



ECHOES OF RESILIENCE: UNVEILING THE TAPESTRY OF SUFFERING IN PALESTINE

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to stress the urgency for humanization of Palestinians in the current genocide occurring in Palestine. This paper will use two approaches to the current genocide: one being humanitarian and one being legal. In the first half of the paper, there will be a brief history of Palestine and Israeli relations, emphasizing the implementation of Israel within indigenous Palestinian land. Discussing this history will show that the events unfolding in Palestine are not a sudden occurrence but rather the culmination of 76 years of systematic oppression. Western media outlets refer to the Palestinian genocide as the “Israeli-Hamas War”; using the official definitions of war and genocide, this paper will argue that this is not a war, but a genocide. Specifically, this paper will prove how the atrocities occurring in Palestine are a genocide under the Geneva Conventions in detail. This paper utilizes numerous statistical insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of the living conditions Palestinians are subject to, emphasizing the need to speak up for our Palestinian brothers and sisters, as they are in grave danger.

Introduction

“Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization.” (Said, 1978.) This quote from Edward Said summarizes the justification of exploitation and colonization of resources and land of the Arabs. The “real civilization” that Said was expressing, is the common colonizer justification of genocide because the indigenous people of the said land “don’t know how to take care of it.” With this belief, Arabs needed Western settlers to show them how to be civilized people. Today, the Middle East is known to be a never ending “war-stricken” zone and the people themselves are uncivilized, extremists, and terrorists. So, the events currently happening in Palestine – why should we care that those Arabs are at war?

According to the United Nations, over 30,000 people have been murdered at the hands of Israeli forces and 80% of the population has been displaced from their homes, leaving them with nothing and nowhere to go since October

7th. The civilians are being starved, forcing them to eat grass, animal feed, and weeds to survive. The 2023 – 2024 academic school year was cancelled due to the 4,327 students murdered, leaving 625,000 students out of school, 346 schools destroyed, and 236 teachers and administrators killed (Al Jazeera, 2023.) The children of Palestine have been protesting in the streets, calling for a cease-fire and food aid, holding signs addressed to the world to hear their cries for help. The tragedy of this situation is that our society has accustomed to just seeing the numbers. We don’t really process what information was just relayed. It just becomes a poorly written headline, and we move on with our lives.

The purpose of this paper is to stress just how important and powerful our individual voices are and how we all have a duty as human beings to speak up for what’s right during these devastating times. In addition to a humanitarian approach, I will take a legal and policy-based approach highlighting clear violations Israel is committing and how Israel is not above the law



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and must be held accountable for its actions. The first step to this is awareness, which is what I will provide.

Section 1: Why Should We Care About Palestine as Human Beings?

Brief Overview of the History of Palestine and Israel

While under occupation from Britain, the land of Palestine was pledged to be “a national home for the Jewish people” by the Balfour Declaration in 1917. This declaration promised Jews a land where the natives made up more than 90 percent of the population, which was just one of the many conflicting promises made by the British. Secondly, the British had already promised Arabs independence in the 1915 Hussein-McMahon correspondence, in exchange for Arab assistance in opposing the Ottoman Empire. The third contradiction was the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 between the British and the French. In this agreement, Britain and France were to divide up the Arab territories from the former Ottoman Empire. As shown, these three policies contradict one another and caused tensions between the Arabs and the British since they never intended on holding any of their promises of an established state of Palestine. This is especially problematic as it reveals the West’s intentions and perceptions towards the Arabs. In their mind, it didn’t matter if they betrayed the Arabs; they simply didn’t deserve their land. In November of 1947, the United Nations approved a plan to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, which was against the will of the indigenous Palestinian Arab population. According to the Institute of Middle East Understanding, this plan gave 56 percent of the land to the proposed Jewish state, despite the fact Jews had owned about 7 percent of the private land and made 33 percent of the population. This left 42 percent of Palestine to the indigenous people. When the British mandate was scheduled to end in May of 1948, the state of Israel was created. Backed

by U.S. President Truman, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14th, 1948.

