

Gazans Were “Grass to Be Mowed” Again, but Their Roots Remain Strong

Since March 30, thousands of Palestinians who have been struggling to survive in the Gaza Strip gathered nonviolently along the militarized zone that keeps them imprisoned and under siege in unlivable conditions. Peaceful women, men, and families with children – generations of people displaced by Israel – participated in the Great March of Return, based on UN resolution 194, demanding an end to their forced confinement.

The Great March of Return was met with another barbaric episode in Israel’s 21st century strategy for Palestinians. As explained by Efraim Inbar and Etan Shamir of Bar Ilan University in “Mowing the Grass, Israel’s Strategy for Protracted Intractable Conflict”: “Only after showing much restraint in its military responses does Israel act forcefully to destroy the capabilities of its foes, hoping that occasional large-scale operations also have a temporary deterrent effect in order to create periods of quiet along its borders...” (*Journal for Strategic Studies*. Began-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. Download of full PDF available: tinyurl.com/ycgkglux)



Hands Up! Don't Shoot! Tweet from Gaza, June 1, 2018: Moments before volunteer paramedic, Razan Alnajjar was murdered by Israeli snipers, shows her and her colleagues with hands up as they were heading to treat injured protesters. (cropped)

Breaking this down: By their very existence, Israel regards Palestinians as the “enemy” or “foe.” And “occasional large-scale operations” are, of course, code for ethnic cleansing by massacre. Israel wants quiet along Israel’s borders? Why? So that the world will not pay attention so that Gazans, who have no sophisticated military for their defense, will submit quietly to dying - either slowly from confinement in a narrow strip of land with a destroyed infrastructure, or by Israeli weapons used against them in a peaceful protest.

On May 21, the Palestinian Health Ministry revealed just how Israel demonstrated “much restraint in its military responses.” According to the ministry, the “Israeli army killed 112 Palestinians and injured 13,190 since the Great March of Return began on March 30th.” [Update: 129 Gazans were killed as of June 14.] The ministry reported 13 children among the dead. More than 2,000 children and 1,000 women were wounded. Among all the people shot, 502 people

were shot in the head and neck, 283 were shot in the back, 225 were shot in the pelvis and abdomen, 325 were shot in the legs. Twenty-seven of the wounded Palestinians “suffered amputations in [of] their legs, one in [of] his arm, and four others had some fingers severed by Israeli fire.”

Soldiers also attacked medical personnel, rescuers, and journalists. The Israeli forces shot and killed one medic [Update: two with Razan Alnajjar’s death], and injured 323 others with live fire and gas bombs, in addition to causing damage to 37 ambulances. The Committee to Protect Journalists documented that live rounds fired by the Israel Defense Force hit at least 22 journalists; two of them died later from their injuries. It is widely assumed that professionals working in the area were deliberately targeted, as they wore clear indications of their functions.

None of this would be possible without the support of the U.S. political and media refusal to recognize the rights and humanity of Palestinians. Yet, in tragedy, Palestinians’ will to live is not defeated: Instead, the roots of Palestinian identity grow stronger.

Sources for statistics: Palestinian Health Ministry/International Middle East Media Center (IMEMC News): tinyurl.com/y73vv95d; Committee to Protect Journalists cpj.org

ACTION:

See U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights uscpr.org and Jewish Voice for Peace.org
In the Twin Cities: Watch for events on the WAMM Calendar at womenagainstmilitarymadness.org. Join the Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine on Fridays, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., corner of Summit and Snelling Avenues, St. Paul.

Resources :

“Six Things to Know About the Great Return March” Jewish Voice for Peace
tinyurl.com/ybu35594

Freedom Flotilla Coalition 2018/Right to a Just Future for Palestine. An international grassroots people-to-people solidarity movement working together to end the siege of Gaza by sea. jfp.freedomflotilla.org

“Arms Manufacturers Use Israeli Massacres in Gaza to Test New Weapons.” Interview with arms trade expert Andrew Feinstein. The Real News Network. tinyurl.com/y9doutpy