

# What the Media “Forgets to Tell You” About Israel and Gaza. Israel’s Ethnic Cleansing Program.

**Jonathan Cook**

Ignore the fake news. Israel isn’t defending itself. It’s enforcing its right to continue ethnically cleansing Palestinians

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*The missing context for what’s happening in Gaza is that Israel has been working night and day to ethnically cleanse the Palestinian people from their homeland since even before Israel become a state – when it was known as the Zionist movement.*

*Israel didn’t just cleanse Palestinians in 1948, when it was founded as a Western colonial project, and again under cover of a regional war in 1967. It also worked to ethnically cleanse Palestinians every day between those dates and afterwards. The aim was to move them off their historic lands, and either expel them beyond Israel’s new, expanded borders or concentrate them into small ghettos inside those borders – as a holding measure until they could be expelled outside the borders.*

The ‘settler’ project, as we call it, is a misnomer. It’s really Israel’s ethnic cleansing programme. Israel even has a special word for it in Hebrew: ‘Judaisation’, or making the land Jewish. It is official government policy.

Gaza was the largest of the Palestinian reservations created by Israel’s ethnic cleansing programme, and the most overcrowded. To stop the inhabitants spilling out, Israel built a fence-barrier in the early 1990s to pen them in. Then when policing became too hard from within the prison, Israel pulled back in 2005 to the outer perimeter barrier.

New technology allowed Israel to besiege Gaza remotely by land, sea and air in 2007, limiting the entry of food and vital items like medicine and cement for construction.

Automated gun towers shot anyone who came near the fence. The navy patrolled the sea, stopping boats straying more than a kilometre or two off shore. And drones watched 24 hours a day from the sky.

The people of Gaza were sealed in and largely forgotten, except when they lobbed a few rockets over the fence – to international indignation. If they fired too many rockets, Israel bombed them mercilessly and occasionally launched a ground invasion. The rocket threat was increasingly neutralised by a rocket interception system, paid for by the US, called Iron Dome.

Palestinians tried to be more inventive in finding ways to break out of their prison. They built tunnels. But Israel found ways to identify those that ran close to the fence and destroyed them.

Palestinians tried to get attention by protesting en masse at the fence. Israeli snipers were ordered to shoot them in the legs, leading to thousands of amputees.

The ‘deterrence’ seemed to work. Israel could once again sit back and let the Palestinians rot in Gaza. ‘Quiet’ had been restored.

Until, that is, last weekend when Hamas broke out briefly and ran amok, killing civilians and soldiers alike.

So Israel now needs a new policy. It looks like the ethnic cleansing programme is being applied to Gaza anew. The half of the population in the enclave’s north is being herded south, where there are not the resources to cope with them. And even if there were, Israel has cut off food, water and power to everyone in Gaza.

The enclave is quickly becoming a pressure cooker. The pressure is meant to build on Egypt to allow the Palestinians entry into Sinai on ‘humanitarian’ grounds.

Whatever the media are telling you, the ‘conflict’ – that is, Israel’s ethnic cleansing programme – started long before Hamas appeared on the scene. In fact, Hamas emerged very late, as the predictable response to Israel’s violent colonisation project.

And no turning point was reached a week ago. This has all been playing out in slow motion for more than 100 years.

Ignore the fake news. Israel isn’t defending itself. It’s enforcing its right to continue ethnically cleansing Palestinians.

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