These actions led to the Nakba, meaning “catastrophe” in Arabic, which was the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab Israeli war. Nearly one million Palestinians were expelled from their homeland, deeming them refugees by the new Israeli military. Several dozen massacres were carried out by the Israeli army, killing approximately 15,000 Palestinians, which played a critical role in prompting the flight of Palestinians from their homes. Over 400 Palestinian cities and towns were systematically destroyed by the Israeli army to prevent the return of Palestinian owners (IMEU, 2023). Most Palestinians ended up as stateless refugees in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and neighboring Arab countries. This tragic event for the Palestinian people resulted in the loss of their homeland, the fragmentation and marginalization of their national community, and the erasure of the Palestinian identity through the means of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Though the Nakba happened 76 years ago, remaining Palestinians today still lack humanitarian rights and remain subject to hostile treatment.

Living Conditions in Palestine Prior to October 7th

It’s important to understand that the current “war” did not begin with attacks from Gaza. Over the last 76 years, Palestinians have been living in a system of apartheid, another crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and subject to hostile treatment and discrimination by Israeli forces. From Amnesty International, for example, 68,000 Palestinians living in the Bedouin villages are currently “unrecognized” by Israel, meaning they are cut off from the national electricity, water supply, and targeted for repeated demolitions (Amnesty International,



2022.) Residents of these villages are also cut off from the healthcare and education systems, which have coerced many into leaving their homes, thus forcible transfer. Additionally, Israel has been using administrative detention, holding a person without trial and without committing an offense, on the grounds that they plan to break the law in the future. As this practice is intended to be preventive, it has no time limit. Over the years, Israel has placed thousands of Palestinians behind bars ranging from several months to several years, without charging them or disclosing what “crime” was committed, and without proving the alleged evidence to them or their lawyers. In August of 2022 alone, Israel had been holding over 1,200 Palestinian detainees, the most in 3 decades (AP News, 2023). Following the October 7th attacks, Israel currently holds nearly 7,000 Palestinians in detention (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Children are unfortunately not safe from administrative detention as well. Israeli authorities regularly arrest Palestinian children during nighttime raids, interrogate them without their parents present, and hold them for longer periods before bringing them to a judge. A study conducted by The Association for Civil Rights in Israel in 2017 shows that authorities kept 72 percent of Palestinian children from the West Bank in custody until the end of proceedings. In comparison, only 17.9 percent of children in Israel underwent similar detention. Besides the lack of due process, Israeli authorities have mistreated and tortured Palestinian prisoners for decades. According to a study from the Human Rights Watch, “More than 1,400 complaints of torture, including painful shackling, sleep deprivation and exposure to extreme temperatures, by Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security service, have been filed with Israel’s Justice Ministry since 2001.” (Shakir, 2023). Blockades have also played a big factor in the living conditions of Palestinians. For the last 16 years, Gaza has been under a violent blockage, which severely limits travel, trade, and everyday life for over 2 million residents. With a 50 percent unemployment

rate, Gaza’s living conditions, health systems, and infrastructures have all suffered under the blockade (Abdulrahim, 2023).

Israel-Hamas “War”

Oxford Languages defines a war as “a state of armed conflict between different nations or states or different groups within a nation or state” (Oxford Languages, 2022.) How can we label something as a war when one side doesn’t have the adequate tools needed to equally engage in a war? Palestine has no land army, air force, or navy, and does not have advanced military equipment. In comparison, Israel’s Defense Forces are known to be as one of the most equipped militaries across the globe. Since 2011, Israel has rallied on its Iron Dome missile defense system, worth multi billion dollars (The Economic Times, 2023). It also has tanks, artillery, missiles, fighter planes, and warships in addition to a 2,200 strong arsenal (The Economic Times, 2023). In case this was not enough, Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign aid since its founding in 1948, totaling up to about \$300 billion in total economic and military assistance (Master, 2024). In comparison, Hamas has an inventory of light weapons, including improvised and self-made rockets, mortars, and other explosives. Hamas has approximately 40,000 fighters, but the Israeli Defense Forces has over four times the manpower at 170,000 soldiers (Ghaedi, 2023). As you can see, the state of Israel, with one of the strongest militaries in the world, overpowers Hamas’ capabilities of engaging in the war. Additionally, if this war is supposedly targeting Hamas only, why are 30,000 innocent civilians dead despite the fact Israel has one of the most sophisticated armies in the world? If this truly is an attack designated to Hamas, why is Israel bombing Syria and Lebanon? Why is the IDF targeting hospitals, schools, ambulances, refugee camps, which are official war crimes, and several other locations other than Hamas’ bases if this is anything other than a genocide?



