

“Israel’s 9/11” Is a Slogan to Rationalize Open-Ended Massacre of Palestinian Civilians

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As in the aftermath of 9/11, official claims to be only fighting terrorism will continue to serve as PR smokescreens for a government terrorizing and inflicting mass carnage on Palestinians.

When Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations spoke outside the Security Council on Sunday, he [said](#): “This is Israel’s 9/11. This is Israel’s 9/11.” Meanwhile, in a *PBS NewsHour* [interview](#), Israel’s ambassador to the United States said: “This is, as someone said, our 9/11.”

While the phrase might seem logical, “Israel’s 9/11” is already being used as a huge propaganda weapon by Israel’s government—now engaged in massive war crimes against civilians in Gaza, after mass murder of Israelis by Hamas last weekend.

On the surface, an analogy between the atrocities just suffered by Israelis and what happened on Sept. 11, 2001 might seem to justify calls for unequivocal solidarity with Israel. But horrific actions are in process from an Israeli government that has long maintained a system of apartheid while crushing basic human rights of Palestinian people.

What is very sinister about trumpeting “Israel’s 9/11” is what happened after America’s 9/11. Wearing the shroud of victim, the United States proceeded to use the horrible tragedy suffered inside its own borders as a license to kill vast numbers of people in the name of retaliation, righteousness, and, of course, the “war on terror.”

It’s a playbook that the government of **Benjamin Netanyahu** is currently adapting and implementing with a vengeance. Now underway, Israel’s collective punishment of 2.3 million people in Gaza is an intensification of what Israel has been doing to Palestinians for decades. But Israel’s extremism, more than ever touting itself as a matter of self-defense, is

at new racist depths of willingness to treat human beings as suitable for extermination.

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On Monday, Israel's **Defense Minister Yoav Gallant** [described](#) Palestinians as "beastly people" and [said](#): "We are fighting animals and are acting accordingly."

Indiscriminate bombing is now happening along with a cutoff of food, water, electricity, and fuel. Noting that "even before the latest restrictions, residents of Gaza already faced widespread food insecurity, restrictions on movement and water shortages," the [BBC reported](#) that a UN official said people in Gaza "were 'terrified' by the current situation and worried for their safety—as well as that of their children and families."

This is a terrible echo from the post-9/11 approach of the U.S. government, which from the outset after Sept. 11, 2001 conferred advance absolution on itself for any and all of its future crimes against humanity.

In the name of fighting terrorism, the United States inflicted collective punishment on huge numbers of people who had absolutely nothing to do with 9/11. The Costs of War project at Brown University [calculates](#) more than 400,000 *direct* civilian deaths "in the violence of the U.S. post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere."

Early in the "war on terror," **Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld** had fashioned a template to provide approval for virtually any killing by the U.S. military.

"We did not start this war," he said at a [news briefing](#) in December 2001, two months into the Afghanistan war. "So understand, responsibility for every single casualty in this war, whether they're innocent Afghans or innocent Americans, rests at the feet of the al Qaeda and the Taliban."

Rumsfeld was [showered with acclaim](#) from the U.S. media establishment. While he not only insisted that the U.S. government had no responsibility for the deaths caused by its armed forces, he also attested to the American military's notable decency.

"The targeting capabilities, and the care that goes into targeting, to see that the precise targets are struck, and that other targets are not struck, is as impressive as anything anyone could see," Rumsfeld said. He lauded "the care that goes into it, the humanity that goes into it."

Even before its current high-tech attack on Gaza, Israel had amassed a long track record of killing civilians there, while denying it every step of the way. For instance, the United Nations [found](#) that during Israel's 2014 "Operation Protective Edge" assault, 1,462 Palestinian civilians died, including 495 children.

There's no reason to doubt that the civilian death toll from the present Israeli military actions in Gaza will soon climb far above the number of people killed by the Hamas assault days ago. As in the aftermath of 9/11, official claims to be only fighting terrorism will continue to serve as PR smokescreens for a government terrorizing and inflicting mass carnage on Palestinians. Deserving only unequivocal condemnation, Hamas's killing and abduction of civilians set the stage for Israel's slaughter of civilians now underway in Gaza.

Absent from the *New York Times* home page Monday night and relegated to page 9 of the newspaper's print edition on Tuesday, a grisly [news story](#) began this way:

“Israeli airstrikes pounded Gaza on Monday, flattening mosques over the heads of worshipers, wiping away a busy marketplace full of shoppers and killing entire families, witnesses and authorities in Gaza said. Five Israeli airstrikes ripped through the marketplace in the Jabaliya refugee camp, reducing it to rubble and killing dozens, the authorities said. Other strikes hit four mosques in the Shati refugee camp and killed people worshipping inside, they said. Witnesses said boys had been playing soccer outside one of the mosques when it was struck.”

Along with releasing a [statement](#) about the latest tragic turn of events, at RootsAction.org we've offered supporters of a just peace [a quick way](#) to email their members of Congress and President Biden. The gist of the message is that “the horrific cycle of violence in the Middle East will not end until the Israeli occupation ends—and a huge obstacle to ending the occupation has been the U.S. government.”

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