

Israeli Crimes against Humanity: Targeting Palestinian Children with “Pinpoint Accuracy”

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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“We saw the faces of those who’ll throw our children

Out of the window of this last space ...

We will die here, here in the last passage.

Here and here our blood will plant its olive tree.”(Mahmud Darwish, 1943-2008.)

The Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights has now assessed the destruction caused to Gaza and to it’s 1.6 million people living in an area of land twenty five miles long and between four and seven miles wide (forty one km and six to twelve km respectively.)

The destruction of near all necessary to maintain civil society is so surgical as to make it impossible not to believe that the stated aim of Israel’s Interior Minister Eli Yishai to “... send Gaza back to the Middle Ages”, Gilad Sharon’s to “Flatten all of Gaza”, or Knesset Member Michael Ben-Ari’s exhorting: “There are no innocents in Gaza, mow them all down”, were not aberrations but reflected Israeli government intentions.

In the first five days of the Gaza onslaught the Israeli military state that they carried out thirteen hundred and fifty air strikes on the tiny strip already blockaded since electing the Hamas government in 2006. Ironically Gaza had life support collectively removed the same year as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was connected to it, where he remains.

The Al Mezan Centre’s initial findings on death and destruction are chilling and shaming (i) but were out of date just twenty four hours later. In an extensive list, damaged or destroyed schools now stand at fifty two, the deaths at one hundred and sixty eight.

The Maan News Agency recounts: ‘The Headmistress of the UN-sponsored Al-Bureji girls preparatory school, Hanan Abu Yousif was stunned when she found her school in pieces on Saturday morning. “The school that used to win competitions has been turned to rubble.”

Exactly what threat the clinics, the schools, the Headquarters of the Palestinian Paralympic Committee, now rubble, posed to Israel’s security is unknown. Just the remains of a wall with a sign proclaiming the latter’s name and its aim: “For The Disabled Sports” are all that is left.(ii)Three youth clubs were also destroyed.

It is also hard to know what threat the dead pose to the State of Israel.Three cemeteries

were also bombed.

“Children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of indecent assault. The Parties to the conflict shall provide them with the care and aid they require, whether because of their age or for any other reason”, states paragraph 1, Article 77 of the Geneva Convention (1977.) What rubbish.

On November 15th, Nader Basoni (14) sleeping in the same room as his brother, saw nine year old Faris decapitated when metal from an air strike on “a near by field” tore through the family home. “His head was gone except for a piece of skin of his face”, said Nader. “I’m afraid to go to sleep because I see him in my dreams. It’s the same thing over and over – Fares is gone. He’s dead.”

The Hijazi family too have suffered the unimaginable. In 2008 Mohammed (17) was killed in an Israeli air strike. His parents were gifted with the arrival of another baby who they named Mohammed in his memory. Last week this small pre-school threat to the fourth most powerful military on earth, and his two year old brother Suhaib died in an attack – as did their father Fouad and mother Amna. Trauma continues to engulf a third generation of Gaza’s children, families. (iv.)

And that famed “pinpoint accuracy” stuff has done well. Media images include a beautiful pigtailed four year old, looking in to the camera with the huge eyes of the innocence of life’s threshold. Then she is in a hospital, unconscious, four great ugly suture lines criss-crossing her right cheek, from mouth to ear to hairline, blackened eyes swollen until it seems they might burst.

“Pinpointed” seemingly, were two dead boys probably about nine years old, one with his stomach near eviscerated, remnants of his leg placed on his body. The other, his leg made meat, exposed bone, blood drenching his jaunty blue and white, matelot-type sweat shirt.

Four so, so small children, lay together on a trolley in the morgue, blue jeans, brightly coloured, now bloodied tops were also part of military accuracy, the frozen faces of parents and relatives recording them to memory for the last time – before they washed them, wrapped them and laid them under the earth.

And did anyone in authority in the “only democracy in the Middle East” note the image of the father kissing the face of a dead toddler, his arms collecting her to him for a last time, this lost little threat to a neighbouring State – and another peril: the blood soaked child, lying across his father’s lap, the young father’s head buried on his lifeless form.

A nine year old girl lost the fingers of her right hand, her mother is working to explain that her artistic passion can be achieved as well with her left. Pinpointing doesn’t get more accurate than the fingers of a small right hand.

Ranan Yousef Arafat, was three, blue eyed, smiling, her green hair-ribbons matching her green top must have had them worried, she was reduced to a form shrivelled, blackened, near unrecognizable – and heart-shreddingly pathetic.