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In comparison, genocide is defined as “the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group” (Oxford Languages, 2022.) we have witnessed the murders of 30,000 Palestinians, with many thousands more under the rubble. In the coming sentences, I will provide a load of numbers, identifying the documented destructions and murders from different scopes. Then, I will explain the strategic implementations of these tragedies and how they display a case of textbook genocide. We have seen the carpet bombing of the Gaza Strip with over 40,000 tons of explosives, the destruction of 100,000 homes, and the displacement of 1.7 million Gazans (State Crime, 2024). We have witnessed the murders of hundreds of medics, 31 of Gaza’s 36 hospitals destroyed, two universities in ruins, and at least 76 journalists killed (State Crime, 2024). As of October 31st, Israeli forces have killed all members of over 600 families, removing them entirely from the Palestinian civil registry (Aljamal, 2023). The Israeli military has opened fire on several different occasions for those waiting for aid. Specifically, the Flour Massacre of February 29th resulted in 118 Palestinians killed and 750 wounded by Israel’s open fire of those waiting for aid (Al Jazeera, 2024). These numbers above are only those directly killed by Israel. Israel is also responsible for the indirect murders for those suffering from starvation, diseases, lack of medical supplies, and even hygienic products. According to a 2024 report from Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “... international experts predicted that the number of victims of starvation and related diseases may exceed the number of those killed directly during the Israeli genocide of Palestinians.” The UNRWA said 570,000 Gazans are classified as having food insecurity equivalent to famine levels of starvation, defined by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (Kekatos, 2024). The WHO has reported that the remaining hospitals in the Gaza Strip are suffering from a severe lack of fuel and basic supplies, running

at three times their capacity (WHO, 2024). Infectious diseases have been spreading at soaring rates due to lack of sanitation and hygiene. According to the WHO, there is only one shower for every 4,500 people and one toilet for every 220 (WHO, 2024.). Clean water is scarce; 97 percent of Gaza’s water is unfit for human consumption (CNN, 2023.)

I’ve thrown a lot of numbers and statistics out there, but what does this all mean, and what does it have to do with genocide? By displacing millions of civilians, it prevents Palestinians from living in their homes and forces them to flee for safety, unable to return when the war is over due to Israeli policy. The murders of journalists and medics is an especially strategic action; killing the journalists prevents the world from seeing for themselves what has been happening in Gaza and killing the medics prevents other wounded civilians from getting medical care, thus increasing the death toll at an elevated pace. The mass spread of diseases and famine are likely to kill even more Palestinians in Gaza. Gaza has become uninhabitable due to Israeli bombardment and blockade. Even if a ceasefire is granted, many Gazans will have no home to return to seeing as half of all homes in Gaza were destroyed. Citizens requiring medical attention will not be able to acquire it in Gaza due to many of the hospitals being in ruins. Children will not be able to return to school, seeing as that most of them have turned to rubble. All these factors added together conclude that this is not a target to Hamas, this is a target to the Palestinian people collectively. By destroying Gaza, Gazans will be unable to return to their homes, which is a prime example of ethnic cleansing. Israel is killing Palestinians at an accelerated rate, forcing civilians to dig mass graves for the bodies that continue to pile. If Gaza is not enough, the bombing of Rafah was well-planned and thought out to continue to get rid of as many Palestinians as possible, whether that’s through murder or displacement. Rafah, sheltering 1.7 million Palestinians, is the farthest place south Palestinians can go



before entering Egypt. Egypt's foreign minister, Sameh Shoukry, warned that any Israeli ground invasion on Rafah would have "disastrous consequences", saying Israel intends to eventually force the Palestinians out of their land. Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu warns that a Rafah assault "will happen", indicating thousands of people will end up dying or being forced to flee into Egypt, thus getting rid of Palestinians one way or another. This is not a "war" against Hamas, as Western news outlets suggest, but a genocide against the Palestinian people.

