

Depopulation, Destruction and Displacement of the Palestinian People

Al Nakba Redux

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

For Palestinians, the Nakba “Catastrophe” is their “Holocaust” six-month slaughter and displacement before and after the May 1948 establishment of Israel. In December 1947, Jews in Palestine numbered 600,000 compared to 1.3 million Palestinians. David Ben-Gurion ordered them removed and for “Every attack....to end with occupation, destruction and expulsion.”

He meant depopulation, destruction, mass slaughter, displacement, and erasing a proud people’s history. Palestine was to become Israel. Most of the job was completed, more in 1967, and thereafter incrementally until total dispossession is achieved. Gaza is the latest battleground. More ahead is planned. The struggle for liberation continues.

In all respects, Gaza’s situation is dysfunctional and calamitous. Consider the dire medical state alone.

The UK Lancet Medical Journal on Gaza

The prestigious Lancet issued the following statement:

“We find it hard to believe that an otherwise internationally respected, democratic nation can sanction such large and indiscriminate human atrocities in a territory already under land and sea blockade. The heavy loss of civilian life and destruction of Gaza’s health system is unjustified and disproportional....The collective punishment of Gazans is placing horrific and immediate burdens of injury and trauma on innocent civilians.” These acts are lawless, and we deplore “the silence of national medical associations and professional bodies worldwide....Their leaders....are complicit in a preventable tragedy” with potential long lasting consequences.

The Lancet followed with a lengthy overall assessment. In an introductory overview, it deplores conditions on the ground.

- violence directed at civilians;
- the unjustifiable toll;
- the deaths, injuries and social infrastructure destruction;
- the breach of “international norms of humanitarian behaviour;”

- ambulances attacked;
- medical personnel killed;
- hospitals short or depleted of everything – power, equipment, medicines, anesthetics, beds, and overworked staffs pulling round the clock shifts;
- vaccination programs, lab services, pre and postnatal care, and school health services disrupted;
- severe restrictions on ICRC personnel; and much more; in short, a calamitous situation bring all normal life to a halt.

Despite banning foreign journalists, carnage reports are heard, read, and seen worldwide. Justifiable outrage followed and grows. Testimonies on the ground are heart-rending. Fear grips everyone. People have nowhere to go. The indifference of influential politicians is reflected in Tony Blair's failure once to visit Gaza since his 2007 appointment as the (US, UN, EU, Russia) Quartet special envoy – one for war, not peace, for Israel, not Palestine, for injustice, not liberation.

His absence and silence in the face of a Gaza “Holocaust” reflects his complicity with Israeli terrorism, contempt for Palestinians overall, and another war crime with the others during his tenure as prime minister.

Now and ahead, Israel will be judged by its attitudes and actions towards the non-Jews it controls. America, the West, and complicit Arab regimes share equal guilt for their complicity. Palestinians are isolated on their own, yet for six decades have been resolute and resilient. Their struggle continues.

Contrary to popular perception, the Israeli – Palestinian conflict boils down to this. Over 90 years ago, imperial Britain promised Palestine to two peoples in one 1917 Balfour Declaration sentence from the British Foreign Secretary to the head of Anglo-Jewry:

‘His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.’

This was duplicitous on its face. Britain wanted a Western presence in an oil-rich part of the world to assure it got the lion’s share. Decades later, neither side will leave so conflict persists. The international community is complicit. It fuels struggle and threatens regional and world peace as a result.

The Dire State of Gaza’s Medical Facilities

The 585-bed Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza’s best equipped in normal times, “resemble(s) a charnel house” with corpses strewn everywhere, many torn apart patients for too few beds, and doctors having to treat them on the floor and do surgery with little or no anesthesia, at times by flashlight in less than ideal sanitary conditions.

Hospital director Hussain Ashaur worries about risked infection, severe trauma, and horrific burn cases. As bad are “scenes out of Dante’s Inferno.” Patients arrive with no arms or legs,

crushed limbs, bodies torn apart by flesh-shredding DIME weapons, and terrible shortages of everything for normal functioning.

