

## **Blaming the victim: the pathology of the Zionist siege of Gaza**

By Yuram Abdullah Weiler

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“At the heart of the blame approach is a system of warfare, which centers on the outcome of moral or legal battles rather than on the resolution of conflict and the prevention of future violence. As such, it neither reduces pathology nor protects the victim.”

—Ofer Zur, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

Once again, the Zionist entity has unleashed a massive bombing campaign on Gaza, killing over 200 people and injuring 1500,<sup>2</sup> supposedly in retaliation for being targeted by “an ever-escalating number of missiles.” The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, by responding with over 1,000 rockets aimed at targets within the Zionist entity, is being portrayed as the aggressor and “Israel” as an innocent victim that even agreed to a cease fire while its “terrorist” adversary did not.<sup>3</sup> U.S. President Obama has justified Zionist assaults on Gaza since “there’s no country on Earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders.”<sup>4</sup>

To clarify who is the victim and who is the perpetrator here, we must briefly examine history to see the pathology of the Zionist entity, which has repeatedly launched similar assaults on Gaza under the pretext of its right to defend itself. Most news coverage of the current carnage points to the deaths of three kidnapped teenagers as the immediate cause, falling in line with the allegations of Zionist prime minister Netanyahu, who insisted on blaming Hamas for the tragedy.<sup>5</sup> However, taking such a short-sighted perspective can only yield a distorted view of this ongoing colonial confrontation whose roots date back to before the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

To understand what led to the current onslaught, we can begin with the unilateral withdrawal of Zionist occupation forces and settlers from Gaza in August 2005. Engineered by Ariel Sharon, the butcher behind the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon,<sup>6</sup> the “disengagement” from Gaza was an excuse to circumvent Zionist responsibility under the Fourth Geneva Convention as the occupying power,<sup>7</sup> as was clarified in a letter sent to then U.S. President George Bush. The letter stated that, upon completion of the withdrawal, “there will be no basis for the claim that the Gaza Strip is occupied territory.”<sup>8</sup>

By cooperating with Sharon’s disengagement plan, Palestinians expected the Zionists to live up to their word and allow Gazans “to breathe the air of freedom and begin rebuilding their shattered lives.” However, this did not happen: Gaza’s borders remained closed, its airport remained shut down, the sea was still off limits to fishermen, and entry into and exit from the coastal enclave remained a virtual impossibility, subject to the whims of the Israeli entity.<sup>9</sup> Based on the Hague “effective control test,” Gaza remained occupied territory under international law, as research professor of law at the University of London Iain Scobbie wrote, “When we also take into account the views that have been expressed on control of the territory from the air, it is clear that Israeli withdrawal of land forces did not terminate occupation.”<sup>10</sup>

Before the disengagement, Hamas had announced their intention to participate in the May 5, 2005 legislative elections, which resulted in Fatah winning 50 seats and Hamas winning 28, mainly in the major urban areas. Fatah contested the election in court, which ruled in their favor,

necessitating a second election that was delayed until January 25, 2006. However, as the date approached, it became increasingly clear, much to the chagrin of U.S. and Zionist officials, that Hamas stood a good chance of winning over the disputing Fatah factions. Their worst fears were born out when Hamas won big, taking 74 seats to Fatah's 45, something which reportedly surprised even the Hamas leadership.<sup>11</sup>

As a result of the sweeping Hamas victory, rival Fatah, of course, became bitter, but the Bush administration flatly refused to accept the outcome, and announced that they would neither engage the victors in dialogue nor grant economic aid until Hamas met three conditions: First, recognition of the Israeli entity; second, disarming and renunciation of violence; and third, acceptance of all previous Palestinian agreements with Tel Aviv. By placing these conditions on Hamas, the American officials, who, incidentally, were among the staunchest proponents of holding the elections, effectively signaled that, rather than supporting democracy, they were unwilling to accept the will of the majority of the Palestinian people.<sup>12</sup>