In case the humanitarian approach is not enough, I want to emphasize that regardless, these are clear war crimes. This is a clear textbook genocide case, and I will prove it by using the legal definitions and policies. Furthermore, I will go into detail of the specific acts of the Geneva Conventions that Israel is violating in addition to discussing a few of Israel's perspectives on the ongoing genocide, which I will be rebutting.

Section 2: Why Should We Care About Palestine from a Legal Standpoint?

The Geneva Conventions

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols are international treaties that hold the most important rules limiting the barbarity of war to preserve civilian lives. Specifically, they protect people who are not involved with the fighting, like civilians and medics, for example. Article 2 of the convention defined genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of one group to another group." (Geneva Conventions,

1949). Israel is violating four of the five acts mentioned above, which I will explain in further detail.

A: Killing members of the group

As I have mentioned a few times throughout this paper, Israel has murdered 30,000 Palestinians since October 7th. Of these 30,000 civilians, nearly 13,000 were children and over 8,000 were women (Efesoy, 2024). An Oxfam study has shown that the number of average deaths per day in Gaza is higher than any recent major armed conflict, including Syria (96.5 deaths per day), Sudan (51.6), Iraq (50.8), Ukraine (43.9), Afghanistan (23.8), and Yemen (15.8) (Relief Web, 2024.) Because Gaza is so densely populated at 14,000 people per square mile, the impacts of airstrikes are deadly, producing high numbers of reported deaths (AP News, 2023).

B: Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group

In addition to the tens of thousands of murdered civilians, nearly 70,000 have been injured since October 7th (Marsi & Siddiqui, 2024). Seeing as 12,000 bombs have been dropped on Gaza during this period, this makes it one of the most intense bombing campaigns in history within a populated area. The consequences of these bombings, if not death, result in fractures, peripheral nerve injuries, amputations of one or several limbs, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, and burns, according to the Humanity & Inclusion charity. In addition to this, Gazans do not have adequate medical supplies to treat these injuries. Due to the lack of medical supplies, amputations are carried out without anesthesia or pain relief for those who can reach a hospital. For those who can't, amputations can be carried out with normal cooking knives, scissors, and other household items (Mahfouz, 2024). As for mental harm, the constant bombardment has lasting effects on civilians across Gaza, but mainly allocated to children. UNICEF has estimated at least 17,000



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children in Gaza are unaccompanied or have been separated from immediate relatives (Amer, 2024). The displacement and loss of family members result in anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other adverse mental health conditions in children (Schlein, 2024). They can't sleep as they have emotional outbursts or panic every time they hear the bombings. For many children, death is a more desirable outcome than to continue living in the conditions they are currently in (Nichols, 2024).

C: Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part

The prevention of aid into Gaza is deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life seeing as that it causes serious harm to Gazans as a whole. According to the UNRWA, 500 trucks of humanitarian aid alone are needed each day to meet the basic needs of the people in Gaza. Since October 7th, an average of 95 aid trucks per day entered Gaza (Ebrahim, 2024). An excerpt from PBS News stated that “United Nations agencies and aid groups say the ongoing hostilities, the Israeli military’s refusal to facilitate deliveries, and the breakdown of order inside Gaza make it increasingly difficult to bring vital aid to much of the coastal enclave” (PBS News, 2024.) Israel denies these claims, saying they have restricted shipments of fuel out of speculation that it will fall into the hands of Hamas (Neuman, 2023). Additionally, Palestinians have consistently come under Israeli fire while waiting for aid and humanitarian supplies. For example, the Flour Massacre occurred on February 29th, in which over 100 people were murdered when Israeli forces opened fire on the crowd of civilians waiting for aid (Chehayeb, 2024). This is a clear indication of Israel’s intent to wipe out the Palestinian race; where is the reasoning behind murdering starving people who were waiting for aid?

