

# ONE MORE TIME: HEMP CAN SAVE OUR ASS!

**The chief drawback of reforestation as a solution to the climate crisis is that trees grow slowly.** Any projected restoration could take 50 to 100 years to reach its full carbon sequestering potential. Fortunately, as of December 2018, there is now a cheaper, faster and more efficient alternative - the widespread cultivation of industrial hemp, the non-intoxicating form of cannabis grown for fiber, cloth, oil, food and other purposes. **Hemp grows to 13 feet in 100 days, making it one of the fastest carbon dioxide-to-biomass conversion tools available. Industrial hemp has been proven to absorb more CO<sub>2</sub> per hectare than any forest or commercial crop, making it the ideal carbon sink.** It can be grown on a wide scale on nutrient-poor soils with very small amounts of water and no fertilizers.

Hemp products can promote biodiversity and reverse environmental pollution by replacing petrochemical-based plastics, which are now being dumped into the ocean at the rate of one garbage truck per minute. One million seabirds die each year from ingesting plastic, and up to 90% have plastic in their guts. Microplastic (resulting from the breakdown of larger pieces by sunlight and waves) and microbeads (used in body washes and facial cleansers) have been called the ocean's smog. They absorb toxins in the water, enter the food chain and ultimately wind up in humans. **To avoid all that, we can use plastic made from hemp, which is biodegradable and nontoxic.**

Other environmental toxins come from the textile industry, which is second only to agriculture in the amount of pollution it creates and the voluminous amounts of water it uses. **Hemp can be grown with minimal water, and hemp fabrics can be made without the use of toxic chemicals.** Environmental pollution from the burning of fossil fuels can also be reversed with hemp, which is more efficient and environmentally friendly than wheat and corn as a clean-burning biofuel.

Hemp cultivation also encourages biodiversity in the soil, by regenerating farmland that has long been depleted from the use of toxic chemicals. It is a "weed" and grows like one, ubiquitously, beating out other plants without pesticides or herbicides; and its long taproot holds the soil, channeling moisture deeper into it. **Unlike most forestry projects, hemp can be grown on existing agricultural land and included as part of any farm's crop rotation, with positive effects on the yields and the profits from subsequent crops.**



**Hemp cultivation is profitable in many other ways - so profitable that it is effectively a self-funding solution to the environmental crisis.** According to a *Forbes* piece titled "Industrial Hemp Is the Answer to Petrochemical Dependency," crop yields from hemp can range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 per acre. Its widespread cultivation can happen without government subsidies. Investment in research, development and incentives would speed the process, but market forces will propel these transformations even if Congress fails to act. All farmers need for incentive is a market for the products, which hemp legalization at the end of 2018 has provided.

**Hemp can break our dependency on petrochemicals, not only for fuel but for plastics, textiles, construction materials and much more. Hemp can also help save our shrinking forests by eliminating the need to clear-cut them for paper pulp.** One acre planted in hemp produces as much pulp as 4.1 acres of trees, according to the USDA; and unlike trees, hemp can be harvested two or three times a year. Hemp paper is also finer, stronger and lasts longer than wood-based paper. Benjamin Franklin's paper mill used hemp. Until 1883, it was one of the largest agricultural crops (some say the largest), and 80-90% of all paper in the world was made from it. It was also the material from which most fabric, soap, fuel and fiber were made; and it was an essential resource for any country with a shipping industry, since sails were made from it. *In early America, growing hemp was considered so important that it was illegal for farmers not to grow it. Hemp was legal tender from 1631 until the early 1800s, and taxes could even be paid with it.*

**Hemp historians have been writing about the crop's myriad uses and its senseless prohibition for decades. What is news is that hemp cultivation is finally legal across the country. The time is short to save the planet and its vanishing diversity of species. Rather than engaging in endless debates over carbon taxes and Silicon Valley style technological fixes, we need to be regenerating our soils, our forests and our oceans with nature's own plant solutions.**

**Ellen Brown**

Attorney and chairman of the Public Banking Institute, her latest book is

*Banking on the People: Democratizing Money in the Digital Age.*  
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## TORTURE CONTINUES AS USUAL IN ISRAEL

Israel media reported that a judge gave the domestic intelligence agency permission to "use exceptional ways to investigate" Samir Arbeed. The 44-year-old Palestinian Samir Arbeed was admitted to a hospital in Jerusalem after having been interrogated and tortured by Israel's Shin Bet - domestic intelligence service - who is accusing him of being the mastermind behind an alleged attack in an illegal West Bank settlement.

"He was in good health before he was arrested. My husband was not suffering from any illness, and his health has deteriorated because of the torture that he underwent," Noura Miselmani, Arbeed's wife, told the Middle East Eye.

Miselmani explained that Israeli special forces beat her husband when they arrested him in front of his workplace on Wednesday. She added that he appeared in front of a court the following day with bruises, and told the judge he is severely suffering and unable to eat as a result of the beating.

"Despite his difficult condition, the judge issued a decision to allow a military interrogation and the use of force to extract information from him," added the victim's wife. The intelligence agency released a statement on Saturday saying that the members of the cell accused of the attack in the occupied West Bank leading to the death of one Israeli, all belonged to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

In the same statement it added that "during the investigation of the head of the terror cell responsible for the attack on the Ein Buvin spring that killed Rina

Shnerb, the investigator reported that he did not feel well. According to the procedure, he was transferred to the hospital for medical examinations and treatment. No other details can be provided." Arbeed's wife said Shin Bet only made this statement as a way to protect itself and avoid any legal responsibility if her husband were to die.

Arbeed's lawyers said they were only given permission to see him at 22.30 GMT on Sunday when they discovered he had arrived unconscious, with a fractured rib cage, bruises, signs of beating all over his body and severe kidney failure. His family says they have been restricted from seeing him.

Sahar Francis, director of Addameer, recalled that torture of detainees is illegal and any confessions obtained under such circumstances is unreliable and shouldn't be taken into account. "What Samir underwent is a war crime according to the Rome Charter, especially as he entered critical condition within 48 hours as a result of being tortured," she told the Middle East Eye, adding that his hospitalization "confirms that he was subjected to violence and severe torture."

Francis explained that the use of methods amounting to torture during military interrogations of Palestinian detainees is extremely frequent in Israel and commonly employed by the country's authorities. "There are decisions by the Israeli Supreme Court that allow the Shin Bet to use torture as a means of extracting confessions," she explained.

Meanwhile, as Israel continues to be an Enhanced Government, a U.S. federal appeals court hearing the case of a Guantanamo Bay inmate took the rare step of calling "enhanced interrogation techniques" torture. "To use colloquial terms," wrote the Ninth U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco in a ruling Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2019, "Abu Zubaydah was tortured."

At the secret CIA sites, the court said, Zubaydah was "persistently and repeatedly waterboarded," held in a "coffin-sized ... confinement box" for hundreds of hours, kept in cramped and stressful positions, slapped, grabbed and deprived of sleep. Insects were placed near him to exploit a personal phobia, and he was subjected to a mock burial. The CIA eventually concluded that Zubaydah was not a member of Al Qaeda, according to a 2014 Senate Report that found that torture in interrogations had produced little useful intelligence.

Zubaydah has been held without charge since September 2006 at the detention center on the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. His lawyers have urged the government to file charges against him so they can challenge his confinement. Abu Zubaydah was thought to be a high-level member of Al-Qa'ida with detailed knowledge of terrorist plans. He was shuttled between secret CIA sites around the world for the next four years before winding up at Guantanamo.

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