In one of the first acts of the newly-elected government, political bureau head Khaled Mish'al unilaterally extended the Hamas truce with the Zionist regime, but instead of welcoming this gesture, the U.S. exerted pressure on countries worldwide not to recognize the incoming Palestinian administration. While Turkey and Russia extended invitations to the newly-elected government, Mahmoud Abbas played no small role in sabotaging meetings between the Hamas leadership and South Africa and Malaysia. Moreover, the outgoing Palestinian Legislative Council gave Abbas sweeping executive powers which gave him the authority as president to have the final word in any disputes arising with the new Hamas government.<sup>13</sup>

The security situation in Gaza became increasingly chaotic due to poor response by Fatah police under the command of Abbas, who himself had a personal security force of 10,000, financed and trained by the U.S. in Jordan with Zionist collaboration. Then, Washington and Tel Aviv imposed economic sanctions and virtually cut off all financial channels by which aid could flow to the Hamas government. Next, armed provocateurs were dispatched to stir the growing unrest into a full-blown confrontation between Hamas and Fatah. Lastly, the U.S. and the Zionist entity resorted to armed conflict in an attempt to bring down the Hamas government.<sup>14</sup>

As the political struggle between Fatah and Hamas intensified, the Zionist regime fired shells into Gaza, allegedly in response to rockets fired from there, and continued to assassinate Palestinian activists from both factions in an obvious attempt to escalate the conflict. Then on June 9, 2006, a Zionist artillery bombardment killed seven Palestinians, one of whom was the father of a ten-year-old girl named Huda Ghalia. The photos of Huda running in tears toward her father after her entire family had been annihilated by an Israeli shell galvanized Gazans, who demanded a response to this Israeli provocation. At that point the Izzadin al-Qassam brigades appealed to Hamas leadership, which finally relented and ended the truce. Nevertheless, Abbas continued to meet with then Zionist prime minister Ehud Olmert, whom the Hamas leaders justifiably referred to as a "terrorist."<sup>15</sup>

A critical point in the escalating conflict came soon afterward when on June 24 Zionist troops entered Gaza and kidnapped two Hamas members, the brothers Mostafa and Osama Muammar, after severely beating their father who required hospitalization. In retaliation, members of

various resistance factions tunneled under the border to the Zionist outpost of Keren Shalom, neutralizing four soldiers and kidnapping corporal Gilad Shalit. The Zionist regime used the abduction, for which Hamas was not directly responsible, as an excuse to bomb bridges, main roads, water plants, power stations and other services in a vicious attempt to dislodge Hamas by destroying Gaza's infrastructure.<sup>16</sup>

For a time in the summer of 2006, the world was distracted from Gaza while Hezbollah successfully repulsed a full-scale Zionist assault on Lebanon, which killed 1,109 Lebanese civilians and wounded 4,399. Explaining his perspective on cause of the so-called War of Tammuz, one Hezbollah fighter explained, "The Israelis did what they could to destroy our humanity. As a result, the people rose up and resisted. Isn't that normal?"<sup>17</sup> This statement exposes the Zionist pathology: the desire to destroy the humanity of Palestinians, which is precisely what we see in Gaza, as the victim is blamed for resisting the oppressor.

By 2007, an agreement for a unity government brokered by the Saudis was derailed by the United States, which tasked Lieutenant General Keith Dayton with toppling the Hamas government with the help of Fatah. This act of American adventurism led Hamas to expel Fatah forces from Gaza. In response to Hamas with the backing of the U.S., western allies and Egypt, the Israeli entity launched Operation Cast Lead on December 27, 2008,<sup>18</sup> killing 1,400 during the bloody three-week operation. As if this were not enough, the Zionist regime struck Gaza again in March 2012 for five days, killing another 25 Palestinians in a series of air assaults.<sup>19</sup>

This brings us to the present attack on Gaza, which began on July 8 and so far has claimed the lives of over 200 men, women and children, destroyed 500 homes and cut off water to hundreds of thousands.<sup>20</sup> The Zionist pathology remains the same as it was in Lebanon: the desire to destroy the Palestinians' humanity. Even more macabre were the actions of some citizens in Sderot who gathered on a hill to watch the bombardment, cheering raucously as each Israeli bomb exploded in Gaza.<sup>21</sup> This is all part of the morbid Zionist pathology.

