

You Can't Arm a Genocidal State Into Moderation. So Why Does the West Keep Trying?

Western governments will never isolate and sanction Israel. The war machine will roll on until either we stop it or its lethal games blow up in all our faces

By [Jonathan Cook](#)

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There are many reasons [Gaza](#) has been mostly off the radar of the western establishment media for months now, even as the enclave turns into an ever-bigger [killing zone](#).

One is that, nearly a year into what the [World Court](#) has termed a “plausible genocide”, where [Israel](#) has kept out western journalists and killed off most [Palestinian](#) journalists, as well as driving out [international aid organisations](#) and the [United Nations](#), there is almost no one left to tell us what is happening.

We have only snapshots of individual suffering, but not the big picture. How many Palestinians are dead? We know there are at least 40,000 killed by Israel – the deaths recorded by Palestinian officials before the health system collapsed. But how many more? Double that figure? Quadruple it? Times it by 10? The truth is, [no one knows](#).

What about the famine in Gaza that has been raging for many, many months as Israel has systematically blocked aid into the enclave, in line with its promise last October to deny the Palestinians there [food, water and power](#)?

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, has [requested arrest warrants](#) for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his defence minister, Yoav Gallant, because the pair's starvation of Gaza is a crime against humanity.

But the prolonged famine is presented as a near-victimless crime. Where are the dead from this famine? They are certainly not on our TV screens or on our front pages.

The true death toll will probably never be reported, just as it wasn't after the West's Middle East bloodbaths in [Afghanistan](#), [Iraq](#) and [Libya](#). Western politicians have no interest in knowing the truth, and the western establishment media has no interest in discovering it.

Democracy Guttled

The news from Gaza is being actively buried for another reason. Israel's genocide continues to be tangible, shocking proof that western capitals are not the bastions of democracy and bulwarks against barbarianism they claim to be.

Western politicians have been utterly complicit in the genocide – a fact impossible to hide from their publics. The killing could have been stopped at any point, had the Biden

administration so willed it.

Ordinary people have made clear they want the slaughter to end, which is why Biden has to pretend to be “[working tirelessly](#)” to negotiate a ceasefire – a ceasefire he could impose whenever he chooses to.

Israel is entirely dependent on [US](#) military, diplomatic and financial largesse, as is only too clear from the [50,000 tonnes of weapons](#) the Biden administration has so far shipped to Israel since last October.

But the truth is that western politics is now entirely unresponsive to popular demand. The last vestiges of democratic accountability were gutted many years ago as the West’s political systems were completely captured by powerful globe-spanning corporations.

Tens of millions of people turned out on the streets of Europe to try to halt the US and [Britain’s](#) illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003, and it made not a jot of difference.

The situation with Gaza is even worse. It is not just that, as before, no one in power is listening. Those opposing Israel’s genocide, and western complicity in it, are being utterly maligned. The millions marching against the slaughter are reported as “tens of thousands”, while being actively [smeared as “antisemites”](#).

Western states – and their self-professed “defensive alliance”, Nato – are not there to represent the public interest. They have become chiefly vehicles for the promotion of the narrow interests of a corporate elite, whose purpose, in turn, is to siphon into private hands the profits from publicly funded, permanent wars.

Profits from Slaughter

It isn’t just arms manufacturers and the hi-tech industries, with their booming surveillance businesses, whose shares are soaring on the back of the slaughter in Gaza and [Ukraine](#).

Bloomberg reported last month that Israeli air strikes on Gaza had turned the homes of 2.3 million Palestinians into [42m tonnes of rubble](#). That’s enough to fill a line of dump trucks from New York to Singapore.

It won’t be Gaza companies raking in the profits from the mammoth clean-up operation. After a 17-year blockade of the enclave by Israel, Gaza’s industrial and commercial sector barely existed even before Israel’s current wrecking spree. The beneficiaries, once again, will be western corporations.

If the “day after” ever arrives, it will be western corporations bidding to rebuild Gaza – and most likely not for the current Palestinian inhabitants. Israel wants them either dead or ethnically cleansed from the territory.

A razed, emptied Gaza will be a tabula rasa. Expensive new beachfront properties can be marketed to wealthy Israeli Jews. New industrial zones and ports will be able to export easily to Europe and North Africa.