D: Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group

As of November, there were an estimated 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza, with over 180 giving birth each day (Bajec, 2024.) By preventing aid and medical supplies into Gaza, these women are giving birth in shelters, in their homes, or on the streets with the rubble. For those who can reach healthcare facilities, which are overwhelmed, sanitation is a key issue and puts them at risk of infection and medical complications. With the hospitals running out of fuel, the lives of over 130 premature babies who rely on intensive care services continue to be threatened and other necessary medical equipment will no longer function (WHO, 2023). From the WHO’s office in Cairo, “The injured patients are all over the floor, they are being sutured on the floor. There are not enough beds or stretchers. There isn’t any pain medication. They’re basically just bleeding on the floor.” In addition to the lack of medical supplies, hospitals continue to be shot at and attacked. Israeli authorities had promised staff and patients that they would be unharmed by sheltering in the hospital, which was neither true nor honored. Israeli snipers have been shooting civilians outside Nasser Hospital, killing 21 in roughly 24 hours (Al Jazeera, 2023). These factors have a direct impact on reproductive health for pregnant women in Gaza, including an increase in stress-induced miscarriages, stillbirths, and premature births. Since Israel’s bombing campaign, health organizations have reported a 300 percent surge in miscarriages among women in Gaza (Bajec, 2024).

What is Israel Saying?

A: On Intent

The ongoing genocide was kicked off from the October 7th attacks by Hamas onto Israel citizens in which 1,200 people were tragically killed (Byman, 2023). Consequently, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated in an interview that “Israel has responded in a way that is responsible, but also



determined... iron determination to wipe the terrorist group Hamas off the face of the Earth, and that is something we will do.” Though Netanyahu indicated that the target was Hamas, over 30,000 innocent Palestinians have been killed as a “responsible” response. Similarly, Netanyahu also stated “Our goal is to rid Gaza of Hamas terrorists and free our hostages. Once this is achieved, Gaza can be demilitarized and deradicalized, thereby creating a possibility for a better future for Israel and Palestinians alike.”

If Netanyahu is truly trying to eliminate Hamas and preserve the life of innocent civilians, why are 30,000 people dead? Why are numerous hospitals, ambulances, refugee camps, schools, universities, houses, towns, and entire neighborhoods completely destroyed? For example, Israel has recently launched another military operation on Al-Shifa hospital, despite the claims that the IDF had dismantled Hamas’ command structure back in January. During the newer operation in March, 3,000 Palestinians were sheltering in the hospital, deprived of food and water (Ebrahim, 2024). Those attempting to flee the hospital were targeted by snipers or fire from helicopters. If Israel is solely targeting Hamas, out of speculation that Al Shifa was being used as a military base by Hamas, why were the innocent lives of Palestinians undermined? How is it justified to target and starve innocent people taking shelter out of speculation of “terrorist” activity with no concrete evidence?

B: On Hostages & Ceasefire

The aftermath of the October 7th attacks resulted in the abduction of 250 Israeli citizens by Hamas (Byman, 2023.) During the weeklong ceasefire in November, over 100 hostages were released in exchange for the release of 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel (Euronews, 2024). Since these attacks, Israel and Hamas have been having difficulties coming to an agreement on the conditions of a ceasefire. Netanyahu, for example, said that total victory over Hamas, not negotiations, is what would

constitute the hostages’ release (Baskin, 2024). On the other hand, Hamas wants an agreement to secure an end to Israeli military operations and the expulsion of Israeli soldiers from Gaza, in addition to allowing displaced Palestinians the right to return to their homes (Parker, 2024). Seeing as that the two parties were unable to come to an agreement, this genocide has carried on. Despite Israel’s military intelligence, only three hostages were rescued by Israeli soldiers, yet have been able to destroy several civilian infrastructures and crush Gaza collectively.

