

Israel-Palestine War: The Blood of Gaza Is on the West's Hands as Much as Israel's

Israel is on the rampage again and Gaza's population is facing a quiet, slow path to erasure. The ones funding and enabling it are the US and its European allies

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The bloodiest hand in the [current slaughter](#) of [Palestinians](#) and [Israelis](#) belongs not to Hamas or the Netanyahu government, but to the West.

Yes, Palestinian fighters carried out a brutal attack at the weekend on Israeli settlements on the edge of the Gaza Strip. But this attack did not emerge from nowhere, or without warning. It was not "unprovoked", as Israel would like us to believe.

In fact, western capitals know exactly how much the Palestinians of Gaza have been provoked, because those same governments have [been complicit for decades](#) in supporting Israel as it has ethnically cleansed Palestinians from their homeland and imprisoned the remnants of the population in ghettos across their homeland.

For the past 16 years, western backing for Israel has not wavered, even as Israel has turned the coastal enclave of Gaza from the world's largest open-air prison into a gruesome torture chamber, where Palestinians are experimented on.

Their food and power [have been rationed](#), essentials of life denied to them, their access to drinkable water slowly removed, and their hospitals prevented from receiving medical supplies and equipment.

The problem is not ignorance. Western governments have been informed in real-time of the crimes Israel is committing: in confidential cables from their own embassy officials, and in endless reports from [human rights groups](#) documenting Israel's apartheid rule over Palestinians.

And yet western politicians have time and again done nothing to intervene, done nothing to exert meaningful pressure. Worse, they have rewarded Israel with endless military, financial and diplomatic support.

‘Human Animals’

The West is no less responsible now as Israel steps up its barbaric treatment of Gaza. Defence Minister Yoav Gallant decided this week to deepen the siege on Gaza by stopping all food and power – a crime against humanity.

He has referred to the enclave’s caged Palestinian population – men, women and children – as “[human animals](#)”.

Dehumanisation, as history has proved time and again, is the prelude to ever-greater outrages and horrors.

How has the West responded?

President Joe Biden has declared – approvingly – that a “long war” is ahead between Israel and Hamas. [Washington](#) seems to relish long wars, which always prove a boon to its arms industries and a distraction from domestic troubles.

A [US aircraft carrier](#) is on its way. Officials are already preparing to send [missiles and bombs](#) that will be used once again to kill Palestinian civilians from the air, as well as ammunition for Israel’s troops to strafe Palestinian communities during the coming ground invasion.

And, of course, there will be plenty of extra funding for Israel – money that can never be found when it is needed by the most vulnerable US citizens.

Those funds will be on top of the nearly \$4bn Washington [currently sends](#) each year to an Israeli government of self-declared fascists and ethnic supremacists whose express aim is to annex the last remaining fragments of Palestinian territory – as soon as they can get the green light from Washington.

Britain’s Prime Minister Rishi Sunak does not want to be outdone, as Israel inflicts collective punishment on Gaza’s Palestinians and begins to slaughter them every bit as indiscriminately as Hamas did Israeli partygoers at the weekend.

A giant, illuminated [Israeli flag was emblazoned](#) on the facade of the best-known home in Britain: 10 Downing Street, Sunak’s official residence. The [prime minister has offered](#) “military assistance” and “intelligence”, presumably to help Israel bomb Gaza’s caged population.

Suffer in Silence

The truth is that this moment of catastrophe could never have been reached without western powers indulging, subsidising and providing diplomatic cover for Israel’s brutality towards the Palestinian people, decade after decade.

Without such unstinting support, and without a complicit western media refashioning the

land thefts by settlers and the oppression by soldiers as some kind of “[humanitarian crisis](#)”, Israel could never have gotten away with its crimes.

It would have been forced to reach a proper accommodation with the Palestinians – not the bogus Oslo accords that were intended only to ensnare the “[good](#)” [Palestinian leadership](#) into colluding in their own people’s subjugation.