Neonatal deaths are up 10% as new mothers are sent home early for lack of space. Vaccinations have been suspended. Nearly 70% of chronically ill patients aren't treated. Most basic clinics are now just first aid centers.

Accessing the wounded has been hazardous. At least a dozen paramedics were targeted and killed inside clearly marked vehicles and ambulances. Others were shot treating civilians where they lay. The extent of Israeli war crimes is shocking but not surprising under its Dahiyah Doctrine strategy to:

“wield disproportionate power against every village from which (suspected) shots are fired on Israel, and cause immense damage and destruction. From our perspective, these are military bases.” Civilian areas are “legitimate military targets,” and non-combatants are as fair game as fighters.

The ICRC issued a “harshly critical statement” accusing Israel of denying aid workers access to sites for days and finding shocking scenes when allowed in – the sights and sounds of death, horrific wounds, pain, suffering, despair, and starvation.

Because of the siege, conditions were dire before December 27. After three weeks of attack and in the aftermath, health services are near collapse. Doctors report:

“the most horrific war injuries in men, women, and children of all ages in numbers too large to comprehend. The wounded, dying, and dead have streamed into the overcrowded hospital in endless convoys of ambulances and private cars, and wrapped in blankets in the caring arms of others. The endless and intense bombardment from Israeli air, ground, and naval forces have missed no targets, not even hospitals.”

Gaza is now “a shattered, attacked, and drained health-care system trying to help an overwhelming amount of casualties in a war between clearly unequal (sides), where the attacker spares no civilian lives – be it man, woman, or child – not even the much-needed health workers of all professions.”

Doctors with war zone experience say they're overwhelmed and never saw anything like it. Gaza is tiny for its 1.5 million people. It has five cities, seven refugee camps for two-thirds of the population, and a bare 24 square kilometers of potentially productive farmland now decreased because of the siege, fighting, and deliberate Israeli razing of the land. It's a “cage, an enormous prison or a completely sealed off ghetto” with its life being extinguished by violence and Israeli-enforced neglect and terror.

Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital is a five story structure with several pavilions for medical specialties. It has 1011 employees, seven clinics, six operating rooms with worn-out poorly operating equipment, and about 406 doctors, including in seven surgical specialties. It's been reduced to a “makeshift, field hospital after years of siege, as well as a lack of maintenance and upgrading” because none is possible. Everything needed for normal functioning is in short supply or absent. Nonetheless, doctors and staff do all they can, at times in 24-hour shifts that tax the most committed, especially when it's common practice.

Through it all, “the morale, strength, and tireless work done by the health workers in Al-Shifa and (throughout) Gaza to save the injured from death is beyond belief.” Gaza reflects

heroism and resilience despite shocking Israeli state terror and scenes out of Dante's Inferno.

End Game and Prospects in Occupied Palestine and Gaza under Hamas

For six decades, Israel has pursued a colonization, dispossession, and decapitation agenda for total control of historic Palestine. Gaza 2008 - 09 is the latest battleground. Its outcome is undetermined and for the Obama administration to address with a new Israeli government after February 10 elections are held. Continued occupation, oppression, terror wars, and dispossession is their already familiar script.

In 1895, Zionism's founder, Theodor Herzl, wrote: "We must expropriate gently the private property on the state assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by....denying it employment in our country." In 1967, Israeli defense minister, Moshe Dayan, said: Palestinians "shall continue to live like dogs" so they'll leave.

In 1948, David Ben-Gurion stated: "We have taken their country....We must do everything to insure they never return....We must use terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation, and the cutting of all social services to rid the Galilee of its Arab population." In 1988, former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir told Jewish settlers that Palestinians "would be crushed like grasshoppers (with their) heads smashed against the boulders and walls."

Through it all, Palestinians survived, Hamas though battered is unbowed, and if Middle East expert Juan Cole is right:

"the Gaza fighting is likely to underline the self-delusion that has framed the US-Israeli perspective on major groups like Hamas for years, namely that Israel may choose its Palestinian interlocutors, and marginalize and criminalize those who are unwilling to negotiate on Israel's terms. While Hamas by no means speaks for all Palestinians, it is fatuous to assume (it can) be ignored politically or diplomatically."

