

Debunking 18 Claims Justifying the Gaza Massacre

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In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

After spending a great deal of time online, I read and watched endless virtual conversations about who's at fault and who's not in the wake of the over 60 casualties in Gaza on Monday. Discussions varied from whether Israel is exercising a righteous act of self-defense, or if Palestinians are legitimately organizing a peaceful protest; whether it is a conflict between two equals who are both guilty, or it is between an army of a state and an occupied territory packed with civilians?

It's mind-blowing how people have the energy to keep repeating the same claims over and over again for days and weeks, ignoring outside information. That is why I have decided to spare others the time, effort, and emotion, by writing out the most common claims I have seen regarding the events of the Great March of Return, followed by my responses. Those interested in fact-checking these common falsehoods, can find them in one place.

The one claim that I will *not* deal with, one of the most popular, is that of: *"The Bible say God give the land of Israel to the Jewish people?"* Fundamentalists, regardless of faith, will never see beyond their own holy books. This list isn't for them and I won't bother trying to change their minds.

Claim 1: Israel acted with "restraint" towards protesters in Gaza.

Speaking at the United Nations on Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador to the UN [Nikki Haley said](#),

"[W]ho among us would accept this type of activity on your border? No one would. No country in this chamber would act with more restraint than Israel has."

Even harder it was to listen to [an Israeli official saying](#) how

"We have Israeli civilian communities, farms, and homesteads just 100 meters away from the border. If we're allowing that borderer to be porous we'll have dead Israelis."

First thing I can think of is, what border? Israel is the only country in the world with no defined borders, as they keep expanding into others' land. The line between Gaza and Israel is an armistice line from 1949 and 1967, not an internationally recognized border.

Second, Palestinians are not crossing the armistice line and killing Israelis living right across

the fence once they are “unleashed.” They are not animals, neither are they cannibals! Palestinians are the not encaged blood-thirsty animals that will prey the first thing they witness once they are out. Yes, they are trying to cross the fence into 1948 areas, but this is about realizing their right of return to the land many of them were forced to leave. [Seventy percent](#) of Palestinians in Gaza are refugees from cities and towns in Israel. These people are trying to go home. They are trying to get to the houses they still have keys and official documents for! They are not embarking on a secret murderous mission.

Claim 2: Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years ago. Moving the embassy is just a recognition of that reality.

*At the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** said,*

“In Jerusalem, King David established our capital 3,000 years ago.” Several members of the Trump administration have stated in recent weeks that Jerusalem is already the capital of Israel and moving the embassy is a “recognition of reality.”

King David is described in the Bible as the second king to preside over the United Monarchy, a unified territory of all Jewish tribes that lasted for about 100 years. Most of what is known about King David [comes from religious readings, not archeological evidence](#).

According to religious tradition, King David reigned around 3,000 years ago. His capital was considered to be where the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan is located in East Jerusalem, along with the Israeli settlement and Bible park called the “City of David.”

Claim 3: This Great March of Return is totally organized by Hamas, a terrorist group.

It’s quite funny how this claim gives a huge deal of legitimacy to Hamas. They do Hamas a favor when they say that it could actually mobilize more than 40,000 people in one day for one goal.

The Great March of Return was organized by a grassroots group of Palestinians in Gaza. Here’s one of the founders of the protests, **Nabeel Diab**, telling [Mondoweiss that it is a lie that Hamas is behind this movement](#).

Hamas is paying \$1000 to every Palestinian who tries to breach the [#Gaza](#) border with [#Israel](#) and murder Israelis.

The media wants you to think the [#GreatReturnMarch](#) is a human rights protest and that those people are innocent, but it is literally state sponsored terrorism.

— Laura Loomer (@LauraLoomer) [May 14, 2018](#)

Claim 4: Hamas paid each Palestinian protesters a whopping \$1,000 to cross into Israel.

Alt-right personality **Laura Loomer** has circulated the claim that

“ Hamas is paying \$1000 to every Palestinian who tries to break the Gaza border with Israel and murder Israelis.”

Hamas was created in 1987. Palestinians had been resisting Israel since 1948. Who paid them before that?

Also, the assumption that Palestinians are nothing but a bunch of immoral mercenaries, is quite insulting to the nation that still comes up with new creative ways to prove its right in a better life.

