

Israel Killed Everything but the Will to Resist

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

" 'Freedom or death', is the popular Palestinian mantra," wrote Palestine Chronicle Editor-in-Chief Ramzy Baroud in his January 22 article titled "Breaking Gaza's Will: Israel's Enduring Fantasy."

Three weeks of Israeli terror caused about 1400 deaths, over 5500 injured (many seriously), vast destruction throughout Gaza, and Physicians for Human Rights warning that large numbers of wounded may die because hospitals are overloaded and lack basic supplies. Yet Palestinians endure. Their spirit is unbowed and unbroken. Hamas is more popular than ever, and world outrage sustains them.

Middle East analyst Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies believes Israel blundered badly. On January 9, he asked:

"The War in Gaza - Tactical Gains, Strategic Defeat?" In spite of all the IDF's might "The fact remains that the growing human tragedy in Gaza is steadily raising more serious questions as to whether the kind of tactical gains that Israel now reports are worth the suffering involved."

Cordesman reviewed the death, injury and destruction toll after 14 days of fighting, then added: "These direct costs are only part of the story." He cited the siege's crippling economic and humanitarian effects and wrote: "The current war has consequences more far-reaching than casualties. It involves a legacy of greatly increased suffering for the 1.5 million people who will survive this current conflict."

"It is also far from clear that the tactical gains are worth the political and strategic cost to Israel. At least to date, (the war) increased popular support for Hamas and anger against Israel in Gaza. The same is true in the West Bank and the Islamic world....The US is seen as having done virtually nothing....and the President elect is getting as much blame as" George Bush.

He quotes former Saudi ambassador to Washington and London, Prince Turki al-Faisal saying: "The Bush administration has left you (with) a disgusting legacy and a reckless position towards the massacres and bloodshed of innocents in Gaza. Enough is enough, today we are all Palestinians...."

According to Cordesman, Israel appears to be repeating "the same massive failures" as in the 2006 Lebanon war. "Has Israel somehow blundered into a steadily escalating war without a clear strategic goal or at least one it can credibly achieve? Will Israel end in empowering (Hamas) in political terms....? Will Israel's actions seriously damage the US position in the region, any hope for peace, as well as moderate Arab regimes and voices in

the process? To be blunt, the answer (appears) to be yes....If this is all that Olmert, Livni, and Barak have (to show for their efforts) then they have disgraced themselves and damaged their country and their friends.”

Three Weeks of Israeli Terror Took Its Toll

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights compiles it daily and presents it in weekly reports. Its latest January 15 - 22 one includes whole families killed. More than 43% of deaths and injuries were women and children. The vast majority of casualties were civilians. “Entire features of many areas have disappeared, and civilian infrastructure services have completely collapsed.” Other destruction included:

- hospitals, ambulances, civil defense and private vehicles, and relief services damaged or destroyed;
- thousands of homes and whole neighborhoods damaged or destroyed as well as -
- roads, bridges, power installations, sewage facilities, water wells, and other infrastructure;
- 28 public civilian facilities;
- ministry, municipality and other government buildings; the parliament building;
- UN sanctuaries;
- commercial buildings;
- 121 industrial and commercial workshops destroyed; at least 200 others damaged;
- fishing boats and harbors;
- 21 private projects, including cafeterias, wedding halls, tourist resorts and hotels;
- 30 mosques completely destroyed; 15 others damaged;
- five concrete factories;
- 60 police stations;
- five media buildings and two health ones completely destroyed;
- 29 educational institutions completely or partly destroyed; and
- thousands of dunams of agricultural land razed.

After Israel declared a January 17 “ceasefire,” homes were bulldozed, agricultural land razed, civilians attacked and killed, homes invaded and searched, and arrests made. The war cost the al-Sammouni clan 36 of its men, women and children.

The West Bank wasn’t spared. The pattern repeats weekly, but from January 15 - 22 alone:

- Hebron and Beit ‘Awa village (southwest of the city) homes were raided and searched;

four civilians were arrested;

— Jenin town and refugee camp homes were invaded, searched, and one civilian arrested;

— Bourqin village homes, west of Jenin, were raided, searched, and one civilian arrested;

— Qabatyia village homes, southwest of Jenin, were invaded and searched; no arrests were reported;

— Roujib village homes, east of Nablus, were raided, searched, and one arrest made;

— Dura village, southwest of Hebron, homes were invaded, searched, and four arrests made;

— Beit Sahour homes were raided and searched; one resident was arrested earlier;

