

The West's Hypocrisy Towards Gaza's Breakout Is Stomach-turning

There will be little sympathy in the West as, yet again, besieged Palestinians are bombed by Israel, the immense suffering justified by the term 'Israeli retaliation'

By [Jonathan Cook](#)

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The current outpouring of sympathy for [Israel](#) should make anyone with half a heart retch.

Not because it is not awful that Israeli civilians are dying and suffering in such large numbers. But because Palestinian civilians in Gaza have faced repeated rampages from Israel decade after decade, producing far more suffering, but have never elicited a fraction of the concern currently being expressed by western politicians or publics.

[The West's hypocrisy](#) over Palestinian fighters killing and wounding hundreds of Israelis and holding dozens more hostage in communities surrounding and inside besieged [Gaza](#) is stark indeed.

This is the first time Palestinians, caged in the coastal enclave, have managed to inflict a significant strike against Israel vaguely comparable to the savagery Palestinians in Gaza have faced repeatedly since they were entombed in [a cage more than 15 years ago](#), when Israel began its blockade by land, sea and air in 2007.

Western media are calling the jailbreak and attack by Palestinians from Gaza "unprecedented" - and the most dismal intelligence failing by Israel since it was caught off-guard during the Yom Kippur War exactly 50 years ago.

Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** has [accused](#) Hamas, which nominally runs the open-air prison of Gaza, of starting "a cruel and evil war". But the truth is that the Palestinians have "started" nothing. They have managed, after so much struggle, to find a way to hurt their tormentor.

Inevitably for the Palestinians, as Netanyahu also observed, “the price will be heavy” – especially for civilians. Israel will inflict on the prisoners the severest punishment for their impudence.

Watch how little sympathy and concern there will be from the West for the many Palestinian men, women and children who are killed once again by Israel. Their immense suffering will be obscured, and justified, by the term “Israeli retaliation”.

The Real Lessons

All the current analysis focusing on [Israel’s intelligence “blunders”](#) distracts from the real lesson of these rapidly evolving events.

No one really cared while Gaza’s Palestinians were subjected to a blockade imposed by Israel that denied them the essentials of life. The few dozen Israelis being [held hostage](#) by Hamas fighters pale in comparison with the two million Palestinians held hostage by Israel in an open-air prison for nearly two decades.

No one really cared when it emerged that Gaza’s Palestinians had been put on [a “starvation diet”](#) by Israel – only limited food was allowed in, calculated to keep the population barely fed.

No one really cared when Israel bombed the coastal enclave every few years, killing many hundreds of Palestinian civilians each time. Israel simply called it [“mowing the lawn”](#). The destruction of vast areas of Gaza, what Israeli generals boasted of as returning the enclave to the Stone Age, was formalised as a military strategy known as the [“Dahiya doctrine”](#).

No one really cared when Israeli snipers targeted nurses, youngsters and people in wheelchairs who came out to protest against their imprisonment by Israel. Many [thousands were left as amputees](#) after those snipers [received](#) orders to shoot the protesters indiscriminately in the legs or ankles.

Western concern at the deaths of Israeli civilians at the hands of Palestinian fighters is hard to stomach. Have not many hundreds of Palestinian children died over the past 15 years in Israel’s repeated bombing campaigns on Gaza? Did their lives not count as much as Israeli lives – and if not, why not?

After so much indifference for so long, it is difficult to hear the sudden horror from western governments and media because Palestinians have finally found a way – mirroring Israel’s inhumane, decades-long policy – to fight back effectively.

This moment rips off the mask and lays bare the undisguised racism that masquerades as moral concern in western capitals.

Hypocrisy Distilled

Distilling that hypocrisy is [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#), [Ukraine’s](#) president. At the weekend, he [issued](#) a lengthy tweet condemning Palestinians as “terrorists” and offering Israel his unwavering support.

Horrible news from Israel. My condolences go out to everyone who lost relatives or close ones in the terrorist attack. We have faith that order will be restored and terrorists will be defeated.

Terror should have no place in the world, because it is always a crime, not just...

— Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [October 7, 2023](#)

He averred that

“Israel’s right to self-defense is unquestionable”, adding: “The world must stand united and in solidarity so that terror does not attempt to break or subjugate life anywhere and at any moment.”