And that’s before we consider who gets to exploit the bountiful natural gas just off Gaza’s coast, which western corporations have been [greedily eyeing](#) for the past two decades.

Excuses for Repression

Western corporations have been growing ever fatter at the same time as western publics have been required to submit to endless belt-tightening.

The UK's new prime minister, Keir Starmer, who understands that his own political survival depends on continuing this corporate raiding of the public wealth, is busily managing Britons' expectations.

Armed with a massive parliamentary majority, he had no message of hope or change. He [told the British public](#) last week that "things are worse than we ever imagined". There was no reference to why they might be so bad, beyond predictable political point-scoring against the previous government.

Starmer warned of the need to "do things differently". But the difference he offered was actually a commitment to more austerity – the signature policy of his predecessors.

And, just as Starmer's agenda is one of no change on the domestic front, it is also one of no change on foreign policy. The endless wars will continue.

The new British government, like the old one, keeps peddling excuses to [continue to sell arms](#) to an Israeli military using them to massacre civilians.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy grovelled before Israel on 2 September [as he announced](#) he was suspending eight percent of such sales after he had been warned of their possible use in Israeli war crimes. It is apparently fine to send the other 92 percent of military contracts, including components used in Israel's squadron of F-35 warplanes, to a regime actively engaged in genocide.

Meanwhile, the new government, like the old one, pursues with what it calls "[laser focus](#)" wider business opportunities with Israel.

In the US, Kamala Harris, shoe-horned in as the Democrats' presidential candidate to replace Joe Biden, without a single vote cast, is sold by a compliant media as the [candidate of "joy"](#) – vapid political messaging as void of content as former President Barack Obama's much-celebrated slogan of "hope".

"Joy" is serving as an excuse to repress. Demonstrators outside the Democratic National Convention as it crowned Harris protested against her and Biden's near-year-long complicity in the Gaza genocide. But they were not going to be allowed to sour the "joyful" mood inside. They [were forcefully swept](#) out of view by police.

In her first interview since being nominated, Harris [promised US support](#) for the genocide in Gaza would continue – even if, as seems quite possible, it robs her of a handful of swing states in November and ensures Donald Trump is elected president.

The 'Antisemitism' Formula

Both Starmer and Harris are faithful creatures of a permanent bureaucracy that was long ago captured by the West's profit-hungry corporate war machine.

Its most favoured son is Israel, a highly militarised state – a colonial outgrowth of the West – implanted into an oil-rich Middle East like a bone stuck in the back of the throat. Israel is there to advance an openly belligerent Jewish supremacism, mirroring a western supremacism that nowadays prefers to veil its imperial ambitions.

From early on, Israel's backers were given a perfect cover story for the crimes they sponsored against the native inhabitants of the land, the Palestinians – and one that could be adapted to justify Israel's permanently warlike posture in the region.

In a self-serving narrative promoted by the West, the continuing threat of antisemitism required Jews to have their own militarised fortress state – a modern [Pale of Settlement](#) – as a bulwark against a future Holocaust.

Western capitals accepted one marker only of whether westerners were rehabilitated from their earlier Jew-hatred: they must agree to indulge Israel's every military wish.

Those in the West who armed Israel and helped it expel the native Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, those who turned a blind eye as it built the region's only nuclear arsenal, those who encouraged its wars against its neighbours, and those who lobbied for the undermining of international law in the pursuit of those wars, proved themselves to be free of the virus of Jew-hatred.

Those who opposed western imperialism and the excesses of its favourite Middle East client state, those who stood up for human rights and international law, could be dismissed and denounced as antisemites.

That well-worn formula, extraordinary as it seems, has persisted even as Israel has pursued Jewish supremacism to its logical end-point in Gaza: exterminating the population there.

Those in favour of arming a genocide are the good guys. Those opposed are the antisemites and supporters of terrorism.

Independent journalists and Palestinian solidarity activists are now [being rounded up](#) and [intimidated](#) under draconian anti-terrorism laws in Britain.

Social media platforms are limiting the reach of [posts critical of Israel](#), herding opposition to the genocide into small online ghettos.

Universities are starting to draft new rules to make being a Zionist – subscribing to Israel's extremist political ideology – [a protected characteristic](#), no different from being born Hispanic or Black.

