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The Wiped-out Generations of Gaza

The targeted killing of children in Palestine

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Abstract:

"Oxfam reported in 2024 that the Israeli military killed more women and children in Gaza in that year than were killed in any other single year of recent conflict." Israeli attack on Gaza has been the most documented case of genocide yet the most ignored war crime. UN reports suggest that the constant military assault has resulted in the demolition of over 60% of educational institutions in Palestine and 80% in Gaza alone¹. These assaults are not one-off events. They exhibit a methodical pattern of violence meant to destroy the fundamental basis of Palestinian society. This phenomenon, described as "scholasticide," represents an intentional and targeted campaign by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to erase Palestinian identity and future. Without access to knowledge and opportunity, the capacity for societal growth and survival is systematically annihilated. The watering down of the catastrophe is credited to the western projection of the crises which shapes the way the world views the said- conflict.

The humanitarian toll extends far beyond education. Not only has the war forced people to seek refuge within their own land, but it has also deprived them of basic necessities such as water, food, and shelter—resources that are often weaponized to exacerbate their suffering. As per the grossly inadequate yet rarely available reports, 5% of southern Gazan children under two years are malnourished² while Israeli-imposed famine in northern Gaza has been linked to the deaths of children, including toddlers.

Today, despite the overwhelming evidence, the international community continues to turn a blind eye, and if it continues, the state of Palestine, along with its people will cease to exist.

Keyword: genocide, west, scholasticide, crises normalization

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/09/gaza-israels-imposed-starvation-deadly-children>

Introduction:

Historically, Palestine has been a land of constant change witnessing the empire's control to British ownership and the west dividing it to settle its interest. With the demise of the Ottoman empire and issuance of the Balfour Declaration as a consequence of *World War I*, British imperialist forces took charge of a land unknown to them but good enough to divide and, perhaps, rule.

The Arab world saw tremendous destruction and geopolitical upheaval following the conclusion of World War I and the founding of the League of Nations. The League gave Britain the Mandate for Palestine as part of the post-war settlement, thus putting the area under British colonial rule. This mandate had serious inconsistencies because Britain had made contradictory pledges during the war, including supporting Zionist goals through the *Balfour Declaration*, which supported the establishment of a "*national home for the Jewish people*" in Palestine which was followed by mass Jewish immigration driven by Zionist motivation and European backlash.

Instead of preserving peace, British policy frequently made tensions worse by ignoring Palestinian complaints and handling Jewish aspirations for a country at the same time. In the end, these wars prepared the way for subsequent rebellions, bloody clashes, and the division and expulsion of Palestinians in 1948.

Gaza has been a contested territory ever since. Western media along with Israeli propaganda have dealt with Gaza as a separate entity reducing it to mere humanitarian crises ignoring the political instability, gendered violence and targeted attacks on its population.

The West View:

The west tends to dominate any and all political discussion especially when it concerns one of the most lucrative areas in today's world order. But to not restrict the western perspective about Israeli genocide on Palestine to the geographical west, the western 'ideology' is much more fluid. The "West" isn't just a geographical entity; it's an ideological framework that transcends borders, shaping narratives, power dynamics, and political legitimacy worldwide.

Media's portrayal and bias towards Israel is significant in understanding how the world views the "conflict". Reports by Indian media, for example, also amplify the set-western construction of pro Israeli stance. Notably, there has been a rise in anti-Palestinian and pro-Israel propaganda coming from India, frequently spread by people who support the current political system.

The portrayal of Palestinian resistance as "terrorism" or the downplaying of their suffering is largely rooted in narratives shaped by the geographical West and reinforced by the dominance of Western ideology, which heavily influences global discourse. The binary created by the West serves them ideologically as well as strategically given Israel is one of the key allies of the US. Nothing goes down in the international arena without American influence and everything is going down in West Asia due to Israeli attacks. The western portrayal and aids throughout the "conflict" has water down the true atrocities on the gazan population.