In 1982, Israel failed to defeat Palestinian nationalism in Lebanon in spite of slaughtering 18,000 people. It merely sidetracked it for a time. The First Intifada followed. In the 1990s, Oslo, Oslo II, Wye River, Camp David, Taba, and other one-sided arrangements bought time until Intifada anger and more conflict erupted. The Road Map and Annapolis didn't halt it. In 2006, Israel failed to defeat Hezbollah. Cole believes that "Hamas is likely to emerge stronger politically than it was when the fighting began" despite all the IDF's might against it. That clearly appears to be right.

But given Arab street anger in the wake of Gaza's carnage, it's possible that "more extreme (Islamic) groups will strengthen, vying with Hamas (and Fatah) for control (as they already do in Lebanese Palestinian refugee camps)." Cole believes that "the Gaza war will change the political landscape of the Middle East" and present "enormous" and perhaps "unwelcome" challenges for Obama and Israel.

Muslim anger is intense, peacemaking an illusion, and if more regional wars are planned (as is likely), all bets are off on their potentially catastrophic consequences.

The Aftermath

During a January 16 Arab League meeting, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia called for Palestinian unity under Fatah while Abbas advisor Yasser Abed Rabbo told a news

conference that the “president” would not engage in a dialogue with “killers,” meaning Hamas.

At the same time, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed the same sentiment as Washington’s man at the world body. He urged Arab leaders to unite for Abbas and Fatah. So did Terje Roed-Larson, former UN Middle East envoy and current International Peace Academy president. He accused Hamas of carrying out a de facto coup against Gazans and never mentioned it’s the legitimate government, not the corrupted Fatah under Abbas.

Unmentioned also were prominent Hamas figure Salah al-Bardaweel’s charges. On January 19, he accused Abbas of spying on Hamas and conspiring with Israel. He said Fatah spies gave the IDF strategic intelligence on leadership homes and weapons locations. A number were arrested and confessed. “They admitted their guilt and told us names of their masters, who would, in turn, inform the Israeli intelligence apparatus....to facilitate the Israeli mission.”

Gazan activist, photojournalist, and blogger voice of truth Sameh Habeeb reported this on the war’s aftermath:

Thousands on Gaza’s streets are “trying to explore what has happened to relatives, houses and areas. I have documented a massive destruction throughout east, north and west of Gaza Strip. The devastation storms everything needed for normal life. Houses, schools, hospitals, clinics, police stations, charities, universities and streets totally (or) partially destroyed.”

Today, paramedics found over 100 bodies, mostly civilians, including eight members of one family. The “Samouni family which was massacred before found 17 more dead bodies under the rubble. Many families still seek (other) members and relatives who were lost during the war time.”

On January 18, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) reported that Israeli forces still cut off Gaza City and the northern Strip from other areas in the south. In addition, field workers, especially around Gaza City, the north, and Egyptian border said “these areas looked (like) they were struck by a heavy earthquake.” Decomposing bodies are unearthed. Israeli aircraft patrol the skies. The IDF redeployed “outside residential areas” but continue to fire at civilians, especially in border areas.

After declaring a “ceasefire:”

- Israeli artillery shelled houses in al-Juron Square in Jabalya damaging two homes, killing three children, and wounding other residents;
- an IDF drone fired a missile at Palestinian civilians in al-Zarqaa’ area, south of Jabalya killing a man and his son;
- Israeli forces killed a resistance activist near al-Karama apartment buildings, southwest of Jabalya;
- another drone fired two missiles at Palestinian civilians in al-Amal quarter, east of Beit Hanoun; a woman and child were seriously wounded; she lost a leg; her child later died;

