UN Secretary-General António Guterres invoked Article 99, a privilege rarely used, and compelled the Security Council to meet due to catastrophic conditions in Gaza. On December 8, the 15 members of the council gathered to vote on a resolution for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. Once again, the United States blocked a ceasefire by voting against it. The UK abstained, and the remaining 13 members voted in favor. This took place while the Gaza Health Ministry reported 17,480 people had been massacred – nearly half of them children – with many more injured. So the bombing will continue.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 1.9 million or almost 80 percent of the people in Gaza are internally displaced, having been told to evacuate, but with nowhere safe to go. Without adequate food, water, medicine, shelter, or other human needs due to the Israeli-imposed siege, the population is exhausted, traumatized, starved, and dehydrated, and disease is beginning to spread – this on top of being bombed, massacred, and maimed.

The news media Axios reports Israeli officials saying that the military operation will continue for three or four weeks in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis (where many of the Palestinian people sought refuge after being forced to evacuate from the north); “the U.S. isn’t ‘pulling the brakes or giving Israel a firm deadline to stop,’”1 The Biden administration makes statements about protecting civilians, but no one believes them. We know the death and destruction would not be possible without U.S. support. It is clear that Israel is being given time for Palestinian people to be killed before the U.S. actually demands an end.

But people in the U.S., along with millions throughout the world, want an immediate end to the massacre.

1 Barak, Ravid. Israel’s operation in Gaza’s Khan Younis expected to last 3 to 4 weeks more. Axios. Dec. 8, 2023. tinyurl.com/4m3b5kk
GAZA: “A Graveyard for Children”
by Liza Burr

Government statistics from Gaza (current as of November 27) indicate that 14,854 Palestinian people have been killed, including 6,150 children, and more than 36,000 people have been wounded, with 75 percent of the casualties being women, children, and elderly people.1 “Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor estimates the toll to stand at 20,031 killed in Gaza, including 8,176 children.”2 Defense for Children International-Palestine states that one child is killed every 10 minutes, a figure cited by the UN World Health organization.3 The United Nations Children’s Fund calls Gaza a “graveyard for children” and “hell for everyone else.”4 By October 26, in less than three weeks, according to Palestinian diplomat Hanan Ashrawi, 731 Gaza families had been wholly eliminated;5 now, a month later, that number may well have doubled. Across the Gaza Strip, north to south, 60 percent of Gaza’s housing units (residential buildings) have been entirely or partially reduced to rubble,6 with thousands of children and adults missing under the rubble. Civilian infrastructure has been systematically targeted: hospitals and clinics, universities and schools, mosques, churches, communications, and refugee camps (70 percent of Gaza residents are 1948 refugees and/or their descendants). Israeli President Herzog has asserted that all Palestinian residents of Gaza are responsible for the Hamas attacks of October 7 – according to his logic, their mass slaughter is justified.7

The pretext
In case the slaughter isn’t justified, Israel’s pretext for this wholesale destruction of Gaza’s civilians and their infrastructure is its right to “self-defense” against Hamas, labeled “Graveyard for Children”, continued on page 3
as a “terrorist organization.” Hamas in reality is a resistance organization with a military wing and a political wing (the latter being the political party that governs Gaza); it also provides social services and includes women’s and children’s organizations and more. According to Ashrawi, Hamas represents 30 percent of the Palestinian population – it cannot be militarily eradicated, which affords the perfect cover for Israel to wage a long-term war against it. Fatah, the political party that governs Palestine in the West Bank, is regarded as a subcontractor for Israel. By contrast, Hamas stands up to Israel, however one may assess October 7.

Resistance in context

Palestinian resistance has a context, which is decades of Israeli oppression and illegal occupation. Israeli historian Avi Shlaim has written that “Israel’s entire record is one of unbridled and unremitting brutality towards the inhabitants of Gaza.” He states that since 1967 Israel has operated “one of the most prolonged and brutal military occupations of modern times.” On the contrary, Israel and the mainstream media portray the current situation in Palestine/Israel as if it BEGAN on October 7. Another Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé, maintains that Israel is exploiting October 7, in defiance of human rights and international law, in order to far exceed anything that could be called self-defense, or even “revenge.”