Israel would also have been forced to genuinely normalise with its Arab neighbours, not browbeat them into [accepting a Pax Americana](#) in the Middle East.

Instead, Israel has been free to pursue a policy of relentless escalation, sold by the western media as “calm” or “quiet” – until Palestinians try to hit back at their tormentors.

Only then is the term “escalation” used. It is always Palestinians “[escalating tensions](#)”. The permanent state of oppression inflicted by Israel can then be safely acknowledged and relabelled as “[retaliation](#)”.

Palestinians are expected to suffer in silence. Because when they make a noise, it risks reminding western publics of how bogus, how self-serving western leaders’ appeals to the “rules-based order” truly are.

‘Back to the Stone Age’

Where does this endless indulgence from the West ultimately lead?

Already, Israel is emboldened to make much more explicit its policy towards Gaza’s two million inhabitants. There is a word for that policy, one we are not supposed to use to avoid causing offence to those implementing it, as well as those who quietly support its implementation.

Whether by design or outcome, Israel’s starving of civilians, leaving them with no power, depriving them of clean water, and preventing hospitals from treating the sick and wounded – from treating those Israel has bombed – is a genocidal policy.

Western governments know this too. Because Israeli leaders have made no secret of what they are doing.

Fifteen years ago, shortly after Israel instituted its stifling siege on Gaza by land, sea and air, the then deputy defence minister, Matan Vilnai, averred that Israel was ready to [carry out a “Shoah”](#) – the Hebrew word for Holocaust – on Gaza. If the Palestinians were to avoid this fate, he said, they must keep quiet at their internment.

Six years later, Ayelet Shaked, who would soon be appointed a senior Israeli minister, declared all Palestinians in Gaza to be “[the enemy](#)”, and included “its elderly and its women, its cities and its villages, its property and its infrastructure”.

She called on Israel to kill the mothers of Palestinian fighters resisting the occupation so they could not give birth to more “little snakes” – Palestinian children.

During the 2019 general election, Benny Gantz, then leader of the opposition and soon-to-be defence minister, [campaigning with a video](#) celebrating his time as head of the Israeli

military, when “parts of Gaza were sent back to the Stone Age”.

In 2016, another general, Yair Golan, who at the time was the Israeli military’s second in command, [described developments in Israel](#) as echoing the period in Germany leading up to the Holocaust.

When asked to comment on Golan’s remark during an interview this year, retired general Amiram Levin agreed that Israel was becoming [more like Nazi Germany](#). “It hurts, it’s not nice, but that’s the reality.”

Blood of Gaza

Western leaders watched through all this: as Palestinian civilians – half the enclave’s population are children – were kept hungry, were denied drinkable water, were refused electricity, were denied proper medical care, and were repeatedly subjected to horrifying bombardments.

From one side of its mouth, the West pretended to agonise about the legal niceties of “proportionality”. From the other side of its mouth, it cheered Israel on. It spoke of “unbreakable bonds”, of “unquestionable rights”, of “self-defence”.

It echoed figures like Gallant. The Palestinians weren’t humans with agency. They weren’t people striving for their freedom and dignity.

They weren’t a people resisting their occupation and dispossession, as they were fully entitled to do under international law – a right the world celebrates when it [comes to Ukrainians](#).

No, they were either the victims or the supporters of their “terrorist” leaders. As such, they were treated by the West as though they had forfeited any right to be heard, to be valued, to be treated as human.

Western politicians and media expect the Palestinians of Gaza to stay in their torture chamber, bite their lips and suffer in silence so consciences in the West are not disturbed.

It has to be said. Gaza’s population is facing a quiet, slow path to erasure. And the ones funding it, the ones enabling it, are the US and its European allies. Their hands are the ones drenched in the blood of Gaza.

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Featured image: A Palestinian child, Omar Alhadeede, the sole survivor of his family, looks at a photo of his brothers, killed by the Israeli bombing on Gaza in 2021. (Image tweeted by Aya Isleem)

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