

MEDIA ADVISORY
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Former IDF Spokesperson and Southern Brigade Commander to Testify in Corrie Civil Trial

May 22 to be Final Court Hearing

(Haifa, Israel – May 17, 2011) – Former IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Ruth Yaron and former Southern Brigade Commander, Colonel Pinhas (Pinky) Zuaretz are both scheduled to testify on May 22 in what is anticipated to be the final hearing in the Corrie family’s civil lawsuit against the State of Israel.

The lawsuit, filed in 2005 by Attorney Hussein abu Hussein, charges the Israeli government and Ministry of Defense with responsibility for killing American peace activist Rachel Corrie in Rafah, Gaza in 2003. Since the trial opened in March 2010, nearly 2000 pages of court transcripts have been recorded, from more than 20 testimonies, including that of 14 military personnel. Most government witnesses were identified only by their initials, and nearly half testified while hidden behind a screen.

Brigadier General Yaron served as the Israeli Military’s spokesperson from 2002-2005. Her testimony will focus on the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), an organization committed to opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands using non-violent methods. Rachel was protesting against civilian home demolitions, as part of ISM, when she was run over and killed by an Israeli military D9R bulldozer.

Colonel Zuaretz was the commanding officer of the Gaza Division’s Southern Brigade at the time, and the bulldozer units were under his command. Zuaretz is the highest ranking officer called as a government witness in the trial, and possibly, the highest ranking military officer ever to face cross examination in a civil suit for the actions of the Israeli military against civilians in Gaza during the second intifada. His testimony is expected to shed light on the Israeli military’s failure to protect civilian life and property in the region.

“The final State witnesses attack Rachel’s right to non-violently protest in defense of her Palestinian friends, their home, and their family,” said Craig Corrie, Rachel’s father. “I have seen the wholesale destruction of the civilian neighborhood the IDF calls a military zone. Rachel not only had the legitimate right to protest against massive home demolitions, she had a moral obligation to stand with this family in the face of the Israeli military actions and threats which violated the bedrock legal obligation to protect civilians and their property.”

The hearing is scheduled to take place Sunday, May 22, from 9:00 – 16:00 in the courtroom of Judge Oded Gershon, 6th floor, Haifa District Court, 12 Palyam St., Haifa, Israel.

Please visit <http://rachelcorriefoundation.org/trial> for updates, last minute changes to the court schedule and related information.

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