Ethnic cleansing and genocide

What Israel is actually doing to Gaza is ethnic cleansing and genocide: On October 28, three weeks into Israel’s bombardment, Craig Mokhiber, director in the New York Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, resigned his post and, in a letter of resignation, described the situation as a “textbook case of genocide.” Genocide is being enacted by means of bombing, starvation, dehydration, lack of medicine, and total lack of fuel – the last meaning, for example, that water (if available) cannot be pumped or desalinated, incubators that formerly protected premature infants are no longer operating, and there is little to no anesthesia for the few remaining functioning hospitals. Through its siege and destruction of civilian life and infrastructure, Israel is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. Among those crimes is the deliberate disabling of the health care system. Even ambulances have been attacked and cannot run without fuel. These crimes add up to the ultimate war crime: genocide.

From Article II of the UN Genocide Convention:

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; 

“Graveyard for Children”, continued from page 2

Activists hung banner over freeway declaring “Ceasefire on Children.”

Photo: Ross Rowley
The role of the U.S.
What is the role of the U.S. (allied with the UK and the European Union)? By supporting Israel materially and rhetorically, the U.S. has become not only complicit, but also a “partner in crime,” as Ashrawi says. As part of a larger foreign military “aid” package, the Biden administration seeks to rush an ADDITIONAL $14.5 billion to Israel on top of the $4 billion already donated annually for military purposes: more money to buy more weapons, which will be used to kill more people. One of the weapons Israel is inflicting on the Palestinian civilians of Gaza, in violation of international humanitarian law, is white phosphorus, which is incendiary. Shlaim has decried the West’s “hypocrisy and ruthless double standards”; their one-sided pro-Israelism, he says, translates into the deletion of Palestinian history, culture, and humanity.11

A permanent ceasefire refused
Israel claims that a ceasefire would signify surrendering to Hamas. At last count, more than 67 percent of Americans want a ceasefire, as do the vast majority of people globally. As of November 25, Biden’s partnership in crime was compounded by his refusal to insist on a permanent ceasefire, reinforcing the erosion of U.S. credibility on this issue in the eyes of the world. In Congress, a small minority of House members have signed onto U.S. Representative Cori Bush’s “Ceasefire Now” resolution. Biden’s calls for “humanitarian pauses” to facilitate the admission of humanitarian aid ring very hollow, with bombs raining down before and potentially after the “pauses” on the people supposedly being aided. [The “pause” began on November 24 and lasted six days, at which time Israel’s bombing resumed.]

What is the agenda?
Finally, what is Israel’s agenda? A document from the Israeli Intelligence Ministry was released at the end of October indicating that Israel’s ultimate goal is ethnic cleansing: to depopulate the Gaza Strip, expelling the surviving population into Egypt’s Sinai Desert.12 Commanding Gaza’s population to flee from north to south fits this program of a premeditated second Nakba. (The original Nakba, “The Catastrophe,” violently forced the displacement of at least 750,000 Palestinians in 1948.) Following the logic of Zionism (supremacist settler colonialism), an expulsion of 2.3 million Palestinians from Gaza would greatly magnify the first Nakba.

The solution: a just peace
The solution to the current crisis is to address its root causes, end the illegal siege and the illegal occupation, and finally replace apartheid Israel with one democratic, secular state that offers justice and equality for all its citizens (Jews, Muslims, Christians, and any others) regardless of religion, ethnicity, or any identity marker. The solution is a just peace.

Liza Burr is a member of the WAMM Middle East Committee who has lived and studied in Palestine/Israel.

