

Breaking Gaza 's Will: Israel 's Enduring Fantasy

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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My three-year-old son Sammy walked into my room uninvited as I sorted through another batch of fresh photos from Gaza .

I was looking for a specific image, one that would humanise Palestinians as living, breathing human beings, neither masked nor mutilated. But to no avail.

All the photos I received spoke of the reality that is Gaza today – homes, schools and civilian infrastructure bombed beyond description. All the faces were either of dead or dying people.

I paused as I reached a horrifying photo in the slideshow of a young boy and his sister huddled on a single hospital trolley waiting to be identified and buried. Their faces were darkened as if they were charcoal and their lifeless eyes were still widened with the horror that they experienced as they were burned slowly by a white phosphorus shell.

It was just then that Sammy walked into my room snooping around for a missing toy. “What is this, daddy?” he inquired.

I rushed to click past the horrific image, only to find myself introducing a no less shocking one. Fretfully, I turned the monitor off, then turned to my son as he stood puzzled. His eyes sparkled inquisitively as he tried to make sense of what he had just seen.

He needed to know about these kids whose little bodies had been burned beyond recognition.

“Where are their mummies and daddies? Why are they all so smoky all the time?”

I explained to him that they are Palestinians, that they were hurting “just a little” and that their “mummies and daddies will be right back.”

The reality is that these children and thousands like them in Gaza have experienced the most profound pain, a pain that we may never in our lives comprehend.

“I think that Gaza is now being used as a test laboratory for new weapons,” Mads Gilbert, a Norwegian doctor who had recently returned from Gaza told reporters in Oslo .

“This is a new generation of very powerful small explosives that detonates with extreme power and dissipates its power within a range of five to 10 metres

“We have not seen the casualties affected directly by the bomb, because they are normally torn to pieces and do not survive, but we have seen a number of very brutal amputations.”

The dreadful weapons are known as dense inert metal explosives (DIME), “an experimental kind of explosive” but only one of several new weapons that Israel has been using in Gaza , the world’s most densely populated regions.

Israel could not possibly have found a better place to experiment with DIME or the use of white phosphorus in civilian areas than Gaza .

The hapless inhabitants of the strip have been disowned. The power of the media, political coercion, intimidation and manipulation have demonised this imprisoned nation fighting for its life in the tiny spaces left of its land.

No wonder Israel refused to allow foreign journalists into the tiny enclave and brazenly bombed the remaining international presence in Gaza .

As long as there are no witnesses to the war crimes committed in Gaza , Israel is confident that it can sell a fabricated story to the world that it is, as always, the victim, one that has been terrorised and, strangely enough, demonised as well.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on January 15.

“Livni said that these were hard times for Israel , but that the government was forced to act in Gaza in order to protect Israeli citizens.

“She stated that Gaza was ruled by a terrorist regime and that Israel must carry on a dialogue with moderate sources while simultaneously fighting terror.”

The same peculiar message was conveyed by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as he declared his one-sided ceasefire on January 17.

Never mind that the “terrorist regime” was democratically elected and had honoured a ceasefire agreement with Israel for six months, receiving nothing in return but a lethal siege interrupted by an occasional round of death and destruction.

Livni is not as perceptive and shrewd as the US media fantasises. Blunt-speaking Ehud Barak and stiff-faced Mark Regev are not convincing men of wisdom. Their logic is bizarre and wouldn’t stand the test of reason.

But they have unfettered access to the media, where they are hardly challenged by journalists who know well that protecting one’s citizens doesn’t require the violation of international and humanitarian laws, targeting medical workers, sniper fire at children and demolishing homes with entire families holed up inside. Securing your borders doesn’t require imprisoning and starving your neighbours and turning their homes to smoking heaps of rubble.

Olmert wants to “break the will” of Hamas, i.e. the Palestinians, since the Hamas government was elected and backed by the majority of the Palestinian people.

Isn’t 60 years of suffering and survival enough to convince Olmert that the will of the Palestinians cannot be broken? How many heaps of wreckage and mutilated bodies will be enough to convince the prime minister that those who fight for their freedom will either be free or will die trying?

Far-right politician Avigdor Lieberman, a rising star in Israel , is not yet convinced. He thinks that more can be done to “secure” his country, which was established in 1948 on the ruins of destroyed Palestinian towns and villages. He has a plan.

“We must continue to fight Hamas just like the United States did with the Japanese in World War II,” said the head of ultra-nationalist opposition party Yisrael Beitenu.

A selective reader of history, Lieberman could only think of the 1945 atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima . But something else happened during those years that Lieberman carefully omitted. It’s called the Holocaust, a term that many are increasingly using to describe the Israeli massacres in the Gaza Strip.

It is strange that conventional Israeli wisdom still dictates that “the Arabs understand only the language of force.” If that were true, then they would have conceded their rights after the first massacre in 1948. But, following more than 60 years filled with massacres new and old, they continue to resist.

“Freedom or death,” is the popular Palestinian mantra. These are not simply words, but a rule by which Palestinians live and die. Gaza is the proof and Israeli leaders are yet to understand.

My son persisted. “Why are Palestinians so smoky all the time, Daddy?”

“When you grow up, you’ll understand.”

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