— al-Lubban village, near Nablus, homes were invaded, searched, and three arrests made, including a child;

— at a January 16 Beit Ummar village, north of Hebron, anti-war demonstration, the IDF fired live rounds at civilians wounding at least three;

— at another January 16 southern Hebron demonstration, the IDF shot and killed one man and wounded four others, including a child;

— at a same day East Jerusalem demonstration, the IDF fired sound bombs, tear gas, and violently beat protesters; journalists were also attacked and forced to leave;

— at another demonstration near the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the IDF attacked and violently beat at least 10 women;

— at an al-'Eissawiya village, east of Jerusalem, demonstration, the IDF fired on and wounded four children, and arrested two others;

— homes were also raided and searched in Beita village, south of Nablus; Zabbouba village, west of Jenin; 'Anza village, southeast of Jenin; Hawara village, south of Nablus; Taqqou' village, southeast of Bethlehem; Bani Na'im, east of Hebron; 'Arraba village, southwest of Jenin; Fahma village, southeast of Jenin; Sa'ir village, northeast of Hebron; Western Toura village, southwest of Jenin; 'Assira village, north of Nablus; Beit Emrin village, northwest of Nablus; al-Zahiriya village, south of Hebron; Ya'bad village, southwest of Jenin; Bethlehem city; al-Duhaisha refugee camp, southwest of Bethlehem; 'Aaida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem; and Qaryout village, southeast of Nablus — homes in all areas were raided and searched; numerous arrests were made;

— at a Beit Ummar village, north of Hebron, demonstration, the IDF fired live rounds on protesters wounding at least one child and arresting another;

— two undercover IDF operations made arrests in Qabatyia village, southeast of Jenin, and Qiffin village, north of Tulkarm.

PCHR reports that the Gaza siege continues. Border crossings remain closed. Collective punishment is enforced. Basic food, medicine and other essentials are unavailable or in scarce supply to the great majority of Gazans. Impoverishment now exceeds 80%. Mass

human suffering affects everyone. The world community is complicit by its silence.

The IDF has also “imposed a tightened siege on the West Bank” adding new movement restrictions. Access to Jerusalem is denied, to the al-Aqsa mosque as well. Civilians are beaten, often violently. Vehicles are stopped and searched. Curfews are imposed. Arrests are made. Protests against the Separation Wall construction were attacked violently. Civilians were beaten and shot. Home demolitions continued. Two others were burned down. More land was seized. Settler attacks on Palestinians were reported. It happens all the time. Nothing is done to stop them. They’re free to harass, intimidate, beat, and kill Palestinians.

This is Occupied Palestine. Like Gaza, Israel terrorizes the West Bank daily. Fatah under Abbas is complicit. Human rights violations persist. An international conspiracy of silence permits it. No end of this is in sight. World outrage has taken notice. Israel now worries but not enough to matter.

“Dahiya Doctrine” Devastation

Named after the Beirut suburb IDF destroyed in the 2006 Lebanon war, it’s how future ones will be fought. IDF Northern Command chief Gabi Eisenkot explained:

“What happened in the Dayiya quarter of Beirut in 2006 will happen in every village from which Israel is fired on. We will apply disproportionate force at the heart of the enemy’s weak spot (civilians) and cause great damage and destruction. From our standpoint, these are not civilian villages (towns or cities), they are military bases. This is not a recommendation. This is a plan. And it has been approved.”

According to Col. Gabriel Siboni (in October 2008), the idea is to use enough “disproportionate force (to inflict) damage and met(e) out punishment to an extent that will demand long and expensive reconstruction processes....With the outbreak of hostilities, the IDF will need to act immediately, decisively, and with force that is disproportionate to the enemy’s actions and threat it poses....The strike must be carried out as quickly as possible, and must prioritize damaging assets....be aimed at decision makers and the power elite....in Lebanon....at Hezbollah....(at) economic interests and the centers of civilian power.”

Disproportionality will “make it abundantly clear that the State of Israel will accept no attempt to disrupt (a state of) calm. Israel must be prepared for deterioration and escalation, as well as for a full scale confrontation....This approach” applies to Gaza as well....(It) will increase Israel’s long term deterrence (and) leave the enemy floundering in expensive, long term processes of reconstruction.”

For General Yoav Galant, it was to “send Gaza decades into the past.” Disturbing reports indicate that Lebanon may be next to complete the unfinished business of the 2006 war.

