

Let Israel's Leaders Get Arrested for War Crimes

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All decent Israelis must ask themselves the following questions: Is their country committing war crimes in Gaza? If so, how should they be stopped?

How should the culprits be punished? Who can punish them? Is it reasonable for crimes to go unprosecuted and criminals to be exculpated?

One may, of course, reply in the negative to the first question - Israel is not committing any war crimes in Gaza - thereby rendering the rest of the questions superfluous.

But how can one answer in the negative in the face of the facts and [the situation in Gaza](#):

about 35,000 people killed and another 10,000 missing, about two-thirds of them innocent civilians, according to the Israel Defense Forces;

among the dead are around 13,000 children, nearly 400 medical workers and more than 200 journalists; 70 percent of homes have been destroyed or damaged;

30 percent of children suffer from acute malnutrition;

two people in 10,000 die each day from starvation and disease. (All figures are from the United Nations and international organizations.)

Is it possible that these horrific figures came to be without the commission of war crimes?

There are wars whose cause is just and whose means are criminal;

the justice of the war does not justify its crimes. Killing and destruction, starvation and displacement on this scale could not have occurred without the commission of war crimes.

Individuals are responsible for them, and they must be brought to justice.

Israeli hasbara, or public diplomacy, does not try to deny the reality in Gaza. It only makes [the claim of antisemitism](#): Why pick on us? What about Sudan and Yemen?

The logic doesn't hold: A driver who is stopped for speeding won't get off by arguing that he's not the only one. The crimes and the criminals remain. Israel will never prosecute anyone for these offenses. It never has, neither for its wars nor its occupation. On a good day, it will prosecute a soldier who stole some Palestinian's credit card.

But the human sense of justice wants to see criminals brought to justice and prevented from committing crimes in the future. By this logic, we can only hope that the International Criminal Court in The Hague will do its job.

Every Israeli patriot and everyone who cares about the good of the state should wish for this. This is the only way that Israel's moral standard, according to which it is permitted everything, will change. It is not easy to hope for the arrest of the heads of your state and your army, and even more difficult to admit it publicly, but is there any other way to stop them?

The killing and destruction in Gaza has gotten Israel in way over its head. It is the worst catastrophe the state has ever faced. Someone led it there - no, not antisemitism, but rather its leaders and military officers. If not for them, it wouldn't have turned so quickly after October 7 from a cherished country that inspired compassion into a pariah state.

Someone must stand trial for this.

Just as many Israelis want Benjamin Netanyahu to be punished for the corruption of which he is accused, so should they wish for him and the perpetrators subordinate to him to be punished for much more serious crimes, the crimes of Gaza.

They cannot be allowed to go unpunished.

Nor is it possible to blame only Hamas, even if it has a part in the crimes.

We are the ones who killed, starved, displaced, and destroyed on such a massive scale. Someone must be brought to justice for this.

Netanyahu is the head, of course. The picture of him [imprisoned in The Hague](#) together with the defense minister and the IDF chief of staff is the stuff of nightmares to every Israeli.

And yet, it is probably warranted.

It is highly unlikely, however. The pressure being exerted on the court by Israel and the United States are enormous (and wrong). But scare tactics can be important.

If the officials actually refrain from traveling abroad in the next few years, if they actually live in fear of what may come, we can be sure that in the next war, they'll think twice before sending the military on campaigns of death and destruction of such insane proportions. We can find a little comfort in that, at least.

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