

If Palestinians Were Human Beings

By [Shourideh C. Molavi](#)

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Today the struggle for people of conscience appears to be less about convincing people that Israel is committing war crimes against Palestinians or grossly violating international law. Instead the struggle has become about convincing the world that Palestinians are human beings too. The ongoing televised genocidal attack of Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli army makes one wonder what the situation would have been like if global powers and mainstream voices saw Palestinians as human beings.



Palestinian children in bombed Shuja'iya district, 26 July 2014. [Photo: Middle East Eye:Mohammed Asad]

If Palestinians were human beings, they would not lay scattered in the hundreds on the grounds of a crowded marketplace in [Shuja'iya](#) after IDF shelling during a four-hour ceasefire declared by Israel.

If Palestinians were human beings, the corpses of those killed in Khuza'a, with skins melted from the intensity of U.S.-made Israeli bombs, would not have been [found piled on top of one another](#) in the corner of the bathroom of a house. Many of them have not been identified as their [bodies were completely burnt](#).

If Palestinians were human beings, the medical crews would not have been [denied access](#) by Israeli tanks to the dozens of civilian casualties in Khuza'a. These victims of missiles fired from Israeli drones would have been buried instead of scattered in the streets and reportedly [eaten by nearby animals](#).

If Palestinians were human beings, Israel would not have launched a massive campaign with artillery shelling in [Rafah](#) with explosions everywhere, cars flying up in flames, and a barrage of bombs killing entire families prevented from evacuating their villages, only to be literally crushed to death by their collapsing homes.

If Palestinians were human beings, they would not have been bombed to death by Israel while taking shelter in one of the seven [UN schools attacked](#) thus far, including in [Beit Hanoun](#), in Jabaliya as [families lay sleeping](#) on the floor of a classroom, and most recently in Rafah as [children queued for sweets and biscuits](#).

If Palestinians were human beings, then their cities, villages and towns, including Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun, Shuja'iya, Khuza'a, and Zanaa would not have been [razed and flattened](#) by the Israeli army, with [buildings pulverized](#) into sand and pieces of bodies visible

beneath the rubble.

If Palestinians were human beings, [whole portions of single families](#) would not have been erased by targeted Israeli military strikes, while sitting together in their homes. There would not be a globally [institutionalized disregard](#) for their lives.

If Palestinian parents were human beings, they wouldn't have to experience searching for, collecting, and carrying in [plastic bags](#) the remaining pieces of their children's bodies blown up by Israeli shells.

If Palestinian children were human beings, they would not lose their entire families to Israeli bombs while suffering shrapnel wounds at [2-years old](#), or be prematurely born as orphans like [Shaymaa al-Sheikh](#) only to be buried next to her dead mother at a mere one week-old. If they were human beings Palestinian children would not be killed by airstrikes while [playing](#) on the beach, sleeping, eating, or even [while undergoing surgery](#) in a hospital. They would not be the main targets of Israel's '[precision war](#)'.

If Palestinians were human beings, Israeli leaders and public figures would not publicly fantasize for years about their [mass extermination and concentration camps](#), or to extinguish them *en masse* by having Gaza grazed, [painted red, turned into rubble and flattened, reformatted and wiped clean](#), and [sent back to the Middle Ages](#).

If Palestinians were human beings in the eyes of Israel and global powers, their killers in the IDF would be held accountable under international law. They would be allowed to flee a war zone contained by concrete walls where thousands of tons of Israeli bombs rain down on them, be protected in UN schools, and access clean water, electricity and basic medicine. They would be able to watch their children grow up in peace and live with dignity. We would know their names, what they did, what they liked and what they dreamed.

If Palestinians were seen as human beings, the world would follow in the footsteps of their extreme resilience, care and compassion, with which they refuse to give in to their utterly inhumane conditions. •

Shourideh C. Molavi is a Ph.D. student and writer based in Toronto, Canada. She is author of [Stateless Citizenship: The Palestinian-Arab Citizens of Israel](#) (Brill, 2013), which explores the dynamics of Israel's multifaceted legal, political and structural system of control through the lens of citizenship. Thanks to Justin Podur and Fabian Voegeli for their comments.

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