

Tuesday, 9 April 2013

Israeli settler gets life for 1997 Palestinian murders



An Israeli court on Tuesday sentenced an extreme rightwing U.S.-born Jewish settler to two life terms in prison for the murder of two Palestinians in 1997. Jack Teitel, 40, was found guilty in January of murdering a bus driver and a shepherd as well as two separate attempted murders, for illegal possession of weapons and incitement to violence. The religious activist was handed two life sentences by the Jerusalem District Court, one for each of his victims, and will have to pay compensation of 180,000 shekels (\$47,000/36,000 euros) to each of their families. Teitel was also sentenced to 30 years for the two attempted murders and other offences. At the January hearing, the court ruled that Teitel was mentally competent when he carried out the offences, and rejected his lawyers' arguments that their client had not been mentally stable and was therefore not guilty. The father-of-four from the West Bank settlement of Shvut Rachel has been branded by the Israeli press as a "Jewish terrorist." He was arrested in 2009. In January, he admitted carrying out a 2008 bomb attack on the home of leading leftwing Israeli professor Zeev Sternhell, wounding him. He also admitted sending a parcel bomb to a Jewish couple that accepts Jesus as the Messiah, wounding their 15-year-old son. Teitel, who immigrated from the United States, is also known for his hatred of homosexuals, calling for the murder of "sodomites."