Fact-check: relatives of Palestinians who were killed by Israeli forces [were offered \\$3,000, and injured Palestinians were reportedly paid between \\$200 and \\$500](#). In reality these funds cover funerals, hospital bills, and provide a modest welfare stipend to the bereaved. More importantly, no Palestinian is being offered cash to kill Israelis.

Claim 5: Palestinians hate Israelis more than they love their kids.

This is a tired argument that keeps resurfacing one way or another ever since former Israeli **Prime Minister Golda Mier** said the first iteration,

“Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us.”

[The line was just as offensive back then as it is now.](#)

I am not sure how I can explain that *no sane human being feels at ease endangering their kids*, no matter what outcome they are expecting. No one can do this. None. I hardly think this kind of statements are meant to be discussed with logic. These are dehumanizing cruel insults I have no interest in wasting time on.

Claim 6: Live ammunition was only used to stop the ones crossing the fence. Israel used tear gas and rubber bullets for the most part. The casualties of journalists and minors are totally unintended mistakes.

I won't say a word here. I'd rather let the IDF official Twitter account respond to this one (note: the IDF later removed the tweet):



Claim 7: This is Israel's land and it will always be Israel's, deal with it.

We are dealing with it, trust me. You took territory by force and ethnic-cleansing. We are trying reclaim our rights as civil and bloodless as possible in regular non-violent civil disobedience and boycotts.

The United States must play an aggressive role in bringing Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and the international community together to address Gaza's humanitarian crisis and stop this escalating violence.

Claim 8: The humanitarian crisis in Gaza must be solved.

Senator Bernie Sanders *tweeted yesterday,*

“The United States must play an aggressive role in bringing Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and the international community together to address Gaza’s humanitarian crisis and stop this escalating violence.”

While I appreciate these attempts to educate Americans on the Palestinian plight, and I understand how hard it is to maneuver while trying to avoid backlash, or in Bernie Sander’s case being smeared as “a self-hating Jew,” it is not very effective to call on an end to only the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, although it is getting worse by day.

The core problem is occupation and injustice. Without an end to the blockade, the humanitarian crisis will never end. Palestinians do not only demand food, water, and medication. They need full freedom, just like everybody else in the world.

Claim 9: Why should Israel give the Palestinians a state? Israel gave them Gaza and look what they have done with it? They are even split up between Fatah and Hamas.

This usually comes in response to any mention of a future Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This logic that says *we do things better, we have to train them first, they can’t run their own affairs*, is quite similar to the colonial narrative that says *brown people always need supervision from the others who know better*, as if we are underage teenagers who can’t control our own fates. I don’t really have anything to say to counter this claim except, *“If you are going to use this statement, then don’t get mad when we call Israel a colonial-settler state.”*



Palestinian family, 1910s, Ramallah. (Photo: Public Domain)

Claim 10: Every stone in this land was built by Israel. It was a barren land, Israelis built and grew it.

Palestinians do no deny the Jewish existence in historic Palestine. We do realize that the Jews existed there; we are not interested in contradicting the truth. It might be surprising to some, but both the Christians and the Muslims of Palestine believe in all the prophets of the Jewish faith; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon. Narratives of the stories related to these figures are almost identical to people from all three faiths. There is no conflict there. In fact there are [Jewish Palestinians](#).

Furthermore, Palestine was not “a barren” land when European Jews arriving in the late 1800s and early 1900s began to increase. Haifa was an important cultural hub in the region. People worked to make a living, and historic Palestine was considered mostly an agrarian region of the Ottoman Empire. The old “land without a people” claim can be labeled as fiction.



Haifa Port. (Photo: Z. Kluger. Erez Israel from the air - 1937-38)



Advertisement for a 1939 theater production staged in Haifa. (Photo: Arab48)

Claim 11: Palestinians be third-generation refugees. That's ridiculous.

Well, I think we can. As long as Palestinians are living in refugee camps, have very limited accessibility to the houses our families were forced out of, Palestinians can be refugees. Once Palestinians are given the choice to have our houses and farms back, only then we stop being refugees.

Claim 12: Refugee camps are not what you think. People drive nice cars and have decent housing. They even get educated. Why are they still complaining?