On October 6, 2008, prominent award-winning Israeli media figure Yaron London wrote about “The Dahiya strategy” for the Israeli English language Ynetnews.com. His tone was belligerent and provocative in saying:

“Israel finally realizes that Arabs should be accountable for their leaders’ acts.” In the next Lebanon war, “we won’t bother to hunt for rocket launchers....Rather, we shall destroy (all of) Lebanon and won’t be deterred by the protests of the world.”

We'll "pulverize the 160 Shiite villages that have turned into Shiite army bases, and we shall not show mercy when it comes to hitting the national infrastructure of a" Hezbollah-controlled state. "This strategy is not a threat. (It's) an approved plan (because) the whole of Lebanon is an Iranian outpost. (It's) entirely malicious. (It's) an enemy....Everyone is Nasrallah....nations are responsible for their leaders' acts....(Gazans) are all Khaled Mashal....Lebanese are all Nasrallah....Iranians are all Ahmadinejad....We need to make the fear we sow among them greater."

Most Israelis share these views. So do Kadima, Likud, Labor, and IDF officials. Past leaders as well, including David Ben-Gurion in saying:

"It's not important what the world says about Israel....if we don't show the Arabs that they have to pay a high price for killing Jews, we won't continue living.... (we must) adopt....an aggressive defense; with every Arab attack we must respond with a decisive blow: the destruction of the place or the expulsion of the residents along with the seizure of the place...."

The wisdom of Israel is the wisdom of war, nothing else....We must use terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation, and the cutting of all social services....we (must go on) the offensive....smash Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, and Syria."

Ben-Gurion and later Israeli leaders invoked scripture and self-defense to justify disproportionate force, war crimes, genocide, and occupation. "Dahiya" has a long history. Its current form is the latest version.

US - Israeli Complicity in Committing Genocide Against Palestinians

Francis Boyle is a law professor, human rights expert, and former legal advisor to the Palestinian Delegation to the Middle East Peace Negotiations leading to the 1993 Oslo Accords. He elaborates on "different degrees of heinousness for war crimes." More serious are "grave breaches" of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Since the First Intifada (1987), "the world has seen those heinous war crimes inflicted every day by Israel against the Palestinian people living in occupied Palestine" - by Israeli forces and illegal settlers. Fourth Geneva mandates their prosecution, "including and especially Israel's political leaders."

"Crimes against humanity" are also committed "as determined by the UN Human Rights Commission....The concept" is from the 1945 Nuremberg Charter, drafted by America to try Nazi war criminals. These crimes include:

"murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against a civilian population, before or during the war, or prosecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated." Israel is criminally liable for committing them. So is America as a co-conspirator.

Nuremberg is the "historical and legal precursor to the international crime of genocide as defined by the 1948 Genocide Convention." It's very specific and includes killing; causing serious bodily or mental harm; and destroying a group "in whole or in part."

Since late 1947, Israel's "final solution" has been the total annihilation and/or displacement of the Palestinian people:

“For at least the past six decades, the Israeli government and its predecessors-in-law – the Zionist agencies, forces, and terrorist gangs – have ruthlessly implemented a systematic and comprehensive military, political, and economic campaign with the intent to destroy in substantial part the national, ethnical, racial, and different religious (mix of Muslims and Christians) constituting the Palestinian people....(This US – Israeli) campaign (is designed to destroy them) in violation of Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention.”

Its Article I “requires all contracting parties....’to prevent and to punish’ genocide. Yet to the contrary,” Israel’s genocidal wars on Palestine have “been financed, armed, equipped, supplied and politically supported by the (Judeo – Christian) United States” – even though America is a contracting party to Nuremberg, Geneva, and the UN Charter that prohibit such practices.

Nor did Washington and the international community demand “humanitarian intervention” to stop Israeli aggression and protect a defenseless people. America funds the Israeli killing machine. It can as easily de-fund it and halt the violence. Boyle calls failure to do it “dishumanitarian intervention (or) humanitarian extermination” by the US and Israel “against the Palestinians and Palestine.”

Through his efforts, on January 13, the Malaysia Star reported a “special (Malaysian) Parliament session” voted for Israel to be brought before a UN-sanctioned international war crimes tribunal “for its atrocities and violence on the Palestinian people.”

It also expressed “disappointment” that the international community and Security Council failed to halt the attacks. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said “resolutions would be presented to the relevant parliaments, the United States Congress and the European Parliament.”

Abdullah called for Malaysians to unite “against the inhumane actions of the Zionist regime. The attacks by Israel have contravened international laws and such actions are deemed war crimes....”