Netanyahu has made it clear that there will be no ceasefire until Hamas is completely eliminated. According to Netanyahu in a recent statement, to achieve a “complete victory” over Hamas, Rafah must be invaded. Specifically, he stated “This victory requires entry into Rafah and the elimination of the terrorist battalions there... It will happen, there is a date.” This incredibly limited statement of a military operation puts 1.7 million Palestinians at risk as Rafah is a refugee space. The irony of this situation is that Netanyahu explicitly stated Rafah to be a safe space for civilians to flee Gaza, but has once again contradicted his promises, endangering the lives of millions (VOA News, 2024).

C: On Humanitarian Aid

There are currently two million Palestinians at risk of famine as the constant bombing and airstrikes from the Israeli military has destroyed avenues to accessing food (Euro-Med, 2023.) Netanyahu has addressed this humanitarian crisis by flipping the blame onto Hamas, saying “Humanitarian deaths and starvation is, for us, it’s a tragedy. For them, it’s a strategy. They think that this will help them place more pressure on Israel to stop the war, leave them in place so they can repeat the October 7 massacre.” Due to this speculation of aid getting into the hands of Hamas, Israel has implemented blockades of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Furthermore, Israel has already taken a military veto over what enters and exits the Rafah-Egyptian



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border (Parker, 2024). What else can be done to ensure aid is not falling into Hamas' control if Israel already controls the entry of aid into the border? Additionally, the same element of generalizing Palestinians with Hamas is present in this scenario. Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant stated "No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly."

This here is the one of the root causes of the lack of humanitarian aid into Gaza. This generalization of equating Palestinians with Hamas will forever prevent Palestinians from being treated as human beings and using their rights entitled to them under international law. If politicians in the Israeli government are saying heinous statements as such, can we really be surprised of how Israel has been handling this situation? In this case, how is it just to prevent millions of Palestinians from acquiring aid out of speculation, with again no concrete evidence, that it will fall into the hands of Hamas? Why do millions of people have to suffer for something they did not do? Surely, as one of the strongest militaries in the world, there must be practices ensuring humanitarian aid into Gaza without it "falling" into Hamas' hands.

In these three arguments, it all ultimately leads back to Hamas, as Prime Minister Netanyahu made clear. The problem with this stance is that there is no differentiation between innocent Palestinians and Hamas. With this mindset, the constant bombings and airstrikes are justified seeing as that Israel is looking to completely eliminate Hamas. With this mindset, forced starvation of millions of Palestinians is justified because this aid will supposedly fall into Hamas' hands. With this mindset, bombing hospitals and schools were justified because they were speculated to be Hamas' military bases. With this mindset, the destruction of an entire city, home to two million people, was justified because Hamas had supposed tunnels underground that posed a threat to Israeli society. The Geneva Conventions were created to ensure the horrors

of the Holocaust were not to be repeated in the future. We were taught from a young age of the violent acts fueled by hatred and supremacy that killed millions of people, ranging from slavery of the African Americans, the Native American Genocide, the Holocaust, and numerous others. We sat in class and wondered just how we could let something so horrible happen. Here we are in 2024, watching humanity fail to recognize this is a textbook case of genocide. Regardless of your political views of Palestine or Arabs in general, these are human beings who are being brutally murdered by the state of Israel. Regardless of your personal feelings, these are war crimes being committed and banned by international law. We have the overwhelming burden of proof seeing as that we are watching this genocide from our phones, which is something we didn't have in prior cases. If anything, this should show you the clear evidence of the atrocities happening in Palestine. It's right in front of you.

Conclusion

There is something very harrowing about witnessing a genocide live streamed through social media platforms. We have overwhelming evidence of the atrocities that are occurring in Gaza right now. Though Israel has murdered numerous journalists and reporters to mask the heinous crimes against humanity imposed on Palestinians, we still see content being uploaded day by day for those who have the resources to do so. There are no words to describe the things I've seen from my own social media platforms. It's a very chilling, disturbing thing to witness; the remains of human beings who were mercilessly bombed, the destruction of an entire city, hearing the voices of children pleading for help under the rubble of what was once their homes, their schools, and their city.