"Of course, let us not think for a moment, God forbid, that we can be indifferent to the death of innocents. The death of any child, Israeli or Arab, Muslim or Jew, is an unspeakable tragedy that rends the heart," Rabbi Eric Yoffie, former president of the Union for Reform Judaism, confided sanctimoniously.<sup>22</sup> This is while three teenage Zionists have confessed to murdering a teenage Palestinian boy by burning him alive.<sup>23</sup> This oxymoron is also part of the Zionist pathology.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ofer Zur, Ph.D., "Rethinking 'Don't Blame the Victim': The Psychology of Victimhood," *Zur Institute*, n.d., accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.zurinstitute.com/victimhood.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "205 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza," *Press TV*, July 16, 2014, accessed July 16, 2014, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/07/16/371486/israeli-attacks-kill-205-palestinians/>.

<sup>3</sup> Sandy Rashty, "Israel says yes to ceasefire – Hamas says no," *Jewish Chronicle Online*, July 15, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.thejc.com/news/israel-news/120591/israel-says-yes-ceasefire-%E2%80%93-hamas-says-no>.

<sup>4</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Shinawatra in a Joint Press Conference," *The White House*, Office of the Press Secretary, November 18, 2012, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/18/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-shinawatra-joint-press-confer>.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Dysch, "‘ Hamas will pay’ for teenagers’ death, says Netanyahu," *Jewish Chronicle Online*, July 1, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.thejc.com/news/israel-news/120243/hamas-will-pay-teenagers-death-says-netanyahu>.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Dziadosz, "No tears for Sharon at site of Sabra and Shatila massacre," *Reuters*, January 12, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/01/12/israel-sharon-shatila-sabra-idINDEEA0B00B20140112>.

<sup>7</sup> "Israel's Belligerent Occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem and International Humanitarian Law," Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, New York, July 15, 1999, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/6B939C57EA9EF32785256F33006B9F8D#sthash.jqsMSMNR.dpuf>.

<sup>8</sup> Special Documents, in "The Sharon Unilateral Disengagement Plan," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4 (2004): 92, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.palestine-studies.org/files/pdf/jps/6192.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Brandon Hollander, "The Israeli Disengagement Plan: Unilateralism in the Face of Multilateral Agreements," *Human Rights Brief*, American University 13-1 (2005): 17, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief/13/israeli.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Tristam, "Israel and Gaza: A Withdrawal That Did Not End Israel's Occupation of Gaza," *Middle East Issues*, About.com, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://middleeast.about.com/od/israelandpalestine/a/me080618b.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: A History from Within* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2011), 211-218.

<sup>12</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *ibid.*, 225.

<sup>13</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *ibid.*, 225-227.

<sup>14</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *ibid.*, 229-231.

<sup>15</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *ibid.*, 239-240.

<sup>16</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *ibid.*, 241.

<sup>17</sup> Cathy Sultan, *Tragedy in South Lebanon* (Minneapolis: Scarletta Press, 2008), 46,51.

<sup>18</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *ibid.*, 263.

<sup>19</sup> Joshua Mitnick and Matt Bradley, "Israel-Gaza Clash Calms After Egypt Mediates a Truce," *Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 2012, accessed July 15, 2014, [http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304450004577278830260782456?mod=googlenews\\_wsj&mg=reno64-](http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304450004577278830260782456?mod=googlenews_wsj&mg=reno64-)

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<sup>20</sup> "Israel steps up military offensive in Gaza LIVE UPDATES," *Russia Today*, July 8, 2014, last modified July 15, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/171320-gaza-hamas-israel-rockets/>.

<sup>21</sup> "Twitter uproar over pic of 'applauding' Israelis watching night attacks on Gaza," *Russia Today*, July 12, 2014, last modified July 13, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/172324-israel-watching-gaza-attacks/>

<sup>22</sup> Eric Yoffie, "The Bizarre Moral Criticism against Israel," *Time*, July 14, 2014, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://time.com/2982215/israel-gaza-casualties/>.

<sup>23</sup> "3 Israelis say they killed Palestinian teen 'in revenge'," *Russia Today*, July 14, 2014, last modified July 14, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/172676-israel-palestine-murder-teen/>.