- IDF naval vessels shelled the Palestinian General Intelligence headquarters and open areas near Gaza City;
- Israeli forces fired on Wadi al-Salqa village, southeast of Deir al-Balah; no casualties were reported;
- before redeploying, the IDF demolished at least 30 houses and razed agricultural land in the al-Fukhari area;
- near the Israeli - Gaza border, Israeli forces opened fire at Palestinian civilians checking their homes and land; one man was reported killed;
- an IDF explosive charge killed two children playing in the Al-Sha'af area east of Gaza City;
- Israeli forces killed a farmer while he was working on his land;
- redeployed soldiers demolished houses, damaged others, and razed agricultural land outside al-Shouka village, east of Rafah; and
- Israeli tanks bulldozed dozens of dunums of agricultural land in central Gaza; other tanks moved towards the Al-Maghazy area in central Gaza;

All this happened after Israel's "ceasefire." PCHR warned that Gazans are endangered "in light of (continued Israeli threats) to (renew or) expand military operations against the population of the Gaza Strip."

PCHR is calling for the "international community to immediately intervene;" to establish "inquiry commissions to investigate (war) crimes....against Palestinian civilians," including the use of illegal weapons. It also wants "all political and military officials responsible" prosecuted for their crimes.

Through January 20, the official death toll rose to 1415 with around 5500 injured, many seriously. New deaths will be reported as bodies are discovered under rubble and wounded people die.

PCHR's Gaza Testimonies

"I am still alive," said Ayman Al-Majdalawi, a Jabalia nurse after the IDF shelled the nearby Al-Fakhoura school used by UNWRA as a shelter. It killed dozens of civilians and wounded many more. "Women, men and children had limbs torn from their bodies by the force of the explosions. The ambulance drivers told me the Israelis were shooting at them as they were trying to evacuate the dead and injured." At her hospital "there was chaos. Our ambulances are in danger, and some of the injured people bled to death because we couldn't reach them. I try to go to other hospitals if I am needed, but it is very dangerous, and like everyone else, we are very frightened."

Ambulance drivers reported that they risked their lives to help the maimed and wounded. "We are working twenty four hours a day - we only sleep when there is no Israeli shelling....I have not been to my home for days....Ninety percent of the injured victims....have already lost legs or arms, or both."

Khalid Yusef Abu Sa'ada said:

"I was driving my ambulance in Beit Lahia....when the Israelis shelled us....I was with two paramedics. The Israeli shells killed one of them." The other was badly injured. He's now paralyzed. "A few days ago the Israelis bombed us" while we were trying to rescue a boy. The explosion "ripped (his) head off."

The Israelis killed other ambulance drivers and paramedics by bombing and shelling them. Dr. Eysa Saleh was on duty with the Medical Security Services when a shell blew his head off in Jabaliya. Everyone is exhausted, overwhelmed and horrified while fearing for their own lives on the frontline. "We know there are many people we cannot reach because some areas are too dangerous, and our ambulances are deliberately targeted." Earlier, "as I was driving, I saw a man struck by a missile that tore his body in two in front of our eyes. The situation is unbelievable, but we are doing the best we can, because this is our duty."

Professor Said Abdelwahed Emails from "Destroyed Gaza"

"This morning (January 18), Israel declared a ceasefire" but they keep shooting anyway. Meanwhile, drones and F-16s are overhead and firing missiles "12 hours" later. Over "100 new dead bodies were found under debris and in other places in fields and back streets in Zietoun neighborhood and northern Gaza. Whole families were found under rubble and demolished homes."

"It's unbelievable, incredible and mind-boggling! Innocent civilians paid the most expensive price (with) their lives. It was genocide." All of Gaza is depressed and traumatized. "I am shaken by the psychological situation around! The Israelis still call Palestinian homes by telephone threatening them with another punishment."

Aircraft drop anti-Hamas leaflets in western Gaza. It's "stupid behavior. It didn't move anyone after the ruthless attacks everywhere in Gaza....Tonight is a time of cautious silence and anticipation (that) the whole situation may flare up or explode at any moment. There are still untold stories of horror, destruction and death everywhere in Gaza," and most of us still have no electricity or much of anything else.

An Interregnum Truce Before the Next Onslaught

On January 19, Haaretz reported that: "Israeli officials said that troops would withdraw completely before Barack Obama's inauguration...." They never "withdraw." They just redeploy and maintain border, air and coastal control to keep committing random atrocities unreported in the major media.