There was a particular video that haunts my mind from the earlier days of the genocide that I saw on X. Israel had cut out the power in Gaza, meaning there was no light, no water, and no viable method of communication for civilians



to contact one another. Israel started bombing Gaza in the middle of the night, thus providing a source of light through the vibrancy of the flames from the numerous explosions. I could hear the screams of innocent people begging for help, trying to flee from their homes. I could hear the mosque in the background using the speakers to attempt to communicate with people. Then the camera shook, and the video ended. I don't know what happened to the person recording. My luxury allowed me to back out of the video, and my timeline refreshed to some thread about the highlights of Beyonce's "The Renaissance Tour." I wish I could explain how disturbing the video I had just seen was, how long it lingered on my mind to this day. Yet that's all it was for me; it was just a feeling. I was able to go back to what I was doing before. I had the privilege of witnessing it in my home, with water, electricity, and food, where I was safe. The bombings didn't stop when the video cut off – it kept going on and continued to kill thousands of people.

I am of Egyptian origin, Palestine neighboring our country. In another world, if we were just 216 miles further east, 40 miles more than the distance between Seattle and Portland, this would have been our reality. In another world, this could have been your reality. You would have watched your people be subject to genocide, your cities be burned down, your culture disintegrating, your family and friends going missing or winding up murdered. You would have lacked the adequate aid needed to survive. You would have been subject to be murdered at any waking second, depending on when Israel decides to continue with its air strikes with no warning. If they happened to give you a warning, that they often don't intend to honor, you could have been killed or injured by their airstrikes. To top this all off, you would have concrete evidence of the heinous living conditions you are in, and the world simply wouldn't care. The entire world would be watching just how much you and your people were suffering and continued to move on with their lives. America would continue to support

and fund the murder of your people. You would watch as the ICJ would advise Israel to taking precautions to avoid any more unnecessary civilian casualties, and Israel would continue on with its genocidal campaign.

It's important to keep in mind that these casualties are not just numbers. These were 30,000 human beings who had individual dreams and aspirations. They had families, friends, neighbors, just like everyone else. They had childhoods, for those who were lucky enough seeing as that the average age of Palestinians murdered were 5 years old. They would have grown up to go to school, to go to college, to start a family, to go after whatever it was their hearts desired. Yet they did not get that opportunity. They were murdered. For those who are still alive, they are constantly wondering if the next airstrike will take them out. Family members have regularly been marking their children with their names on their bodies in case they do end up dead from Israeli airstrikes, as often the impacts of these airstrikes are so severe the bodies are not easily identifiable. Since majority of the population in Gaza are children, they will grow up to resist Israel's occupation. They will forever be haunted by the sight of their parents in body bags if they were even able to identify them. For those who were separated from their families, they will forever be wondering what happened to their loved ones. Were they killed? Are they stuck somewhere under the rubble? Are they being held in detention centers? The children of Palestine will always remember these horrific events and be living reminders of what we allowed to happen from our own silence.

A Palestinian child once said "We pray six times a day. Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Isha, and Janazah." Janazah is the prayer Muslims pray at a funeral. The Palestinians have gotten so accustomed to the increasing deaths in everyday life that Janazah is a regular part of their day. I have the luxury of raising awareness about what's happening in Palestine from behind a



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computer with the electricity and resources available to me at any time. I have the luxury of attending classes at my university and going to work without the fear of being bombed. Palestinians don't. You don't need to be Arab or Muslim to care about Palestine, you just need to have humanity. We tend to get wrapped up in the details of race and ethnicity, but we must remember that regardless, we are all human beings. We are one human race, and we must look out for each other. I urge you to look at the conditions Palestinians are in and realize they are in grave danger. I urge you to speak on their behalf and advocate for an immediate cease-fire. I urge you to use your voice to speak up for the oppressed.

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