

Palestinian Suffering? The Denial of Universal Human and Political Rights

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[Jamie Stern-Weiner Blog](#)

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

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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Let's imagine for just a moment that a people was [forcibly dispossessed of its homeland](#).

Let's imagine that a portion of this people had rotted in refugee camps for some seven decades while others had lived under a brutal military occupation for almost five decades.

Let's imagine that the people living under this military occupation were [systematically tortured](#), abused, [stolen from](#), and prevented from exercising their most basic and [universally ratified](#) human and political rights.

Let's imagine that for nearly a decade, a part of this people was placed under an inhuman and [illegal siege](#) that brought about the [complete collapse](#) of their already desperate economy, and rendered their environment [borderline unfit for human habitation](#).

Let's imagine that, on top of the expulsion, military occupation, and inhuman and illegal siege, these people suffered periodic massacres, the [most recent](#) of which killed more than 2,200 people, including 550 children, and destroyed or rendered uninhabitable [fully 18,000 homes](#).



Photo caption: Impossible life in Gaza: Nader Obu Odeh, age 6, gathers wood from destroyed houses to make a fire, Beit Hanoun, Gaza Strip. The Abu Odeh family, 33 people including 21 children, fled but returned to live in the remains of their damaged house without electricity and gas. Photo by Activestills.org

Let's imagine that their hospitals, schools and houses were [repeatedly and deliberately shelled with white phosphorus](#), a substance that reaches 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit and, upon contact with human flesh, can burn through to the bone.

Let's imagine that within this battered and besieged '[prison camp](#)', poverty had climbed to 40%; that 80% of the population was reduced to dependence upon humanitarian aid; and that [unemployment hit 43%—probably the highest in the world](#).

Let's imagine that most of these people were [children under the age of 18](#).

Let's imagine that more than 70% of these people were [refugees](#).

Let's imagine that, for decades, as these horrors were inflicted upon a stateless and dispossessed civilian population, the international community looked on and did nothing.

Let's imagine that the [entire world agreed](#) on how to bring this brutal military occupation to a peaceful close, but that, in defiance of this overwhelming international consensus, the occupying power [brazenly refused to withdraw to its legal borders](#).



Photo caption: IDF soldiers at one the many checkpoints near the West Bank city of Jenin. Photo by Reuters

Let's imagine that, when a number of individuals finally got together and tried to do something to bring the nightmare to an end, [Jonathan Freedland came along and issued to them a heartfelt 'plea':guys, take it down a notch](#).

The upshot of Freedland's wretched article is this: for half a century nothing has been done to put a stop to the brutal, immoral and illegal persecution of the Palestinians, and it's time to do less.



Photo Caption: An open pool of sewage is seen in the garbage-filled Wadi Gaza area of the central Gaza Strip on Nov. 27, 2013. The situation got much worse the following year when Gaza's sewage treatment plant and the power station driving water and sewage treatment was destroyed by the IDF. Photo by Marco Longari / AFP / Getty Images

P.S. Naz Shah MP was vilified for posting an image suggesting, tongue-in-cheek, that Israel be relocated to the United States. Here is [what Jonathan Freedland had to say](#) about an ethnic cleansing that actually happened, and whose surviving victims are still struggling for a mite of justice:

'I have long believed that Israel should be strong enough to admit the reality of 1948 [i.e. the mass expulsion of Palestinian civilians]—and to defend it all the same'. The ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians was 'a horribly high moral price' to pay for the establishment of a Jewish state—but it was also 'a moral necessity'.

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