The inversion of reality is breath-taking. The Palestinians cannot “subjugate life” in Israel. They have no such power, even if a few briefly managed to break out of their cage. It is Israel that has been subjugating Palestinian life for decades.

Not all forms of “terrorism”, it seems, are equal in the eyes of Zelenskiy, or his patrons in western capitals. Certainly, not the state terrorism of Israel that has made Palestinian lives a misery for decades.

How does Israel have an “unquestionable right” to “defend itself” from the Palestinians whose territory it occupies and controls? How does Russia then not have an equal claim to be “defending itself” when it hits Ukrainian cities in “retaliation” for Ukrainian strikes intended to liberate its territory from Russian occupation?

Israel, the much stronger, belligerent party, is now laying waste to Gaza “in retaliation”, as the BBC [puts it](#), for the latest Palestinian attack.

So on what grounds will Zelenskiy or his officials be able to condemn Moscow when it fires missiles “in retaliation” for Ukraine’s strikes on Russian territory? How, if Palestinian resistance to Israel’s occupation of Gaza is terrorism, as Zelenskiy asserts, is Ukrainian resistance to Russian occupation not equally terrorism?

No Hiding Place

By indulging Israel in its deceptions, Israel’s allies have allowed it to perpetrate ever more outrageous lies. At the weekend, Netanyahu warned Palestinians in Gaza to [“leave now”](#) because Israeli forces were preparing to “act with all force”.

But Netanyahu knows, as do his western enablers, that Gaza’s population has nowhere to flee. There is no hiding place. Palestinians have been sealed into Gaza since Israel besieged it by land, sea and air.

The only Palestinians able to “leave Gaza” are the armed factions who broke out of their Israeli-imposed jail and are being denounced as “terrorists” by western politicians and media.

Western governments so horrified by the Palestinian attack on Israel are also the

governments that are remaining silent as Israel turns off the electricity to the prison that is Gaza – again in supposed “retaliation”.

The collective punishment of two million Palestinians in Gaza, dependent on Israel for power because Israel surrounds and controls every aspect of their lives in the enclave, is [a war crime](#).

Strangely, western officials understand it is a war crime when Russia bombs power stations in Ukraine, turning off the lights. They scream for Russian President Vladimir Putin to be dragged to the International Criminal Court in the Hague. So why is it so difficult for them to understand the parallels of what Israel is doing to Gaza?

Daring Escape

There are two immediate, and contrasting, lessons to be learnt from what has happened this weekend.

The first is that the human spirit cannot be caged indefinitely. Palestinians in Gaza have been constantly devising new ways to break free from their chains.

They have built a network of tunnels, most of which Israel has located and destroyed. They have fired rockets that are invariably shot down by ever more sophisticated interception systems. They have protested en masse at the heavily fortified fences, topped by gun towers, Israel surrounded them with – only to be shot by snipers.

Now they have staged a daring escape. Israel will batter the enclave back into submission with massive bombardments, but only “in retaliation”, of course. The Palestinians’ craving for freedom and dignity will not be diminished. Another form of resistance, doubtless more brutal still, will emerge.

And the parties most responsible for that brutality will be Israel and the West that supports it so slavishly, because Israel refuses to stop brutalising the Palestinians it forces to live under its rule.

The second lesson is that Israel, endlessly indulged by its western patrons, still has no incentive to internalise the fundamental truth above. The rhetoric of its current government of fascists and Jewish supremacists may be particularly ugly, but there is a broad consensus among Israelis of all political stripes that the Palestinians must continue to be oppressed.

Which is why the so-called opposition will not hesitate to support the military pounding of the long besieged enclave of Gaza, killing yet more Palestinian civilians to “teach them a lesson”, a lesson no one in Israel can articulate beyond asserting that Palestinians must accept their permanent inferiority and imprisonment.

Already, the “[good Israelis](#)” – opposition leaders **Yair Lapid** and **Benny Gantz** – are in discussions with Netanyahu to join him in an “emergency unity government”.

What “emergency”? The emergency of Palestinians demanding the right not to live as prisoners in their own homeland.

Israelis and westerners can continue their mental gymnastics to justify the Palestinians’ oppression and refuse them any right to resist. But their hypocrisy and self-deceptions stand

exposed for the rest of the world to see.

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Jonathan Cook is the author of three books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His website and blog can be found at www.jonathan-cook.net

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