Abdullah said his call for a special UN session to condemn Israel was boosted when the General Assembly agreed to hold one to urge the Security Council to act. It did not because “Israel didn’t want it,” and America supports Israel. It also rejects the legitimately elected Hamas government, and it lets Israel “kill children, the elderly, women, and other innocent ordinary people...”

President Obama’s first diplomatic call was to Fatah’s Mahmoud Abbas. He rules by coup d’etat. He has no legitimacy. His presidential term expired on January 9. He claims the right to retain it until 2010 legislative elections are held and does so with Western support. Like this writer and others, Boyle expects “no fundamental change (under Obama) in America’s support for” Israel and its policy of Palestinian extermination and displacement.

On January 22, the new president was firm in introducing Hillary Clinton and George Mitchell at the State Department:

“Let me be clear: America is committed to Israel’s security. And we will always support Israel’s right to defend itself against legitimate threats.” He denounced Hamas and said “No democracy can tolerate (its) acts of terror.” In lying to a national audience, he vilified the victims in support of Israeli aggression against a defenseless population. It’s why James

Petras calls him “America’s first Jewish president.” Palestinians and all Muslims have no friend in Washington. They’re on their own. The “war on terror” targets them in George Bush’s third term.

It gets worse. No Israeli policy change is planned. The “peace process” is a dead letter. Gaza’s borders will stay closed, except for some (way inadequate) allowed in humanitarian aid under “an appropriate monitoring regime, with the international (read Israel, Egypt and NATO) and Palestinian Authority participating,” according to Obama. Hamas will stay isolated until it unconditionally surrenders, relinquishes its right to self-defense, hands over authority to Fatah, Israel and/or an international occupying force, and resigns as the legitimate Palestinian government.

Under these conditions, Obama promises “to actively and aggressively seek a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians....” Longtime insider George Mitchell will spearhead it as the new Middle East envoy. He’s a former Senate majority leader and member of the influential Council on Foreign Relations and Bilderberg Group. He’s no friend of Palestine.

Tel Aviv welcomed the appointment. Its US ambassador, Sallai Meridor, said Israel holds him “in high regard and looks forward to working with him on taking the next steps towards realizing a future of peace and security for Israel and her neighbors.”

Human Rights Groups Accuse Israel of War Crimes

B’Tselem, Amnesty International (AI), and other human rights groups want Israel investigated for war crimes. Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for “credible, independent and transparent” investigations” in telling the BBC that Israel “appears to have (committed) war crimes.”

Special Rapporteur Richard Falk said there’s little doubt about the “inhuman character of (Israel’s) large scale military operation against an essentially defenseless population. (This) raises the specter of systematic war crimes. (The evidence is compelling that Israel broke) fundamental rules of international humanitarian law (in attacking) unlawful targets.”

UNRWA’s Gaza chief, John Ging, cited attacks on five UN schools killing dozens of civilians. AI and Human Rights Watch accused Israel of using white phosphorous shells and attacking civilian neighborhoods.

On January 12, the 47-member UN Human Rights Council voted 33 aye (including Russia, China, India and Brazil), 1 nay (Canada) with 13 abstentions (including Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Japan, S. Korea, Switzerland and Ukraine) to investigate “grave” human rights violations by Israel in Gaza. America isn’t a member of the body.

On January 13, the (Geneva-based) International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) “condemned Israel’s military attacks on Gaza that have been indiscriminate or disproportionate (and called for) an immediate end” to the operation. ICJ also wants a “Commission of Inquiry to conduct a fact-finding investigation on violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties.”

The web site wanted.org.il lists high Israeli officials “WANTED for War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity.” Among the accused – Ehud Olmert, Ehud Barak and Tzipi Livni along with 12 others the site includes. Besides the 2006 Lebanon war, Gaza siege, and other offenses, the site wants arrest warrants issued for their involvement in terror attacks on

Gaza.

It also mentions that on December 10, 2008, Lebanese lawyers submitted a formal complaint to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague against Ehud Olmert, Ehud Barak, former General Matan Vilnai, General Security Services director Avi Dichter, and IDF chief of staff Gabi Ashkenazi “on suspicion that they committed war crimes and crimes against humanity by ordering and maintaining” the Gaza siege. Israel isn’t a signatory to the Court so prosecution there isn’t likely.