While saying Israel has no aim to conquer, control or stay in Gaza, prime minister Olmert made no commitments and promised to "renew military actions" if "smuggling" continues and rockets are fired into southern Israel. On Israeli Radio, foreign minister Livni said about the same thing to sound tough ahead of the February 10 elections.

Like others for decades, calm is an illusion before more planned violence. Each conflict begets the next one that may be harsher than the last. Last October, Amos Harel headlined in Haaretz: "IDF plans to use disproportionate force in next war." Israel's Northern Command head, General Gadi Eisenkot, said "the IDF will continue to give first priority to firepower" regardless of the target struck.

In a daily Yedioth Ahronoth interview (Israel's major Hebrew language newspaper), Eisenkot "presented his 'Dahiyah Doctrine,' under which the IDF" will use disproportionate power "at

the heart of the enemy's weak spot" and target civilians.

Major General Giora Eiland, former head of Israel's National Security Council, was even blunter in admitting defeat in the Second Lebanon War because it was against the "wrong enemy - Hezbollah, instead of the state of Lebanon itself." He said it's impossible to defeat an efficient guerrilla army supported by a state immune from retribution. "Hezbollah operates under optimal conditions from our perspective. A legitimate government runs Lebanon, supported by the West, but it is in fact entirely subordinate to the will of the Shiite organization."

Eiland's recommendation: "preemptive action....as soon as possible" in the next war to destroy the Lebanese army and entire civilian infrastructure with heavy use of air power.

Last September, former IDF chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon said the Israeli Air Force failed in the Second Lebanon War. "If they had determined the right objectives, the war could have been finished from the air within five days" and the mission accomplished.

Around the same time, prime minister Olmert warned that if Lebanon becomes a "terrorist state" under Hezbollah, Israel would unleash more massive firepower and hit back harder than before. Israel "did not use all means to respond then, but if Lebanon becomes a Hezbollah state, then we won't have any restrictions in this regard." Without elaborating, he's targeting all Lebanon - its government, infrastructure, military, and civilian population.

Earlier, the Lebanese unity government approved a political platform under which Hezbollah is free to use all means "to liberate land occupied by Israel."

Gaza was a dress rehearsal. A Third Lebanon War appears next, perhaps against Iran, Syria and more on Hamas as well. On January 18, Haaretz correspondent Barak Ravid cited Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin saying that "Hamas would resume smuggling arms into Gaza within a few months, despite Israel's destruction of many tunnels...." They'll be rebuilt, so Israel will attack and destroy them.

On January 20, the right wing Jerusalem Post reported that:

"Iran has renewed efforts to supply advanced weaponry to Hamas and the IDF is concerned that the terror group will try to smuggle long-range Fajr missiles into the Gaza Strip" - easily able to reach Tel Aviv with a range of 70 km. Tzipi Livni said renewed weapons smuggling would be legitimate grounds for renewed Gaza attacks.

Israel is always preparing for the next war and looking for pretexts to launch it. Clearly there are plans. It remains to be seen what, when, and against whom.

For now, Olmert, Diskin and other Israeli officials claim a great victory despite not defeating Hamas, enhancing its popularity and support, and engendering global condemnation still evident on world streets and inside Israel.

For its part on January 18, Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniyeh said Israel's offensive failed and hadn't cowed the Palestinians. In a televised speech, he claimed that "The enemy has failed to achieve its goals," and despite thousands of Palestinian casualties, the war was a "popular victory." Contradicting Israeli assertions, Hamas announced it lost 48 fighters and killed 80 Israeli soldiers. The IDF said five soldiers died fighting and four others were killed by friendly fire.

On January 18, The Israeli English language web site, Ynetnews.com, reported that during the Gaza operation, about 800 Israeli soldiers and civilians needed hospital treatment. As of January 18, 51 soldiers and 13 civilians are still patients, some in serious condition.

