



## Family of Israel Hernandez, Teen Who Died After Taser Incident, to Sue Miami Beach Police Department

*By Gilma Avalos - August 27, 2013*

Eighteen-year-old Israel Hernandez's grieving mother cried at the podium where family attorneys announced they will be moving forward with a lawsuit against the city of Miami Beach and the city's police department.

"We're not trying to drag attention to our family, but we're trying to give the attention that my brother needs so there's no more [cases like] Israel's happening where we live," said his older sister Offir Hernandez.

"What we know is that Israel dies on that pavement on Harding Avenue after having been suspected of what can only be described as a minor property offense," said Todd McPharlin, one of the family's attorneys.

Three weeks ago, Miami Beach Police said they caught the 18-year-old, tagging an empty McDonald's building. Hernandez allegedly took off running when officers approached him. Police said officer Jorge Mercado — now placed on administrative leave — used a Taser on Hernandez.

While in custody, Hernandez went into medical duress and died at Mount Sinai Hospital, according to authorities. Lawyers question whether a Taser should have even been used in this case.

"It is a weapon that exacts excruciating pain, incapacitating pain on the subject and carries with it the risk of serious injury and death," said McPharlin.

Among many claims, the complaint alleges that officers are not sufficiently trained or supervised when it comes to the use of Tasers.

"We believe that this investigation will illustrate that the city of Miami Beach, and the Miami Beach Police Department do not properly train or supervise their officers in their use of force, including their use of a Taser weapon, as we believe occurred in Israel's case," McPharlin said.

"And do not properly prepare their officers for necessary and critical medical attention when they use such weapons."

Miami Beach Police are conducting an investigation into the teen's death, which will be reviewed by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. But the family's lawyers said that is not enough. They are asking for a separate law enforcement agency to conduct its own investigation.

"We want justice and support. We give thanks to those who are giving us support right there in your houses please keep the support," Hernandez's said.

The Miami Beach Police Department didn't comment on the lawsuit.