demolition is perceived, and not without reason, as a problematic tool, which contravenes the dictum that "Every man shall be put to death for his own crime" (*Deuteronomy* 24: 16), a dictum that is anchored in the principles of liberty, justice, rectitude and peace of the legacy of Israel and Hebraic Law.

Yet recently in HCJ 8091/14, various issues related to house demolitions under Regulation 119 of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations have been discussed, and there is pending request for further hearing on this judgment. Therefore, and as my colleague Justice U. *Vogelman* noted, there is now no room to reconsider the existing judicial precedent.

However, the comments of my colleague Justice U. *Vogelman*, lead me to present a number of comments and points for consideration, as follows.

2. The argument that employing house demolition for deterrence turns the assailant's family into a means, an object, and thus adds a violation of human dignity – should not be taken lightly. However, given the claim that house demolition serves an interest of the highest order of protecting the security and lives of residents of the State, it would seem that the controversy over house demolition is increasingly focused on the question of the *efficacy* of the deterrence, that is, on the utilitarian level rather than the deontological.

On this matter my colleague noted that "In effect, if the demolition of some assailant's house deters some other terrorist from harming human life, then we may say that the chosen means has achieved perhaps the greatest conceivable benefit". And indeed, only several months ago a decision was handed down by my colleague Justice *D. Barak-Erez* in CrimApp 2886/15 *State of Israel v. Sharif Khaled Abu Salah* (May 3, 2015). The decision concerns the appeal of the detention in remand pending conclusion of proceedings of several defendants indicted for activities supporting the organization Daesh. In her decision, my colleague quotes from the investigation materials:

"...Indeed, Fadi and Muhammad were opposed to exercising violence within Israel. But in real time, Fadi explained this was only because 'the time is not right', whereas during his interrogation, he noted that he feared the consequences which might include long-term imprisonment *or demolition of his home*. Muhammad stated in his interrogation that he regarded 'a security record' as something 'respectable'. While he did objected to using violence himself, he supported violence being used by others and generally supported fighting in Israel. Muhammad noted that the activity about which he was being interrogated was 'just talk', but added that supporting Jihad could also be done through 'talk''' (*ibid.*, paragraph 28, emphasis added – Y.A.).

The complexity of the deterrence question is accentuated given the words of former Military Advocate General Avichai Mandelblit, which were quoted in the expert opinion submitted to us by the Petitioners:

"...the Committee headed by General Udi Shani... actually determined that it was very doubtful whether the subject of demolition was effective, but when the Committee examined the subject in depth, and its findings were presented to the Chief of Staff, it transpired that in fact assessing the efficacy was very difficult. Alongside concrete examples, and there are concrete examples where effectiveness of this measure has been

proved, there are *concrete examples of families who prevented their sons from going out to commit suicide acts. The ISA presented such examples. There are a few dozen such cases.* But on the other hand, prima facie evidence was also brought whereby that the subject of house demolition for deterrence purposes also created much more hatred, created greater motivation, created refugee collectivity. There are contrary indications and consequently it was difficult to reach an unequivocal conclusion on this subject. Even when we tried to quantify it, the ability to quantify the contradictory aspects of the efficacy issue is not simple, it is complicated... It was impossible to reach a conclusive result in this matter. This is very, very complex. Here, in effect, enters the importance of the additional arguments ... subjects relating also to international law, although I say again... it is possible to substantiate an argument that this is justifiable... and as there is real doubt concerning issue the efficacy of house demolitions, in seeking to strike a balance, there are arguments on both sides of the subject, and these things led to the decision, a significant and dramatic decision..." (Emphasis added – Y.A.).

The authors of the expert opinion chose to emphasize the latter part of the words cited, whereas I chose to emphasize the former part, which indicates that dozens of terrorist attacks were prevented. I wish to note that these lines are being written at a time when the Israeli public experiences primarily knife attacks. Without the slightest intent of belittling these actions, the bloody days of the second intifada must be kept in mind, when suicide attacks resulted in dozens of fatalities in each attack. If so, in my colleague's view, did not deterrence achieve the greatest possible benefit by saving the lives of dozens of people? And in balancing between damage to property – although a person's home is more than property in the regular sense – and the possibility of harm to human lives, is not the second to be preferred? And to put in constitutional language, when it exercises its administrative authority to issue a house demolition order pursuant to Regulation 119, does the State cause proportionate harm to the house owners' rights to *property and dignity*, considering the possibility that deterrence may protect the right to *life* of residents of Israel?

3. And if we are dealing with deterrence, it is interesting to note that in various branches of the law, the standpoint is that the person is a rational being guided by cost-benefit considerations. In effect, the economic approach to the law is based on this assumption (which has its contenders in other disciplines). It seems to me that the "rationality premise", under which it would be assumed that a potential assailant will take into account the suffering his family might incur by the demolition of his home, is neglected in the framework of the discussion on Regulation 119 of the Defense Regulations in favor of the assumption that a potential assailant who is fully motivated to carry out an attack, is indifferent to the totality of the results emanating from his deed. And is the assailant's family, his nuclear family and extended family, also necessarily indifferent to cost-benefit considerations?

4. Does the demolition/sealing of a house/apartment/room under a specific order constitute collective/group punishment in the simple meaning of the word and in view of the objective and historical background underlying the prohibition on collective punishment? Is there no intermediate point between individual punishment & responsibility and collective punishment & responsibility? Shouldn't the demolition of a single house be distinguished from large-scale demolition? Does not the classification of the demolition of a single home – pursuant to a specific order, while taking safety measures to prevent damage to adjacent houses/apartments/rooms, and after granting the right of hearing and the possibility to remove items from the house ahead of time – as collective punishment of an individual for the crimes of another constitute collective punishment? Is there importance to the stance that house demolition is not

a tool of *punishment* but rather of forward-looking *deterrence* vis-à-vis an unknown potential assailant? On the other hand, is it possible to ignore the fact that the actual outcome, harms the members of assailant's household *directly* and not incidentally?

5. The consideration of direct or indirect involvement of the assailant's family members, and to how far can this consideration be expanded.

If indeed the assailant's family is seen as a completely innocent third party, a completely external party, like a family whose home is destroyed in a bombing because of a mistake in the identification of the target? On the moral level, is there any importance to the conduct of the assailant's family? Is a distinction to be made between the family's conduct-knowledge-support and encouragement before the attack and the family's conduct after the attack? Is there any relevance to the fact that an assailant's family praises their son the martyr for his participation in the attack, and gives out sweets as a token of rejoicing and, in general, "dances on the blood" spilled by him? On the other hand, is it not necessary to consider that sometimes the family's joy is a constraint forced upon it by the society and those around, and does not constitute identification with the terrorist act?

6. I do not hold that there is room to expand on these points, as the answers to them appear – whether explicitly or generally – in the precedents regarding Regulation 119, extensively surveyed in the judgment written by my colleague Justice *E. Rubinstein* in aforementioned HCJ 8091/14. The policy of demolishing assailants' houses has to date been exercised narrowly, and was also attended by the use of safety measures to prevent damage to neighboring houses, as indicated by the comment of my colleague Justice *E. Rubinstein* in paragraph H of his opinion in said judgement. So long as this policy is narrowly exercised and on the basis of strict security considerations, I see no need to reconsider the well-entrenched precedent on the issue, in the scope of which all the principle issued regarding house demolition have already been decided.

Therefore, in conclusion, I join my colleague Vice President E. Rubinstein.

Justice

Decided as specified in the judgment of Vice President Justice E. Rubinstein.

Given today, Heshvan 2, 5775 (October 15, 2015).

Vice President

Justice

Justice