Seven year old Nisma Kalajar (v) may never talk again. She suffered a head fracture after falling from the third floor family apartment when it was targeted in a drone strike.

Did the three toddlers, swaddled for burial, their father, his face contorted in his grief, being restrained by relatives as he tried to throw himself on them, somehow retrieve them, really pose a threat to the Israeli State? Or another limp, lifeless mite cradled in the arms of his father, being in turn held tightly by another man to prevent him falling to the ground in grief?

The images are without end, another father kissing the face of his baby daughter, his arms round his other two lifeless, pre-school age children; Iyad Abu Khawsah, eighteen months, so frail, ethereally slender, lying in the arms of a stricken faced morgue attendant.

In a hospital corridor a child of perhaps twelve leant against a wall, his face a mask of grief, despair, bewilderment. He clutched his baby brother, forehead swathed in bandages, in his arms. Their parents had been killed in the attack.

Sitting on a hospital trolley, next to his prone mother was a child about the same age of that bandaged little brother. He had his chubby hand on one side of her face, and his knee wedged against the other side. Her great eyes looked up at his scratched, smudged face. He sat there shoeless, in black, yellow and brown top and just a diaper, patiently waiting for her to wake up. She never will.

When eleven members of the Dallou family were annihilated with five children, their home reduced to a large crater, the Israeli army declared it a:

“mistake in identification of the right home” (vi) a blatant admission that targeting homes is a norm, in yet further defiance of a swathe of international law.

The direct targeting of civilians is a breach of the laws of armed conflict. “The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited,” states Additional Protocol I of 1977. (vii)

Israel, naturally, has not ratified Protocol I: “but this provision, prohibiting direct attacks on civilians, is generally recognized as customary law, universally applicable regardless of ratification.” It has to be wondered how a country that also holds the world record for defying UN Resolutions (viii) continues to get away with “prohibited” attacks, massacres, thefts, displacements, and the spreading of terror or threat of it, on a near ongoing basis.

Further, forgotten it seems, amid the deafening silence of the United Nations and its seemingly now mute Secretary General (even his spineless predecessor Kofi Annan used to respond to illegal annihilations with: “regrettable” or “unfortunate”) are two UN Resolutions:

General Assembly Resolution 3236 of November 22nd 1974 affirms: “the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine...to self-determination without external interference” and “to national independence and sovereignty.”

Reaffirmation of a Palestinian State is in Security Council Resolution 1397 of 12th March 2002, which affirms: “a vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.”

If, as seems near certain, Palestine moves from “Observer entity” to “Non-member observer State” at the UN on 29th November, which: “implies recognition of statehood ...” states Vera

Jelinek, Dean of New York University's Center for Global Affairs, regained nationhood of what remnants remains of Palestine's un- stolen land edges closer.

Will Israel accept this with grace, or will it return to Gaza to inflict a "final solution" on a people also enduring, as Iraq before it, a near Middle Age siege?

As Al Mezan points out in their Report: "The failure of international community to make timely, effective interventions to protect civilians and condemn violations of international law; including the failure of the Security Council to issue a statement (on the Gaza attack) illustrates that international community continues to apply (double) political standards on human rights and international law issues; *an attitude that could allow for violations of international law to recur in the future.*" (Emphasis mine.)

Incidentally, it is an ironic coincidence that the onslaught on Gaza began on the anniversary of German forces murdering nine thousand Jewish people in Slonim, Belarus on 14th November 1941, in "Operation Barbarosa."

In India 14th November was Universal Children's Day, which is celebrated there on the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first Prime Minister much influenced by his friend Mahatma Gandhi, who said: "When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it - always."

Notes

- i. http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=15744&ddname=IOF&id2=9&id_dept=9&p=center
- ii. <http://www.insidethegames.biz/paralympics/1011785-palestinian-paralympic-committee-headquarters-destroyed-in-gaza-bombings?>
- iii. <http://www.uruknet.de/?p=m92933&hd=&size=1&l=e>
- iv. <http://www.uruknet.de/?p=m92933&hd=&size=1&l=e>
- v. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/11/children-face-the-fallout-of-gaza-war/>
- vi. <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=21460>
- vii. <http://www.crimesofwar.org/a-z-guide/civilians-illegal-targeting-of/>
- viii. <http://salemshalom.blogspot.co.uk/2007/12/heres-list-of-u.html>

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