The [aim is to silence](#) all Palestinian solidarity activism on campus as equivalent to racism, extinguishing any chance of a repetition of the large protests that swept US universities during the spring and summer.

Inversion of Reality

For good reason, western establishments are making it impossible to explain the roots of Israel's genocide. They are excising the very terminology needed to begin that conversation.

Zionism is an ideology that originated centuries ago, embedded in an [antisemitic Christian fundamentalism](#) that required forcing the Jews of Europe to “return” to the Holy Land. That way, a supposed biblical prophecy would be fulfilled, bringing about an end times in which Christians alone would find redemption.

Little more than a century ago, Zionism started to make inroads into the thinking of a small European Jewish elite, who saw Christian antisemitism as a path towards the creation of a Jewish state they could rule on licence from the West.

The antisemitic Christian Zionists wanted the Jews out of Europe and ghettoised in the Holy Land – and so did the new breed of Jewish Zionists.

Theodor Herzl, the father of Jewish Zionism, precisely understood this confluence of interests when he [wrote in his Diaries](#): “The anti-Semites will become our most dependable friends, the anti-Semitic countries our allies.”

To understand how and why Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, and why it is being allowed by the West, it is vital to analyse the historic role played by Zionism, and how antisemitism has been weaponised over decades to serve as the perfect cover for the dispossession, and now extermination, of the Palestinian people.

Which is precisely why, on his path to power, Starmer, Britain’s new prime minister, made sure [to conflate anti-Zionism](#) – opposition to Zionism – with antisemitism.

The corporate war machine requires of anyone it allows near the centres of power to prove that they will maintain this inversion of reality: that those who support war are the good guys, and those who oppose genocide are the antisemites.

In trying to turn reality back onto its feet, Starmer’s predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, doomed himself to endless smears.

Now those who try to maintain – in the face of a genocide – their grasp on reality, as well as their humanity, find themselves similarly vilified.

Genocide by Proxy?

This is the hidden context for interpreting the ever-more dangerous developments unfolding around the Gaza genocide.

Israeli political and military leaders are split on where to head next.

There are those ready – having laid waste to Gaza – to do a deal on the remaining Israeli hostages, pull back somewhat and let the rest of the genocide gradually play out.

Aluf Benn, editor of Israel’s venerable Haaretz newspaper, recently set out [the emerging plan](#) for “the day after”.

Israel will split Gaza into northern and southern territories along the Netzarim corridor, and starve anyone in the north to death if they refuse to leave.

North Gaza will be settled by Jews, attracted by its “convenient topography, a sea view, and proximity to central Israel”.

South Gaza, packed with destitute, homeless and often maimed refugees deprived of housing, schools and hospitals, will be left to rot under an Israeli siege, an intensification of Israel's policy before 7 October. The media, it is expected, will lose what little interest it already exhibits in the plight of Palestinians there.

Benn avoids mentioning what happens next. The enclave's population will face a long, cold, wet winter with no power or sanitation. Starvation will deepen, epidemics will spread.

A genocide by proxy.

Unless, that is, neighbouring states, most especially [Egypt](#), can be blackmailed into [agreeing to become complicit](#) in Gaza's ethnic cleansing.

This is the view of much of the military command, expressed in defence minister Gallant's reported "[shouting match](#)" with Netanyahu at a cabinet meeting on 30 August over the prime minister's continuing moves to obstruct a hostage deal with Hamas.

It is also the impulse behind the huge protests in Israeli cities this week, and the calling of [a general strike](#) by the main labour union, after six hostages were brought back from Gaza dead.

Two Birds, One Stone

The question is whether Netanyahu's government can be persuaded to stick to this "minimalist" genocide.

Impatient to complete the slaughter in Gaza, and aware that Israel is already a pariah state in the eyes of non-western states and now, increasingly, with western publics, the far right in Netanyahu's government see only opportunity. They wish to [block a ceasefire indefinitely](#), and use that time to expand the genocide into the larger, more prized Palestinian territory of the West Bank.

This is Israel's version of killing two birds with one stone. It is also the only way for Netanyahu to keep his far-right coalition together and exploit his role as "wartime leader" to put off his date with the courts in his long-running corruption trial.

Last week's large-scale attacks on major West Bank cities, with Israeli officials warning the population to be ready to flee invaded [areas at short notice](#), are a foretaste of what is intended.