Crisis Normalization:

The constant upheavals faced by the Gazan population has desensitized the world to their sufferings. The world is too desensitised to atrocities that one needs to face some tremendous suffering for the world to consider it 'important'. Constant humanitarian crises reset expectations, making previously dire conditions seem "normal."³

In a context where war in, perhaps on, Gaza is normalised to the extent that only an extreme, unheard war crime makes the world turn their heads, humanitarian aid and any help from the outside world is politicised. In addition to being physically under blockade, Gaza is also discursively isolated since it is mostly portrayed in popular narratives as a humanitarian catastrophe rather than a political battle. Supported by the international media, policymakers, and humanitarian organizations, this narrative presents Gaza as a distinct circumstance separate from the greater Palestinian conflict. Because it depoliticized Gazan suffering and hides the root causes of Palestinian oppression, this framing has significant repercussions that affect global perceptions and political decisions.

³ Feldman, I. (2009). Gaza's Humanitarianism Problem. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 38(3), 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2009.xxxviii.3.22>

Gaza is commonly depicted as a humanitarian calamity, with food, medical, and energy shortages. Despite the fact that these problems are severe and genuine, seeing Gaza only from a humanitarian perspective reduces its citizens from active participants in a political conflict to helpless victims. Reports from international organisations like the United Nations and the Red Cross address the catastrophic conditions prevalent in Gaza from a humanitarian lens but they fail to acknowledge and bring forth the dire situations of a failed political structure within the territory attributed to Israeli occupation, blockades and politicising the bare minimum humanitarian aid addressed to Gaza.

Because Gaza lacks adequate medical treatment, children who survive these strikes frequently have long-lasting problems. Children are frequently deprived of the opportunity to live normal lives due to amputations, disfigurements, and loss of sight or hearing.

The Palestinian people's division is strengthened by the emphasis on Gaza as a "special case." The prevailing narrative helps to create the impression that Gaza's predicament has nothing to do with the larger Palestinian cause by isolating Gaza from the West Bank and Palestinian communities within Israel. By undermining Palestinian unity and making it simpler to justify policies that treat Gaza as a separate entity rather than a part of an occupied country, this fragmentation benefits Israel.

This division has been formalized by the Oslo Accords and subsequent diplomatic initiatives. These initiatives have led to agreements that treat Gaza as administratively separate from the West Bank, despite their shared history and demographics.

Politicisation of humanitarian aid:

"There's no such thing as free aid. There's always a political cost, a strategic interest, or a geopolitical calculation behind it."

- Arundhati Roy

Israel has imposed a very selective embargo and limits on aid to Gaza, operating within a framework that purports to allow humanitarian help but routinely denies vital resources required for long-term growth and recovery. By using selective enforcement as a tactic of economic strangulation and control, Gaza is kept dependent on foreign aid while being

unable to rebuild or grow on its own. The categorisation of aid restricts items with “dual purpose”, those which have the capability to be used for both civilian and military purpose, to be delivered within Gaza. These restrictions mean that while basic humanitarian relief (such as food shipments) may enter Gaza, the essential materials required for rebuilding its infrastructure and ensuring self-sufficiency are systematically obstructed.

But allowance of humanitarian relief does not mean that citizens in Gaza tend to have access to the basic life essentials. They lack basic medical infrastructure, medicines, water purifiers, fuel and other electricity equipment.

The blockade imposed by Israel and reinforced by Egypt has not only restricted Gaza’s physical access to essential goods but has also severely stunted its economic growth, creating a situation where humanitarian aid is a lifeline for the majority of the population. This blockade, which has been in place since Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, has prevented the movement of goods and people, strangling industries, commerce, and job opportunities.

In her essay, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War*, Mary Anderson presents a critical analysis of how aid and support can fuel conflicts rather than helping or alleviating suffering. In divided societies, aid that flows disproportionately to one side can deepen grievances and perceptions of injustice⁴. Aid, in turbulent societies, also legitimizes corrupt governments without holding them accountable for addressing underlying issues.

Her work focuses on war and /or conflict ridden states, one of those focuses on Gaza, where she emphasises on how international aid to Gaza, while essential for survival, has often reinforced the political status quo rather than addressing long-term development.