Thanks to the UNRWA schools and vocational training centers, generations of Palestinians refugees were and are still able to be provided with education. This is one basic human right granted by the UN. Although the education from the UN might not always be the highest-quality one can dream of, Palestinians have constantly managed to make something out of it, so they have better lives.

This does not go against the fact that they are still displaced. If you wish to understand why they can't simply belong to where they were born and forget about anything else, please [read my previous article on the connection between Palestinians and their heritage](#).

Mahmoud Abbas, end your apartheid! <https://t.co/soiwRRJYNZ>
<pic.twitter.com/fkbUOIrxep>

— Danny Ayalon (@DannyAyalon) [February 20, 2018](#)

Claim 13: Israel is not an apartheid state. Palestinian territory IS where you can't find one Jew living among Palestinians. Israelis are not welcome there.

This is an increasingly popular allegation, that it is the Palestinians who are practicing apartheid, not Israel. This narrative is promoted by Israel's former ambassador to the U.S., Danny Ayalon. He even bothered to produce a video about it and make it his pinned tweet.

The Palestinian Authority does not ban Israelis from being in, or living in the West Bank. It is Israeli who has made it illegal for Israeli citizens to enter Area A of the West Bank, the section of the occupied Palestinian territory that houses all of the Palestinian urban areas.

Claim 14: Palestinians are anti-Semites.

I totally understand that European Jews still live the horrors of the Holocaust. I do realize that the anti-Jewish sentiment is still present in Europe and the U.S. to this very day, I have witnessed it first-hand. But remember, we, Palestinians, had nothing to do with this. We are not the Germans.

Claim 15: Palestinians are originally from other parts of the world, they are not natives to the land.

This could be true indeed. But if we are going to trace every inhabitant of every spot in the world to their ancestral origins, it should sound fair when the 5.2 million Native Americans decide to kick out every other American citizen and tell them: “you have all of Europe, Africa, and Asia to live in, this is ours and only ours.”

Moments ago, in what seem to be the dumbest ever [#Palestinian](#) TV interview, [#Hamas](#) official Salah Al-Bardawil confirmed what Israel was saying all along: "50 of the 62 deaths (80%) on the [#Gaza](#) border in May 14th were of Hamas operatives". The work of the just is done by others! pic.twitter.com/KHUuiPLFnq

— Elad Ratson ?? (@EladRatson) [May 16, 2018](#)

Claim 16: Most casualties on May 14th were middle aged males in military age.

I just heard this yesterday by the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on CNN. This is usually used to say that they are potential terrorists. Totally shifting attention from the fact that there were kids among the victims. As if saying that middle-aged male Palestinians are necessarily violent death-loving ones.

This reminds me of what extremists on our side usually say when they wish to justify suicide attacks in Israeli shops and buses, saying that *“ALL Israelis serve in the military, that are all responsible for occupation, therefore, they are all legitimate targets”*.

If the first claim is accepted by the international community, I don't see why the second isn't. It's either both are true, or neither. And for the sake of humanity I sincerely hope it's neither.

This claim originated from Hamas' Saleh Bardwil who said 50 of the 62 killed on Monday were Hamas' people. This statement is unfounded propaganda. Neither Hamas or Israel has provided evidence that this is true. And Bardwil has an incentive to fabricate Hamas' importance wherever he can.

Claim 17: Palestinians don't respect woman. They are barbaric. Why would civilized people give them any rights? They have to be better human beings first.

The fact that there are various forms of injustices within a community doesn't mean they can be deprived of their basic rights. Palestinians can resist patriarchy, corruption, double standards, all while resisting occupation. If they cannot, I demand that I see examples of societies and countries that could not enjoy full sovereignty before they were perfectly ideal and crime-free.

Claim 18: The call for Palestinian right to return, is an explicit call to destroy Israel and to kill its people.

Why not think “The call for Palestinian right to return is [a great step to achieving peace](#), so Israelis and Palestinians can live all together in one secular, multi-cultural state with equal rights for all, and an ending refugee sufferings?”

The claim shows, if anything, a deep sense of dehumanizing Palestinians, of not showing a regard to their feelings, aspirations, needs, and most importantly: rights.

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