

Gaza: Remembering Operation “Cast Lead”

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December 27 marks the third anniversary of Israel’s lawless war on Gaza. Without provocation, three weeks of terror bombing and invasion devastated the Strip.

Missiles, bombs, shells, and illegal weapons were used against defenseless people. Mass slaughter and destruction followed.

Brazen crimes of war and against humanity were committed. Responsible officials remain unaccountable. Security Council no-fly zone protection wasn’t ordered. International leaders shared culpability through silence. They still do. Washington was complicit by supplying Israel with weapons, munitions, and encouragement.

Cast Lead’s one of history’s great crimes. Before his fall from grace, Richard Goldstone said:

“(T)here is evidence indicating serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed by Israel during the Gaza conflict, and that Israel committed actions amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity.”

Over 1,400 Gazans were killed, 80% or more civilians. Thousands more were injured, many seriously, and extensive civilian infrastructure and private property were destroyed or damaged, including homes, schools, hospitals, mosques, and businesses.

Israel’s internal investigations whitewashed horrendous crimes. According to the [Palestinian Center for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#):

“Rather than uphold the rule of law, the Israeli investigative and judicial system is artfully manipulated to provide an illusion of investigative and judicial rigour, while systematically perpetuating pervasive impunity” for crimes too extreme to ignore.

For example, on April 29, 2009, then IDF Chief of Staff, General Gabi Ashkenazi authorized publication of the findings of five military investigate teams. Unsurprisingly, they concluded that:

“(T)hroughout the fighting in Gaza, the IDF operated in accordance with international law. The IDF maintained a high professional and moral level while facing an enemy that aimed to terrorize Israeli civilians whilst taking cover amidst uninvolved civilians in the the Gaza strip and using them as human shields.”

In detail, they brazenly justified Israel’s crimes of war and against humanity. Human Rights Watch called them “indiscriminate, disproportionate (and) at times seemingly deliberate, in

violation of the laws of war.”

PCHR marked the anniversary by calling December 27, 2008 “the single bloodiest day in the history of the occupation. On this day three years ago, 334 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces.” Most were civilians, including women, children, and babies.

In total, 1,419 Palestinians were killed in cold blood, including 1,167 civilians (82.2%). Another 5,300 were injured. “Israeli forces directly targeted and attacked private homes and civilian institutions, including hospitals and schools.”

Life in besieged Gaza was devastated. Other targets struck included 3,500 homes, civilian workshops, factories, municipal buildings, charitable foundations, fishing boats, and UN facilities. In addition, farmland was bulldozed. Irrigations systems were destroyed. Under siege, reconstruction is virtually impossible.

PCHR submitted 490 criminal complaints to Israeli authorities on behalf of 1,046 victims. All documented grievous crimes. They demand redress and prosecution of culpable officials.

So far, only two substantive replies followed. Most were ignored. “If the occupation taught us anything, it is that as long as Israel is granted impunity, it will continue to violate international law. Palestinians will continue to suffer the horrific consequences,” and human suffering will remain extreme.

[Al-Haq](#) remembered Cast Lead’s anniversary, saying what’s to prevent it repeating! Moreover, “the international community continues to show its complete lack of political will to achieve justice for the victims who have all but abandoned such expectations.”

Only three Israeli soldiers received punishments too minor to matter. Not for mass slaughter and destruction, but for using a Palestinian human shield during searches and credit card theft.

For three years, accountability’s been entirely absent. Impunity immunizes Israel. Not only is justice delayed, it’s disdained, denied, scoffed at, and spat on. Moreover, Israel attacks Gaza regularly. Air and ground assaults repeat often. In 2011, dozens more Palestinians were killed, many others injured.

“By eschewing the importance of justice and accountability, the international community has merely facilitated the ongoing violation of human rights by Israel. How many more anniversaries will pass before this comes to an end?”

[Hamis](#) commemorated Cast Lead’s anniversary by saying Gaza’s a symbol of dignity in the face of adversity.

“The siege imposed on Gaza has failed to realize Israel’s goals when faced with the steadfastness and firmness of the Palestinian people,” said spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri. “Instead of being erased from the map, Gaza has become the Qibla (direction Muslims face to pray) for the free people of the world and a symbol of dignity under challenge.”

[Press TV](#) remembered martyrs who died during Israel’s aggression. It also noted illegal weapons used like white phosphorus bombs, able to burn flesh to the bone.

[Russia Today](#) said though Gaza's war is over, the "battle for reparations continues in court. Saleh Abu Hajaj achieved a rare victory, a bitter sweet one, saying:

"I am a broken man. The Israelis say their army has morals. Which morals are they talking about? I couldn't get to my home for 16 days, because the Israeli soldiers were firing all the time."

"As soon as they left, I went there and inside. On the walls, the soldiers had written, 'You'll find the bodies 50 meters away.' I found the body of my mother, buried in the sand, and the body of my sister, Majda, covered with some bricks."

Salah Talala al-Samoumi's had no redress three years after filing a claim. His mother was blown apart. His two-year old daughter, father, aunt, cousin, and entire family were killed by rocket and shell fire. No one was held accountable.

China's [xinhaunet.com](#) remembered Cast Lead's horrors, including on December 27 when hundreds alone were killed.

Western media scoundrels were silent. Unswervingly they support Israel's worst crimes.

Not Gaza's Center for Political and Development Studies [Yousef Aljamal](#), saying:

He and his youngest sister hate war. "She could never forget the sounds of American-made F16s raiding Gaza's only power plant, burning it to ashes, which happened close to our house. I could not forget her screaming...."

When war began, he was studying for final exams. Electricity went out. Many hundreds were killed. "We are not numbers. We are stories. We are feelings. We are Iman Hijjo sitting in her mother's arms and breastfeeding when the bomb tore her small innocent smile apart."

"We are Mohammed Al-Durra, hiding behind his dad's arms bleeding, while his very dad screams tearfully: The boy died by a bullet. We are the Al-Samouni family," told to move to a tiny room for safety. "The next day, the entire family was erased....We are not invented numbers, sir."

Remember Cast Lead and besieged Gaza's 1.6 million people on this and every day. Their suffering is ours. Only mass public outrage can end it!

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Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening. <http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/the-progressive-news-hour/>.

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