After Hamas won an election in 2006 and seized control of Gaza in 2007, the international community (especially the US and the EU), implemented a stringent "no-contact" policy with the group. These entities cut off direct diplomatic and financial connections with Hamas after designating it as a terrorist organization. Gaza was further isolated as a result of aid and political participation being routed solely via the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank.

⁴ Gray, D. H. (1999). [Review of *NO HARM: HOW AID CAN SUPPORT PEACE OR WAR*, by M. B. Anderson]. *International Journal on World Peace*, 16(3), 85–87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20753222>

This refusal *to engage* has deepened Gaza's isolation from the overall Palestinian struggle for self-determination sidelining Gaza's struggle against Israeli occupation. By January 2024, over 80% of Gaza's population was dependent on aid, with unemployment exceeding 45%.⁵

Scholasticide in Gaza: The Systematic Destruction of Education

"The best way to control a people and completely control them is to take away their history, their literature, and their culture."

-Karl Marx

The term “scholasticide” refers to the systematic destruction of educational institutions, infrastructure, and academic life in a targeted region. UNHRC reports that after six months of military assault, more than 5,479 students, 261 teachers and 95 university professors have been killed in Gaza, and over 7,819 students and 756 teachers have been injured. These casualties continue to rise.

Bombings have destroyed research facilities, libraries, and student resources at several higher education institutions, including Al-Azhar University and the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG). This destruction is not merely incidental, it embodies a comprehensive strategy that not only disrupts education in the immediate sense but also seeks to undermine the intellectual and professional prospects of Palestinian society in the long run. The targeted killings of students, teachers and everyone involved in the educational sector cannot be seen in isolation. This constitutes a component of a broader objective to undermine Gazan identity and Palestinian culture. And the easiest way to restrict growth, in all aspects, is to wipe out all curious minds.

The Israeli blockade significantly limits access to vital educational resources, including textbooks, scientific apparatus, and digital learning instruments. Because Israel restricts the entry of computers, lab supplies, and even paper, Gaza's colleges lack adequate infrastructure. Furthermore, Palestinian students are at a major disadvantage when compared

⁵ Strand, T. (2014). *Tightening the Noose: The Institutionalized Impoverishment of Gaza, 2005–2010*. [PDF document].

to their colleagues throughout the world due to ongoing power outages and restricted internet access, which impede remote study and research.

An aspect of Israel's larger strategy of scholasticide is the arbitrary detentions, travel bans, and administrative roadblocks imposed on students who are seeking to pursue study overseas. Students wishing to pursue higher education abroad are burdened by the draconian measures by Israeli authorities reflected in arbitrary arrests and restriction of movement at or beyond certain “designated checkpoints”. Not only do these limitations affect individuals, but they also erode the foundations of Palestinian society and ensure the country's ongoing economic and political subordination by contributing to the long-term suppression of academic and professional advancement within Palestine, especially Gaza.

If academic aspirants manage to obtain a travel permit, education essentially becomes a one-way ticket to exile. Even those who successfully leave Gaza to pursue their studies elsewhere face the risk of being denied re-entry. Students are forced to choose between being permanently separated from their families and homeland or the pursuit of their academic ambitions.

Another critical aspect of scholasticide within Gaza is the psychological impact and disruption of intellectual growth within the masses. Students' concentration and academic performance are significantly impacted by the trauma of war, displacement, and ongoing terror. Because of the continuous violence and instability in Gaza, UNICEF reports that over 90% of children experience psychological anguish⁶. As a result, a generation is growing up without the stability required for healthy intellectual and emotional development, academic performance declines, and dropout rates rise. This also guarantees that professionals and academics are continuously undermined, and without even the most basic access to high-quality education and a broad range of knowledge, the populace is further deprived of the opportunity to voice their grievances, learn to think critically, and help rebuild their own country. Instead of striving for self-sufficiency, this forces individuals into a cycle of dependence on external aid.