Having received no meaningful pushback from western capitals over the Gaza genocide, the Israeli right has grown more confident that the same template can be rolled out for the West Bank.

Foreign Minister [Israel Katz](#) noted that invasions of the West Bank would be handled "exactly as we deal with terror infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian civilians".

In response, a US official indicated that Washington was ready to sign up to an expansion [into the West Bank](#) of Israel's war against the Palestinian people: "We recognise that localised evacuation orders may be necessary in certain instances to protect civilian lives

during sensitive counter-terrorism operations.”

The sense of urgency has only been underscored to Israeli leaders by the [World Court's recent ruling](#) that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories is illegal and constitutes apartheid rule.

Rampaging through the West Bank can be justified indefinitely on the pretext of foiling an ["Iranian-backed terror threat"](#).

And US support will only deepen if Trump wins in November. Should he manage to foreclose on Nato's proxy war in Ukraine, the military resources expended there can be redirected towards Israel.

Israeli Pyromania

Netanyahu and his allies understand that his solution for the "Palestinian problem" risks a regional conflagration, which is why they need to drag the US deeper into the mire.

And they have multiple potential provocations up their sleeve that can further entangle Washington in neutralising a regional "axis of resistance" that stands as an obstacle to Israel's military hegemony in the region.

Itamar Ben Gvir, the fascist minister in charge of the police, is seeking to light a match under al-Aqsa in occupied East Jerusalem. His police militias have been running protection for Jewish extremists breaking into the mosque complex to pray there.

On 26 August, Ben Gvir stepped up his incitement by calling publicly for the first time to [build a synagogue](#) inside al-Aqsa.

But the real target is Iran and groups allied to it. Netanyahu's pyromania has extended to a series of executions designed both to humiliate Tehran, the main sponsor of resistance, and its [Hezbollah](#) allies in [Lebanon](#), while making negotiations to end the bloodletting in Gaza impossible.

Back in April, Israel struck [Iran's consulate in Damascus](#), killing 16 people. And on 31 July, [it assassinated](#) Hamas' political leader and chief negotiator, **Ismail Haniyeh**, while he was being hosted in Tehran.

A day earlier, Israel [killed Fuad Shukr](#), a Hezbollah military commander, in an attack on the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

Simmering Border

Netanyahu knew the inevitable consequences.

[Yahya Sinwar](#), Hamas' much less compromising military leader, has filled the void left in the group by Haniyeh's execution.

And both Hezbollah and Iran have even stronger grounds for launching retaliation operations against Israel that could quickly spiral into an all-out war.

That came close to happening late last month with an [exchange of heavy fire](#) across the

Lebanese border, with Israeli warplanes bombing more than 40 sites in Lebanon while Hezbollah launched more than 300 rockets and drones at military sites in Israel.

Israel's northern border has been simmering for months.

Senior Israeli politicians have been noisily demanding that the Israeli military destroy south Lebanon [and reoccupy it](#). In June, Israel was reported to have approved a plan for a war in Lebanon. The US envoy to Lebanon was said to have told Hezbollah that Washington "won't be able to [hold Israel back](#)".

The New York Times has reported [soaring recruitment](#) of Palestinians in Lebanon by armed Hamas brigades there, adding another unpredictable element to the mix.

And in a useful feedback loop for Israel, the more it can provoke Iran, the greater excuse it creates to repeat the Gaza genocide formula in the West Bank, bombing its cities and driving out its population.

Foreign Minister Katz has been setting out precisely this thesis in English-language posts for western audiences, suggesting that Iran is smuggling weapons through [Jordan](#) into the West Bank.

[He claims](#) Tehran is "working to establish an eastern terror front against Israel through special units of the IRGC [Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps], involved in smuggling weapons, funding, and directing terror organisations".

Western politicians and media are never going to admit that Israel is carrying out a genocide in Gaza. The moment they do, the veil of illusions fostered for decades about Israel - designed to conceal the West's complicity in Israeli crimes - would be torn away.

In committing a genocide, a state crosses a threshold. It cannot be armed into moderation. Nor can it be reasoned into peacemaking. It must be aggressively isolated and sanctioned.

There is no sign western establishments are willing to do that for one very simple reason: they cannot afford to do it.

So they will continue feeding the war machine until either we stop them or its lethal games blow up in all our faces.

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