Endnotes
1 Israel-Gaza War in maps and charts. Live Tracker. Al Jazeera. November 27, 2023. tinyurl.com/mry5tbd6
4 “Gaza has become a graveyard for children.” Press release. UNICEF. October 31, 2023. tinyurl.com/2wr29722
10 Craig Mokhiber has accused the U.S., UK, and much of Europe of being “wholly complicit in the horrific assault.” Pilkington, Ed. Top UN official in New York steps down citing ‘genocide’ of Palestinian civilians. The Guardian. October 31, 2023. tinyurl.com/ym4etnxr
12 Lis, Jonathan, and Samuels, Ben. Israeli Intel Ministry Suggests Relocating Gazans to Sinai after Hamas War. Haaretz. October 30, 2023. tinyurl.com/5n7rs6p3
Testimony of Sarah Martin, a retired registered nurse, at the Minnesota Board of Investment Hearing November 29, 2023:

My name is Sarah Martin and I am a registered nurse who had worked at Regions Hospital in St. Paul. I was able to retire several years ago with a Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) pension. It has benefited me well. But my pension has been catastrophic for the people of Palestine. Almost one billion dollars of the pension plan is invested in bonds, weapons manufacturers, and companies complicit in the killing and displacement of the Palestinian people.

I join the demand that you, the State Board of Investment (SBI), divest these bonds and all other investments involved in the denial of the rights of the people of Palestine, including the most basic right, the right to live a long and full life.

To me, as a nurse, this latest bombing campaign unprecedented in this century by every measure of death and destruction, was unimaginable. Hospitals were at the center of Israel's attacks. My pension, which I receive because I took care of sick and injured people in a state-of-the-art hospital, was used to destroy the hospitals of Gaza. More than 15,000 people, most of them children and women, have been murdered and wounded and many more injured.

Heroic health care workers labored in impossible conditions. The sheer number of people and severity of their injuries have been unrelenting and overwhelming, compounded by the shortages and finally, lack of fuel, clean water, electricity, food, medicines, and gauze due to Israel's total siege of Gaza. Even the dead can't be properly buried, and hospitals are turned into graveyards. Despite these horrendous conditions, the hospitals closed only when the staff were forced by the Israeli army to evacuate, completing the total destruction of the north of Gaza, making it uninhabitable.

Bombing hospitals is against international law and that means that we in the U.S. and the state of Minnesota have participated in war crimes. We have aided and abetted Israel with political, military, and financial aid in this massive crime against humanity of genocide and of ethnic cleansing.

The majority of the people of the world want justice for the people of Palestine and have shown solidarity by the millions on a daily basis, including here in Minnesota. Now it's time for the SBI to do the right thing – to be on the right side of history as you were in 1985 when you divested from South Africa.

Not another nickel, not another dime, no more money for Israel's war crimes!

Sarah Martin is a long-time antiwar activist and chair of the WAMM Middle East Committee.
Activists bring their demand to Minnesota Governor Walz’s temporary residence on October 19. They want the state to divest from its Israeli holdings as Gaza is bombed. Photo: Kim DeFranco.

WAMM joins Veterans For Peace-27 at the door of U.S. Senator Klobuchar’s Minneapolis office.
Demanding an end to the genocide in Gaza, Minnesotans confront the levers of power in their state: congressional offices, the governor’s residence, and Master of War weapons manufacturer, Lockheed Martin.

Feeling betrayed, Betty McCollum’s constituents post the congresswoman’s own words on a window in her office. She voted for H.R. 771, which gave the green light to Israel to attack Gaza. October 25.

Protester calls out Lockheed Martin for its weapons that can kill the children of Gaza. Photo: TIME Magazine
When the Messages Stopped

Alice Rothchild is a retired physician and a mentor liaison for We Are Not Numbers, a board member of the Gaza Mental Health Foundation, and a steering committee member of Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council.

excerpted from full article: https://alicerothchild.substack.com/p/when-the-messages-stopped-reflections

From October 7th to 27th, my phone apps, emails, and texts constantly called for my attention, mostly fragmented messages and videos from the Gaza Strip, cries from survivors and the feared-soon-to-be dead. Medical colleagues and friends stayed to work in their hospitals in the north despite the impossible Israeli directive to move south (to what?) when the roads were reduced to rubble and there was almost no fuel for vehicles. Others did manage to flee from the north to the south, only to be bombed in southern Khan Yunis, Rafah, Deir Al Balah, and nearby refugee camps.