⁶ UNICEF. (2024, February 14). *Cold, sick and traumatized: The ongoing nightmare for children in Gaza*. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/cold-sick-and-traumatized-ongoing-nightmare-children-gaza>

The easiest way to kill a population subconsciously is to deprive them of their capacity to think critically, ability to enjoy their culture and to understand their history. Israel ensures that future generations lack the information and abilities necessary to resist oppression and create a self-sustaining society by systematically dismantling Educational institutions.

Research from UNICEF and Save the Children reveal that approximately 80% of Gaza's youth experience anxiety, depression and PTSD. A generation of severely traumatized individuals is being created by the ongoing exposure to violence, the loss of family members, and the destruction of homes and schools.

The Future In Exile

The "conflict" did not begin on October 7, 2023; it started with carving out a territory to establish Israel. Israel was created to serve western interests rather than provide a homeland for a specific group of people. Palestine, including both The West Bank and Gaza, has been a conspicuous blind spot for the west. Issues are often created, exacerbated by the western European states and US funding Israel to acquire arms and ammunition against civilians.

If they aim to eradicate Hamas and in that process, innocent civilians are killed, the survivors may rise and create a new Hamas altogether. The targeted killing of Palestinian children in military operations not only results in tragic loss of life but also fuels cycles of resistance and radicalization. Every kid murdered or left orphaned by Israeli bombing is another family that has experienced pain that cannot be healed, making future peace initiatives more challenging. Since these atrocities leave young Palestinians without hope, rights, or choices, they foster a sense of despair and sadness that makes it easier for extremists to attract new members.

Therefore, Hamas's presence and power in Gaza are maintained by the very measures intended to suppress it.

The world has been nothing but silent spectators to this devastation but also, ironically, active participants and highly involved in deciding Palestinian future. Worldwide boycotts, rallies and protests did shake the deadened nerves but majorly, the leaders have had little to no opposition to Israeli atrocities. This is well reflected in President Trump's recent statements to "re-develop" Palestine by displacing the natives to other states. It is important to note that Palestinians are not a possession of either Israel or America or any other western power, for that matter. The national identity defined by ethnic cohesiveness, shared history and strong

cultural ties which make them Palestinians is all deeply rooted in the land which is theirs. Ironically, Trump has been deporting illegal immigrants from America, but is flaunting his idea to be one in Palestine.

A normalised havoc, an ignorant world and cries for help characterise Palestinian struggle to freedom. Freedom to live in their own land, to cherish their culture and to exist as Palestinians. Western media portrayal of the ongoing genocide as Israel-Palestine 'conflict'⁷ very well shows how the world chooses to downplay the horrific crimes of its ally. Blood might be thicker than water, but neither the horrific blood shed of the dead nor the tears of the survivors helped Palestinians receive the humane treatment that they deserve.

Conclusion

Israel has been at war with Palestine for over half a century⁸ but it is only recently that the world has begun to fully acknowledge against Palestinian civilians. Boycotts and rallies have helped to galvanize for widespread condemnation of Israel for the inhumane, barbaric attacks.

The global community must take an active role in advocating for justice and human rights in Palestine. This begins with recognizing Gaza and the West Bank as a single Palestinian entity, rather than treating them as separate political and administrative zones. The fragmentation of Palestinian land and governance has been a deliberate strategy to weaken national unity and hinder self-determination. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that Palestinians are being forcibly displaced, forcefully and rendered homeless in their own country. The international community's foremost duty is to be vocal against the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homeland.

The Palestinian struggle for freedom must not be normalized or watered down to appease Western powers.. The truth remains that true identity and liberty are rooted in one's homeland – the land that has belonged to the Palestinians, and no entity, however powerful, can take that away from them.

⁷ leading news networks like, CNN and the BBC, have revealed the inner workings of those outlets' newsrooms from October 7 onward, alleging pro-Israel bias in coverage, systematic double standards and frequent violations of journalistic principles.

⁸ With its creation in 1948, Israel has been at truce with Palestine. The first Arab-Israeli war of May 1948 clarified Israeli intentions as invasive into Palestinian sovereignty.

From land to sea, Palestine would be free
