

The Unthinkable Is Happening. Genocide Is Being ‘Normalized’

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For almost 11 months the world has been seeing documented evidence from Gaza—in the form of videos or ground-based reports—of the most horrible killings of innocent persons including a large number of women and children. Nearly 52,000 people have been confirmed by health authorities to have been killed in this violence or are buried in rubble, over 90,000 have been injured or disabled. Most of the houses and essential infrastructure have been destroyed. Traumatized people, grieving the loss of dearest ones and carrying the injured and the sick with them, exposed to extreme hunger, almost famine like conditions, denied water and sanitation, facing many diseases, exhausted and tired beyond words, are being ordered time and again to move from one place to another on their own, but sometimes have been killed even in shelter places or on way to them, ultimately crammed in a small place in the most difficult conditions. There is also exposure to extreme pollution from shockingly large use of huge bombs and explosives. Medical facilities have been largely destroyed.

If it is accepted that such conditions can lead to the excess mortality of at least three times compared to the people killed directly in violence, (such assumptions have been made in the past for calculating war and conflict mortality by very credible studies) then it is likely that nearly 208,000 persons have died in this genocidal operation (52,000 plus 156,000) in 11 months, a figure close to the widely quoted number of 186,000 estimated number of dead people in a Lancet report. Hence the mortality per month during the last 11 months is likely to be close to 19000 per month or 600 per day, while the number of those sustaining injuries is about half this number. All this is for a population of nearly 1.9 million. In other words, nearly one tenth of the population has perished due to the direct and indirect impacts of war and conflict in just 11 months.

In normal times if an incident happened of about 100 people, a majority consisting of women and children, getting killed or seriously injured and disabled in any part of world on any single day in very cruel and arbitrary ways by any armed forces, which also imposed very painful conditions on other remaining people such as denial of food, what would be expected is a huge world level outcry against such a massacre, but let us face it, this has been happening time and again in Gaza, has been almost routinized in the course of the actions of the armed forces of Israel, yet has failed to bring forth the kind of response that is needed—for example the world getting together to bring immediate peace, or at the very least, the main suppliers of weapons to Israel like the USA and Germany announcing an immediate stoppage of all weapons and military help to Israel.

This is what a senior journalist dealing on daily basis with the reporting of this extremely

tragic and unacceptable situation has to say,

“Genocide, something the world vowed would never happen again after the Holocaust, is being normalized. And this will affect not just our future as Palestinians, but the future of the entire world.

“Every day for the last 11 months, I have been receiving pictures of dead bodies, smashed heads and parts of bodies being collected in body bags.

“As the region’s bureau chief for Middle East Eye, it is my job to sift through and examine these images. None of the pictures of barbarity appear in the Israeli media or the western world, but an Arab and Muslim audience gets them every day.

“What Israeli soldiers are doing can be done in other countries as well. We seem to sleepwalking into a new age of barbarity.”

(Extended quote [from article by Lubna Masarwa](#), Middle East Eye).

I have read several statements from very senior officials of the UNO, including the Secretary General, rightly emphasizing the need for immediate ceasefire, but I have not yet seen these statements condemning the USA, Germany and other major weapon suppliers for continuing to supply weapons to Israel despite clear evidence of these being used for genocidal actions in Gaza.

This is in keeping with all the double talk that has enabled the so-called international community to go on making some face-saving statements, sometimes completely false ones too, while the genocidal actions in Gaza continue.

Now more recently such attitudes have resulted in Israel, its armed forces and settlers greatly expanding and accentuating their aggression in West Bank too and it is widely feared that here too intolerably high sufferings may be created as in Gaza.

This should not be acceptable in any world having some reasonable levels of commitment to peace and justice. But it appears—and let us at least accept this—that world leadership, particularly western leadership—lacks any reasonable level of commitment to peace with justice these days. They will daily make a statement of some peace efforts and of their commitment to peace, and then hasten to arm the Israeli forces further.

In these extremely difficult times it is important to re-assert that despite all the great sufferings, the future agenda must be defined not by revenge or blind violence, but only on the basis of uniting more and more people with more and more commitment for a future of peace and justice. If more and more people continue to come forward for an agenda of immediate permanent ceasefire, followed by large-scale community-based rehabilitation, followed by a strong and stable Palestinian state in which people can live peacefully and safely, then there is still hope.

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