Some colleagues separated from their families (either internally in Gaza or because they now reside in the diaspora) are sick with anxiety. What will happen to the elderly relative who does not have access to her diabetes and high blood pressure medications, or the young pregnant daughter with no access to prenatal care? Are they even alive? There is no clean water and even bread is hard to find. Starvation is imminent . . .

Messages to me from Gaza abruptly stopped October 28th, except for the occasional gruesome Instagram video. Intense airstrikes obliterated all methods of communication, which meant no landlines, cell phones, or internet. Now messages are intermittently coming again at a trickle, a reflection of Israel’s total control and the damaged infrastructure. The communications are sad beyond belief. “Unfortunately, I am still breathing,” one young Gazan wrote to a colleague. “I will try to write something.” “. . . [A] terrible couple of days,” wrote a doctor.

What this constriction of communications represents in terms of civilian lives is frightening: No one can call an ambulance, check on a relative, rescue workers can’t communicate with each other or victims, hospitals cannot call in emergency support, humanitarian agencies were quickly brought to a standstill, local reporters could not document atrocities and if they were experiencing one themselves, they were unlikely able to communicate their realities to the international community.

I cannot know if the health workers or young writers I have worked with, agonized over, hoped for, are still alive, searching for water, bread, shelter, loved ones, or buried in rubble-tossed graves. The hospitals have run out of morphine leaving patients writhing in pain, and there is almost no fuel to generate electricity. Patients are being treated on corridor floors because there are no available beds. Israel is bombing hospitals and ambulances, directing patients and staff to leave although there is nowhere safe to go and no medical facilities to receive them and no fuel or ambulances to transport them. This is all under the ruse that hospitals harbor “Hamas terrorists and tunnels,” despite the hospital staff’s assertions that this accusation is false. And even if there were tunnels under hospitals, it is a violation of international law to bomb them . . .

In her reflection, Rothchild goes on to remark on the resistance among U.S. citizens to the forceful assault on Gaza:

Despite the moral stupor of our U.S. Congress, our city streets and college campuses are filled with protesters. Thousands filled Grand Central Station in New York, and a host of cities from the East Coast to the West, an estimated 300,000 gathered for a protest at the nation’s capital on November 4th. Acts of civil disobedience are happening all over the country. On November 3, a group of us from Jewish Voice for Peace and faith-based allies shut down the Federal Building in Seattle for two hours. Several polls show that the majority of U.S. citizens support a ceasefire. Phone calls and emails are pouring into Congress with the message, “Ceasefire Now!” Perhaps we as a country have learned something from our morally and politically disastrous response to 9/11. Perhaps our elected leaders have not.

As an author, filmmaker, and activist, Alice Rothchild, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist, focuses on human rights and social justice. She most recently visited Israel, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza in July and August 2023. Her book, Condition Critical, Life and Death in Israel/Palestine (2017) is available from Just World Books. See more about her and her work at alicerothchild.com
On December 11, we received a heart wrenching message from Alice Rothchild with news about young writers who were part of We Are Not Numbers. She wrote: “We have lost 4 writers and 1 was pulled from the rubble alive . . . here are tributes to those tragically killed in this outrageous and devastating war on the people of Gaza  https://wearenotnumbers.org/?s=tributes”

These talented and hopeful young people, killed in Israeli airstrikes, were part of We Are Not Numbers, a youth-led project through which experienced writers mentored young writers in Gaza. They wanted to convey who they are beyond politics and statistics: “the daily personal struggles and triumphs, the tears and the laughter, and the aspirations that are so universal that if it weren’t for the context, they would immediately resonate with virtually everyone.”

As always, we as U.S. citizens, must ask first what is the role of the U.S.? The answer is that, along with political support, the U.S. has been providing the bombs, bullets, and fighter jets to Israel.* The abhorrent killing of these youth – and all the other people in Gaza – are why we need to do what we can to force our government to end hostilities and free Palestine.

Endnote

We also acknowledge with sadness the hateful attacks on three college students of Palestinian descent: Tahseen Amed, Kinnan Abdel Hamid, and Hisham Awartani (now paralyzed from the waist down) who were shot while walking down a residential street in Burlington, Vermont. Awartani, whose parents and home are in Ramallah, was visiting his grandmother over Thanksgiving, his parents believing he would be safer.
Ukraine: what was that for?