A weekend Reuters report estimated that Gaza rebuilding will cost \$1.6 billion even before accounting for all damage and assessing what's needed for reconstruction. Human costs and humanitarian needs aside, undoing Israel's damage will take years and likely cost billions. At issue is who'll pay. Given past indifference to Palestinian needs, the answer is likely few or perhaps no other nation despite Saudi King Abdullah promising \$1 billion in aid. Palestinians are tired of promises.

They want fulfillment, but won't get it according to EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Without explicitly mentioning Hamas, she said reconstruction won't begin until the EU has an acceptable Palestinian partner. She then accused Hamas for confrontation and for hindering Gazans' prospects for a better life. Following a Western tradition, she blamed the victim, absolved the aggressor, let the people of Gaza be damned, and called their democratically elected government "terrorists" and on their own.

For its part, Olmert assigned Yetshak Hertzog, Israel's social welfare minister, to coordinate whatever Gaza reconstruction is planned and insisted that no funds go to Hamas or other resistance groups. Further, Israel wants control of everything, will decide what will or won't be done, will require permits for projects, and says the UN must have no direct dealings with Hamas.

Tel Aviv may have other plans as well. It's erecting hundreds of tents in the Sinai near Rafah. Egyptian blogger Ahdaf Souif said:

"Outside the general Hospital in Egyptian Rafah, a city of tents has sprung up. I counted 200. But soldiers there told me they have many more and can set them up immediately. They said the beds and furnishings for all the camps are ready. I was also told that other camps are being set up, in el-Arish and other locations. I was told these camps were" for Palestinians - and may be a first step toward mass-transferring Gazans to Egypt as Israeli extremists, like Avigdor Lieberman, advocate.

Egypt knows what's happening, but is silent. It's believed Mubarak agreed to the plan in secret negotiations, just prior to Israel's "ceasefire." All along, Egypt has collaborated with Israel and Washington, a familiar role for its leader in return for ample compensation.

Gaza municipal authorities estimate that 20,000 government, residential and commercial buildings were damaged, many badly. Another 4000 were demolished. In addition, about 50 of the UN's 220 schools, clinics, warehouses and other facilities were also damaged or destroyed. The enormity of destruction can't be underestimated or the task needed to rebuild it. Reuters compared it to "Stalingrad" and AP to a "moonscape." The UN said more than 50,000 Gazans are homeless. Other reports say 100,000 or more.

"Travel advisory issued for top IDF officers"

On January 19, Ynetnews.com reported that Israel is concerned about "international human rights groups' intention(s) to file war crimes charges against military personnel with the Hague, local European courts, (and advises) officers planning to travel (to) contact (the) Judge Advocate General's office first....some may be instructed not to leave the country."

Reports say evidence is being collected in photos and testimonies, and Attorney General Menachem Mazuz said Israel is “preparing for a wave of international lawsuits over the operation in Gaza.”

Police State Israel - Suppressing Internal Dissent

On January 19, 2009 for Inter Press Service (IPS), Nora Barrows-Friedman reported that:

“The Israeli government is stepping up efforts to suppress dissent and crush resistance in the streets” in the wake of pro-Gaza demonstrations. “Police have been videotaping (street protests and then) arresting (participants) in large numbers.”

Police reports show “at least 763 Israeli citizens, the majority of them Palestinian (of whom 244 are under 18), have been arrested, imprisoned or detained for” their participation. Most held are then released, but “at least 30” are still being held. The idea is to harass, intimidate, and discourage further demonstrations.

Ameer Makhoul, director of Ittijah, the Union of Arab Community-Based Associations in Haifa is quoted saying: these demonstrations “are part of the uprising here inside the Green Line, to share responsibility and to share the challenge with the people in the Gaza Strip.”

Israel’s internal security Shin Bet arrested Makhoul for organizing demonstrations. “They called me, came to my home and held me for four hours. They accused me of being a terrorist and supporting terror. They said that they are watching me and monitoring me. Israel has become a terror state” against Palestinians, Arab Israelis, independent regional states, and dissent.

