

Editorial Position of the New York Times: “Thumbs Up for Gaza Slaughter”

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By Abba Solomon and Norman Solomon

Over the weekend, the New York Times sent out a clear signal: the mass slaughter of civilians is acceptable when the Israeli military is doing the killing.

Under the headline “Israel’s War in Gaza,” the most powerful newspaper in the United States editorialized that such carnage is necessary. The lead editorial in the July 19 edition flashed a bright green light — reassuring the U.S. and Israeli governments that the horrors being inflicted in Gaza were not too horrible.

From its first words, the [editorial](#) methodically set out to justify what Israel was doing.

“After 10 days of aerial bombardment,” the editorial began, “Israel sent tanks and ground troops into Gaza to keep Hamas from pummeling Israeli cities with rockets and carrying out terrorist attacks via underground tunnels.”

The choice of when to date the start of the crisis was part of the methodical detour around inconvenient facts.

For instance, no mention of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s June 30 [announcement](#) that the “human animals” of Hamas would “pay” after three Israeli teenagers kidnapped in Israeli-controlled territory in the West Bank were found dead. No mention of the absence of evidence that Hamas leadership was involved in those murders.

Likewise, absent from the editorializing sequence was Israel’s June [“crackdown”](#) in the West Bank, with home raids, area closures, imprisonment of hundreds of Hamas party activists including legislators.

Most of all, the vile core of the Times editorial was its devaluation of Palestinian lives in sharp contrast to Israeli lives.

The Times editorial declared that Hamas leaders “deserve condemnation” for military actions from civilian areas in the dense Gaza enclave — but Netanyahu merited mere expressions of “concern” about “further escalation.” Absent from the editorial was any criticism of Israel’s ongoing bombardment of homes, apartment blocks, hospitals, beaches and other civilian areas with U.S.-supplied ordinance.

At the time, there had been one Israeli death from the hostilities — and at least 260 deaths among Gazans as well as injuries in the thousands. The contrast illuminates a grotesque difference in the Times’ willingness to truly value the humanity of Israelis and Palestinians.

In the morally skewed universe that the Times editorial board evidently inhabits and eagerly promulgates, Hamas intends to “terrorize” Israeli citizens while Israel merely intends to accomplish military objectives by dropping [thousands of tons of bombs](#) on Palestinian people in Gaza.

A keynote of the editorial came when it proclaimed: “There was no way Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was going to tolerate the Hamas bombardments, which are indiscriminately lobbed at Israeli population centers. Nor should he.”

While sprinkling in a handwringing couple of phrases about dead and wounded civilians, the editorial had nothing to say in condemnation of the Israeli force killing and maiming them in large numbers.

Between the lines was a tacit message to Israel: Kill more. It’s OK. Kill more.

And to Israel’s patrons in Washington: Stand behind Israel’s mass killing in Gaza. Under the unfortunate circumstances, it’s needed.

When the editorial came off the press, the Israeli military was just getting started. And no doubt Israeli leaders, from Netanyahu on down, were heartened by the good war-making seal of approval from the New York Times.

After all, the most influential media voice in the United States — where the government is the main backer of Israel’s power — was proclaiming that the mass killing by the Israeli military was regrettable but not objectionable.

The night after the Times editorial went to press, the killing escalated. Among the calamities: the Israeli military shelled the Gaza neighborhood of Shejaiya throughout the night with nonstop tank fire that allowed no emergency services to approach. Eyewitness media reports from Shejaiya [recounted](#) scenes of “absolute devastation” with bodies strewn in the streets and the ruins.

Two days after the editorial reached Times newsprint, [over 150 more were counted dead in Gaza](#). No media enabler was more culpable than the editorializing voice of the Times, which had egged on the Israeli assault at the end of a week that began with the United Nations reporting [80 percent of the dead in Gaza were civilians](#).

The Times editorial was in step with President Obama, who [said](#) — apparently without intended irony — that “no country can accept rockets fired indiscriminately at citizens.” Later, matching Israeli rationales for a ground invasion, the president [amended](#) his verbiage by saying: “No nation should accept rockets being fired into its borders or terrorists tunneling into its territory.”

An important caveat can be found in the phrases “no country” and “no nation.” The stateless people who live in Gaza — [70 percent of whom are from families expelled from what’s now southern Israel](#) — are a very different matter.

By the lights of the Oval Office and the New York Times editorial boardroom, lofty rhetoric

aside, the proper role of Palestinian people is to be slaughtered into submission.

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