The U.S./NATO proxy war with Russia in Ukraine appears to be moving toward the end with the U.S. as its main financial backer currently hung up in Congressional disagreements. In August, *The New York Times* estimated a staggering 500,000 people were killed – mostly Ukrainian and Russian soldiers, but that number includes civilians, as well. Landmines, cluster bombs, and – compliments of the U.S. depleted uranium munitions – leave a dangerous and carcinogenic legacy, which will soon be forgotten except by those who have to live with the ecocidal results. None of this was necessary. Tragically, peace agreements were dismissed before and during the war. Political analysts and historians will soon sift through the detritus and tells us who actually ends up benefiting from the $75 billion the U.S. has spent having Ukrainians fight to their detriment almost to “the last Ukrainian.” Sadly, it won’t be ordinary people like the scrappy everyman that Zelensky portrayed.

Syria, Iraq: whose decision?

The U.S. government maintains five bases and facilities in occupied Syria and several locations in Iraq. These facilities have been attacked many times since the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel. U.S. military presence on foreign soil makes sitting ducks for parties to target and can easily act as a trigger to bring the U.S. into another regional war in the Middle East. With these concerns in mind, on December 7, anti-interventionist Senator Rand Paul put forth the Syria War Powers Resolution (S.J. Res. 51) to rescind the President’s sole Authority for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) and return the decision to wage war to Congress. Thirteen senators voted in favor of the resolution. Minnesota Senators Klobuchar and Smith voted against it.

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**Wamm Calendar**

*Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other group's events is not meant to convey or endorse any action contrary to public policy that would be inconsistent with exempt purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), i.e., charitable purposes.*

**Wamm Ongoing Peace/Justice Events**

**Immigrant Solidarity Vigils**

**Every Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.**

Vigil at the ICE entrance on 600 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis. (Not far from Bishop Whipple Building where Immigration Court is held.) Park at the Ft. Snelling commuter light-rail parking lot. Sponsored by WAMM. Call Pepper at 612-701-6963.

**Second Tuesday of every month, 7:30 a.m.**

Vigil at 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, (Minneapolis/St. Paul), 55111, outside the Bishop Whipple Building, where Immigration Court is held for five-state area. Prayer, song, courtwatch. Sponsored by Minnesota Interfaith Coalition on Immigration. FFI: mnicom.org

**Wamm Action Groups**

**Board Meeting**

Third Tuesday of every month, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. + hybrid Zoom. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**End Domestic Militarism**


**End Military Madness Against the Earth**

Time/dates pending. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**End War**

First Monday of every month via Zoom, 6:30 p.m. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**Middle East**

Second and fourth Monday of every month via Zoom, 9:30 a.m. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**St. Joan of Arc Wamm Peacemakers**

Fourth Tuesday of every month via Zoom, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. FFI: Call Barbara 612-722-4444 or Bill 612-926-8459.

**Wamm Ongoing Events**

**Wamm Monthly Movies**

Please note: second Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. (entrance on 42nd Street), Minneapolis. Projected on big screen. Free admission. All are welcome. Discussions follow film. Masks and social distancing by choice.

January: “Roadmap to Apartheid” January 8

Corporate news fails to report Israel’s six-decades long oppressive occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Additionally, only minimal attention has been paid to the increased Israeli settler colonization and violence in the West Bank. Progressive voices have long called the overall brutal Israeli punishment of Palestinians as “Apartheid” – forcing Palestinians to live under severe restrictions on freedom, economic viability, education, health, other factors. Highlights punishing apartheid governance that Israel cruelly forces upon the Palestinians.

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Women Against Military Madness is a 501c3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Ways to donate: mail a check to: WAMM at 4200 Cedar Ave. S., Suite 3, Minneapolis, MN 55407. Or, see womenagainstmilitarymadness.org or call the WAMM office at 612-827-5364.

Some resources for Gaza/Palestine News, Views, Info:
(in alphabetical order):
+972.mag.com
aljazeera.com
btselem.org
dci-palestine.org
democracynow.org
electronicintifada.net
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