Shin Bet accused Makhoul and others arrested of “threatening the security of the State of Israel during war time.” Israeli Professor Kobi Snitz expressed alarm about “the current social climate inside the state.” He explained that “People are made to be afraid....police operate under the assumption and guidelines that every political expression (including by Jews) now is to be repressed and prevented.”

Most Israelis support their government’s war on Gaza and believe Hamas is at fault. The media trumpet it daily although contrary views can also be found. Most Israelis don’t bother to look like in America where people rely mainly on television for news and information, and thus are terribly misinformed.

Despite being monitored, harassed and arrested, activist demonstrations continue with a notable January 17 one in Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv. Several thousand “peace groups, Israeli anarchists, and teenaged refusniks fresh from jail (for their activism against Palestinian oppression) marched (with) flags, banners, and vociferous determination (against) their government’s” state terror on Gaza. Security forces were visible and took note. Defying Israel is hazardous even for Jews, much like it is in America under Republicans and Democrats.

Looking Ahead

Editor Ali Abuninah of the Electronic Intifada reports that Israel’s Gaza war failed to weaken Hamas and other resistance groups to clear the way for negotiating with its “chief Palestinian collaborator Mahmoud Abbas to manage Palestinians on (its) behalf until they (can) be forced out once and for all.”

Regional dictators like Mubarak and the Saudi and Jordanian monarchies are on board “to demonstrate to their own people that resistance” is futile. “To win, Israel had to break Palestinian resistance. It failed....it galvanized and unified Palestinians like never before.” Hamas and other resistance fought heroically for 23 days and stand ready to do it again.

“According to well-informed and credible sources, Israel did little harm to the modest but determined military capacity of the resistance. So Israel did what it does best: it massacred civilians” to get people to turn against their government. Instead, Palestinians and the Arab street are together against Israel.

“In popular esteem, Hamas and other Palestinian resistance factions (stand) alongside Hizbollah as effective bulwarks against Israeli and Western colonialism.” Israel lost its legitimacy and can’t win it by bombing and mass slaughter. It survives through violence, intimidation, and billions in US aid, but for how long.

Even the Wall Street Journal admits that Hamas gained support from the fighting. On January 20, correspondent Charles Levinson quoted Israeli Col. Shmuel Zakai saying that his country doesn’t understand that winning hearts and minds is as important as battlefield victories. “We just keep creating bigger problems,” he said. “Military power alone is not enough.”

Palestinians remained steadfast through it all, and world public opinion now backs them and Hamas like never before. Yet their struggle for liberation persists – against America, the West, complicit Arab regimes, and racists like Israeli Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger who wants Gazans dumped in a Palestinian state in the Sinai.

He told the British weekly Jewish News that Jerusalem belongs to the Jews. Muslims have Mecca and Medina, and they “don’t need a third place.” Metzger wants Britain, the EU and America to build a desert state and arrange for a transfer. He called it a great idea and will discuss it with Olmert.

Earlier on January 13, Israeli election authorities banned two of the three main Arab parties from contesting in the February general elections – the United Arab List-Ta’al (UAL – Ta’al) and the National Democratic Assembly (or Balad). Both parties were accused of “not recognizing Israel’s right to exist (and) incit(ing) and supporting terrorist groups.” Heads of two rival Arab parties condemned the action and called it “a political trial led by a group of fascists and racists who are willing to see the Knesset without Arabs and want” none of them in their country. If these members “had weapons, they would have shot us in the head.”

Arabs currently hold seven of the 120 Knesset seats but have no power whatever in the body. Nonetheless, Avigdor Lieberman, the Yisrael Beiteinu party leader, called Arab legislators a “fifth column” and wants Israel’s High Court to side with the decision to ban them. Israel keeps finding new ways to expose its illegitimacy as a lawful democratic state. Growing calls accuse it of waging an extermination war against Gazans, and West Bank Palestinians will be next unless outcries are great enough to stop it.

This terror persisted for over 60 years, yet Palestinians remain resolute and by 2010 will surpass Jews in number, according to population projections. Their message is firm: This is our land, our country. We’re ready to live in peace, and despite all your might and terror, we’ll never surrender. Not now. Not ever.

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