However, other ways are possible. If courageous judges are willing, it could happen in countries like Spain, Germany, the UK or even America (see below). Law Professor Francis Boyle’s proposal is also laudable, namely for the General Assembly to establish an International Criminal Tribunal for Israel (ICTI) under the UN Charter’s Article 22. It would be “to investigate and Prosecute suspected Israeli war criminals for offenses against the Palestinian people.”

Michael Ratner, President of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), agrees in stating: “There certainly should be a tribunal” on this matter. “The continued impunity of Israel for crimes it has committed encourages it in perpetrating gross violations of humanitarian law. A tribunal is essential” but impossible through the Security Council given the certainty of a US veto.

CCR “advanc(es) and protect(s) the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” It’s been pursuing a case in US courts against Israeli General Security Services director Avi Dichter. On January 16, the US Second Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in the case against him.

CCR charged him “with planning and directing the bombing of a residential apartment building in Gaza City” in July 2002, “knowing it would result in a significant number of civilian deaths and injuries.” Senior CCR Attorney Maria LaHood said: “Avi Dichter’s decision to bomb our clients and their families as they lay sleeping at home was a war crime.” The international community can’t tolerate these “indiscriminate attacks.”

In May 2007, a lower court dismissed the charges ruling that Dichter acted in the course of his official duties and has immunity under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. It may be months before the Appeals Court decision. There’s little doubt where it stands, yet these lawsuits (in America and around the world) may have impact enough one day to send Israeli war criminals to prison. Perhaps American ones as well. It’s why CCR, Francis Boyle, and others pursue them.

For its part, Israel expects a wave of war crimes lawsuits and is reacting. Haaretz reported that the cabinet approved legal aid for IDF officers likely to face charges. Olmert announced: “Israel will give full support to everyone who operated for it and on behalf of it. The commanders and soldiers who were sent to Gaza need to know that they are safe from various tribunals.”

Israel claims “unsurpassed high moral values and traditions,” adherence to international law, and efforts made to avoid harming civilians in fighting. Ehud Barak calls the IDF “the most moral army in the world. (It tries) to prevent tragedies from happening” despite clear evidence it’s done willfully, maliciously, and strategically.

On January 22, Ehud Olmert appointed justice minister Daniel Friedman “to head a team that will examine methods to avoid war crimes charges for those involved in IDF operations in Gaza.” At the same time, IDF chief of staff Gabi Ashkenazi and an army censor forbade the names and photos of officers involved in “Operation Cast Lead” from being published as well as information on their role in ordering or carrying out attacks.

Gaza War A Failure for Israel - Morally and Strategically

On January 22, Haaretz columnist Gideon Levy said so in all its objectives. It failed:

- to stop Hamas rockets for self-defense;
- to prevent Hamas from rearming; and
- to assert Israel’s deterrence capacity and “restore its capability” as a formidable military foe, given that it attacks civilians and not a powerful adversary.

In Israel’s Ynetnews.com, writer B. Michael asked “Was the army’s morality proven again? Oy vey. A moral army is not one that kills civilians and then rushes to boast how moral it is.” He also asked “Was our deterrence restored? No....Israel has been pulverizing the Palestinians for dozens of years now, yet....they continue not to be deterred.” This time is no different.

Hamas emerged strengthened, not defeated, and more popular than ever. In contrast, Israel is discredited, vilified, and shamed. For its part, Fatah is weakened and the Abbas - Fayyad PA disgraced for blaming the violence on Hamas, saying little to denounce IDF war crimes, and for cracking down on West Bank anti-war protests and against Hamas supporters.

Reports are that hundreds of them (including journalists, students and Muslim leaders) have been harassed, beaten, arrested, and tortured across the West Bank in service to Israel and Washington. Palestine Information Center journalist, Khalid Amayreh, said he spent nearly two and a half days in a rancid, dark, windowless cell in Hebron’s Preventive Security Force headquarters after a local security chief invited him there for coffee.

Though not abused, he heard screams from another cell and saw 10 men led away with hoods over their heads. Amayreh estimates from 500 - 600 arrests were made. Hamas said Islambodi Badir needed medical treatment from electric shock torture by Palestinian General Intelligence.

As for Israel, world outrage demands international tribunal prosecutions of its political and military leaders. “Israel is a violent and dangerous country,” concludes Levy. It’s “devoid of all restraints and blatantly ignor(es) the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, while not giving a hoot about international law. The investigations are on their way” maybe this time with teeth enough to bite. If not now, eventually. Nations that live by the sword, die by it. Israel and America are no exceptions.

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