

Israel's Backhanded 'Apology' for the Rafah Bombing

By [James J. Zogby](#)

Global Research, June 12, 2024

[The Jordan Times](#) 10 June 2024

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the Translate Website button below the author's name (only available in desktop version).

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), [click here](#).

Click the share button above to email/forward this article to your friends and colleagues. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

[Give Truth a Chance. Secure Your Access to Unchained News, Donate to Global Research.](#)

On May 27, Israel "apologised" for the 45 Palestinian deaths resulting from its bombing raid on a "humanitarian zone" in Rafah. This backhanded apology conveyed more insult than atonement. As Israeli apologies, even insincere ones, are rare, it's worth examining this one's background.

The bombing occurred just two days after the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to stop its assault on Rafah, citing the dangers to civilian life and humanitarian aid delivery. The International Criminal Court prosecutor had also just declared his intent to request arrest warrants for Israeli prime minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** and defense minister **Yossi Gallant** on charges of war crimes committed during the assault on Gaza.

Compounding Israeli embarrassment were the decisions by Spain, Ireland and Norway to recognise the State of Palestine and supportive statements for the ICC warrant request from France and Germany. Many European countries also issued swift and firm denunciations of the Rafah attack.

Unsurprisingly, the initial Israeli response was immediate and excessive. The ICJ was called "a moral outrage". Israeli commentators denounced the court in racist terms, noting the percentage of judges from Muslim-majority or "third world" countries. The EU countries recognising Palestine were compared to Nazis and their action termed antisemitic. The greatest torrent of abusive language came in response to the ICC request for warrants. Justice Minister Levin referred to the request as "one of the biggest moral disgraces in human history". Netanyahu narcissistically said the charges against him were "directed against all of Israel" and "an example of the new antisemitism". He further deflected saying:

“With whatchutzpah do you dare compare Hamas...and the soldiers of the IDF who are fighting a just war that is unparalleled with a morality that is unmatched?”

Netanyahu’s foes **Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid** called the request “a crime of historic proportions” and “unforgivable”.

This bullying through excessive language is Israel’s traditional response to criticism, an attempt to verbally pummel critics into submission while shoring up supporters.

Then came the decision to bomb Rafah, perhaps Israel demonstrating that they were undeterred by criticism. After, Israel described the attack as using “precise munitions based on precise intelligence”. Appearing aware of the attack’s possible repercussions, Israelis seemed to test their critics’ tolerance, threading the needle of compliance with international law and bowing to US concerns about civilian casualties.

Of course, the initial bombing was not precise, with 22 deaths reported. The fires ignited by the blast ravaged an adjacent area, burning to death 45 Palestinians.

Confronted by growing international outrage, the Israelis followed their normal practice of “deny, lie, and obfuscate”. They claimed that the death toll was exaggerated and the attack precise; then said the site wasn’t in a “protected zone”, a false claim, as a few days prior they’d expanded the zone to include the area they bombed. Then they denounced Hamas targets for “hiding out” among civilians. Adding an element of confusion, they suggested that the fire might have started if the bomb blast ignited a nearby Hamas arms cache. No evidence was presented (or needed) because with that obfuscation Israel felt it had cast doubt on its responsibility, shifting the blame back to Hamas.

Failing to dampen international rage, the Israelis made a rare choice: “apologise.” They could see world opinion turning against them. Despite the Biden administration’s hesitation to condemn their crossing his ever-moving red line, they know how precarious their position is in the US. With Netanyahu hoping to address Congress and facing Democratic boycott of his remarks, action was needed.

Hence, the decision to apologise, and what a backhanded apology it was. Netanyahu announced:

“Despite our efforts not to hit them, there was a tragic mishap. We are investigating the incident.” Adding insult to injury, he continued, “For us it’s a tragedy; for Hamas it’s a strategy,”

echoing the hurtful, racist comment of former prime minister Golda Meir:

“We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We can never forgive them for making us kill their children.”

The apology’s insincerity was demonstrated a few days later when Israel bombed another Rafah refugee encampment, killing 21 Palestinians.

As if to greenlight more such attacks, despite growing worldwide and domestic condemnation of these mass killings, the Biden administration announced it would not take any action against Israel. They are satisfied with Israel’s precautions to avoid civilian deaths and its investigation of their actions in Rafah. Netanyahu plays to an audience of one so

that's enough for the bombings to continue.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share button above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

James J. Zogby is president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute.

Featured image: Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (Photo: Valeriano Di Domenico / WEF)

The original source of this article is [The Jordan Times](#)

Copyright © [James J. Zogby](#), [The Jordan Times](#), 2024

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [James J. Zogby](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca