

Israel's 2nd Gaza War

On December 27, 2008, Israel attacked Gaza again, resulting in about 200 fatalities and 600 wounded on that day alone. Regarding the amount of killed persons, many of them civilians, many more regular policemen (not to be confused with the standard term 'militant,' usually termed on each killed Palestinian by the occupation forces), I have immediately termed it "Israel's 2nd Gaza War," the first one leading up to Israel's officially baptised "2nd Lebanon War" and described together with it [1]. Such wars usually starts when 'the other hits back,' to explain the gradual increase of tensions.

Under the terms of a ceasefire, which was initiated for six months by the end of June 08, Hamas and its affiliates would refrain from firing home-made rockets into Israel and the latter would halt incursions and attacks on the Gaza Strip. In addition, there should be an easing of Israel's restrictions on the borders, thereby allowing goods into the besieged territory [2]. Instead, Gaza was hungered out in an action that can only be compared with a medieval siege or the siege of the Warsaw Ghetto toward the end of WWII. After this provocation, Palestinian rocket fire intensified [3]. The truce was further violated by an Israeli raid and on Nov. 4 and, while anyhow not respected, not prolonged when expiring shortly before Christmas.

In the morning of the day, Israel attacked by air, hitting 30 targets within 2-3 minutes. Prior to the operation, Israel sought to catch Hamas off guard by luring it into a false sense of security through certain measures, including the opening of Gaza border crossings [4]. According to Haaretz, Barak ordered preparations for Saturday's operation 6 months ago, as Israel, Hamas agreed on a truce [5].

The Guardian expresses that the latest attacks in Gaza rank with Deir Yassin and the Sabra and Shatila [6]. It was the bloodiest day for Palestinians in more than 20 years [7]. And how naive to think, that this tamed the Palestinians and ended the conflict; Hamas leader, Khaled Meshal, threatened to unleash "hell" to avenge the dead, including possible suicide bombings, and militants fired rockets into southern Israel. In an analysis, probably before the military censorship was installed, Haaretz stated that "The fact that Hamas may have gone too far with its rockets is not the justification of the Israeli policy for the past few decades" [8], and hundreds of left-wing and human rights activists marched in the streets of Tel Aviv on Saturday night to protest the massive offensive in Gaza. The police arrested five of them.

The word largely reacted towards both parts, in particular (and as usual in vain) urging restraint from Israel - except, of course, USA, which only blamed Hamas. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said the Islamist group Hamas, if prolonging the broken ceasefire, could have avoided the Israeli attacks on Gaza [9].

Dec. 28, 2008

The war was well-prepared. Guardian reports that Israel used 6 months of intelligence-gathering to pinpoint Hamas targets including bases, weapon silos, training camps and the homes of senior officials. That means that with the beginning of the armistice in June, Israel prepared for war. The plan was decided on a cabinet meeting on Dec. 19.

1 Israel's 2nd Lebanon War - in this seria

2 <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2008/12/20081218102459596978.html>

3 Why are these Qassam fired? - in this seria

4 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1050359.html>

5 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1050426.html>

6 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/27/israelandthepalestinians-terrorism>

7 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-attacks-gaza-more-than-140-reported-killed-1213304.html>

8 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1050451.html>

9 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1050470.html>

What is a War Criminal?

War crimes are, according to Wikipedia [10] "violations of the laws or customs of war", including but not limited to "murder, the ill-treatment or deportation of civilian residents of an occupied territory to slave labour camps", "the murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war", the killing of hostages, "the wanton destruction of cities, towns and villages, and any devastation not justified by military necessity". In addition, War crimes are sometimes part of instances of mass murder and genocide, in self a crime against humanity. Accordingly, we are looking for a person (combatant or politician) responsible for war crimes.

No doubt, quite a number of Israeli politicians fulfil this definition, but what about the soldiers? The land forces have not yet been greatly activated, but the air force was carrying this massacre on largely civilians and police members (who were not soldiers). The IAF was already committing several war crimes in Lebanon in 2006, where some 1100 humans were killed (mostly civilians and 1/3 of them children) and the infrastructure for many years destroyed [11]. The question is, who were these war-criminals were. Is it fair to suggest that the IAF-pilots are war-criminals, until otherwise proven? No doubt, the majority of pilots belong to this category, like the majority of ~~the~~ soldiers during the Nazi-reign found the stereotypic excuse, "I just obeyed orders." In 1967, a pilot refused to attack the American warship USS Liberty (a planned but failed false-flag action); he was arrested upon landing. I am not aware of later, similar cases from the air force. Perhaps the IAF, by only employing willing pilots, justifies automatically considering them of the despicable category, to be detained upon arrival in civilized countries. In 'Breaking the Silence' [12], some Israeli soldiers testify the racially motivated malpractice in the occupied territories, but there are no pilots among them.

29.12.08

Toward year's end, at least 395 Palestinians have been killed in the unilaterally led warfare, a record since 1948. At least 42 of the casualties were children.

Facts about Gaza

Gaza, with 1.5 million inhabitants, is the most densely populated area on the earth. Robert Fisk explain its appearance so: "the Palestinians who lived in Ashkelon and the fields around it – Askalaan in Arabic – were dispossessed from their lands in 1948 when Israel was created and ended up on the beaches of Gaza. They – or their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren – are among the one and a half million Palestinian refugees crammed into the cesspool of Gaza, 80% of whose families once lived in what is now Israel" [13].

Historically, Gaza was the home of the Philistines after their invasion of the area including Egypt, which barely managed to beat them. Gaza was the place where Samson was imprisoned and met his death. Ancient Gaza was a prosperous trade centre and a stop on the caravan route between Egypt and Syria.

The small Israeli town, **Sderot** has gained international reputation while situated only 6 kilometres from the Gaza strip and the principal target for the desperate. What you do not read in the mainstream media is, that Sderot is built on the ashes of an ethnically cleansed and defaced Palestinian village, **Najd**. Its Palestinian villagers, about 620 in 1945, were expelled on 13 May 1948, before Israel was declared a state and before any Arab armies entered Palestine. Before, Palestinian Arabs own 12,669 dunums in Najd while Jews owned 495 dunums (3,8 %) of land [14].

10 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_criminal

11 [Israel's Second Lebanon War – in this serial \(also including the first Gaza-War\)](#)

12 http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/index_e.asp

13 <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-why-bombing-ashkelon-is-the-most-tragic-irony-1216228.html>

14 <http://www.redress.cc/palestine/pjballes20090103>

These " Hamas-Rockets"

Among the propaganda lies, repeated endlessly in the media, is the claim that Hamas fired these rockets (or let them go). There is no basis for that claim. Hamas tried to control the desperate action, and largely successfully until Israel broke the ceasefire on Nov. 4, 2008. Then it became difficult to control the many groups, empowered by Israel's hunger-blockade of the ghetto. With several hundred of Hamas-controlled policemen murdered in the initial massacre on Dec. 27, and with the leading politicians in hiding for a probable targeted assassination, there are nobody left to impose any ban on the Qassams – and nobody who really want to care about it.

The war has now obtained obvious similarities with Israel's miserable '2nd Lebanon War.' The occupational force continues to distribute death and destruction, their only capability. Will they also spread cluster bombs this time?

The Media-War

An article by Stuart Littlewood [15] analyse the erratic statements of FM Tzipni Livni (here in *italics*), indiscriminately repeated by the Israel-devoted mainstream media, here only a first part:

- *"Israeli citizens have been under the threat of daily attack from Gaza for years."*

Palestinians have been under harsh Israeli occupation for 60 years.

- *"Only this week hundreds of missiles and mortars shells were fired at Israeli civilian communities."*

Only one in 500 Qassam rockets causes a fatality. How many thousands of Israeli bombs, missiles, rockets, grenades and tank-shells have been blasted into the crowded city and towns of the Gaza Strip by Israel's high-tech weaponry?

- *"Until now we have shown restraint. But today there is no other option than a military operation."*

The only legitimate option for Israel is to end the occupation and withdraw behind its 1967 border, as required under international law and UN resolution. Israel has been killing Palestinians at the rate of 8 to 1 since 2000, and children at the rate of nearly 12 to 1 (B'Tselem figures). This is somebody's idea of restraint?

- *"We need to protect our citizens from attack through a military response against the terror infrastructure in Gaza."*

Self defence is not a right exclusive to Israel. Palestinians have an equal right to protect their citizens from the terror tactics of Israel.

- *"Israel left Gaza in order to create an opportunity for peace."*

Israel never left Gaza. It still occupies Gaza's airspace and coastal waters and controls all entrances and exits.

- *"In return, the Hamas terror organization took control of Gaza and is using its citizens as cover while it deliberately targets Israeli communities and denies any chance for peace."*

Hamas was voted into power as the legitimate government of Palestine. Israel chose not to accept the people's choice, which amounted to a denial of their human rights, and immediately set about obliterating it.

On Israel's and Palestine's future

If it was not clear to you before, the lethal and destructive character of the Zionist regime in Jerusalem does not invite to further discussion about a two-state solution. The prevailing ethnic cleansing and extreme racial suppression justifies calling it an 'Apartheid-State,' more so while defending itself behind the apartment wall built on stolen land. What Gaza and the remaining, split up West-Bank concerns, it is the parallel concept of the white supremacists South Africa, controlling a number of homelands. Somehow, and fortunately, this concept was not fulfilled and neither does the two-state solution deserve any support now. I hope for a unified Palestine in which also Jews can live (provided they respect the laws of the country). Admitted, it does not seem very

probably at the moment, but also the apartment government of South Africa seemed once unshakable. The first step is withdrawing your support!

January 1, 2009
John Schou

Who are the targets in Gaza?

On Jan. 6, more than 600 Palestinians, most of them civilians, had been killed and the infrastructure of Gaza totally demolished. The Israeli losses contributed 6 soldiers (three of them by friendly fire) and three civilians (Qassam-victims). It is impossible to describe the horror in details, but one major 'incident' deserves mention: by shelling of two UN schools, 43 people were killed. Israeli forces knew they were packed with families as they had ordered them to get out of their homes with leaflet drops and loudspeakers. UN administrators in Gaza said they had identified the schools as refugee centres to the Israeli military and even provided GPS coordinates [16]. The Israeli then claimed that they had been shot at from the schools, a rather traditional lie, predicted by Robert Fisk. He compared the massacre to that of Israel in South Lebanon in 2006 [17]: The people of the village Marwahin were ordered to flee, obeyed Israeli orders and were then attacked by an Israeli gunship. The refugees took their children and stood them around the truck in which they were travelling so that Israeli pilots would see they were innocents. Then the Israeli helicopter mowed them down at close range. Only two survived, by playing dead. Israel didn't even apologise. Instead, the journalists who investigated the matter, were given the standard depiction of anti-Semitism. Israel seems deliberately to attack civilians [18]. Should this only be the deed of individuals, they apparently have official backup.

Further indication of the Israeli war-crimes were the use of the in the Geneva conventions banned C-weapon white-phosphor (photos document that). Selecting among the humanitarian disasters, the ICRC accused the Israeli forces today of failing to assist wounded Palestinians and of "unacceptable" delays in letting rescue workers reach a Gaza home where four small children were found alive next to their mothers' bodies [19].

From the Israeli point of view, the greatest single successful bombings was revealed when around 70 corpses were found by a Palestinian paramedic near a bombed-out house in Zeitoun, 10 inside and 60 outside the house: "We found 15 people still alive but injured so we took them in the ambulances. I could see an Israeli army bulldozer knocking down houses nearby but we ran out of time and the Israeli soldiers started shooting at us. We had to leave ~8 injured people behind because we could not get to them and it was no longer safe for us to stay" [20]. Soldiers had ordered about 100 persons to gather in a single house which was then shelled in the early morning.

January 8, 2009

On January 10, with the casualties number from fore day exceeding 800 killed, also condemns the massacre of six days before [21,22], by which 110 people were collected in one house, which subsequently was shelled, resulting in 30-60 deaths – the uncertainty in figures caused by the absence of orderly reporting (foreign journalists are banned from Gaza and Israeli media are underlying the military censorship). The Israeli military denies

16 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/07/gaza-israel-obama>

17 <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-why-do-they-hate-the-west-so-much-we-will-ask-1230046.html>

18 http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Norwegian_doctor_in_Gaza_Israel_targeting_0105.html

19 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/red-cross-slams-israel-over-access-to-wounded-1232472.html>

20 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/4162193/Gaza-medics-describe-horror-of-strike-which-killed-70.html>

21 <http://politiken.dk/udland/article626181.ece>

22 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/4206913/Israel-bombed-Gaza-safe-house-full-off-evacuees-says-UN.html>

targeting any buildings in the Zeitoun area and says it never forcibly gathers civilians in a specific building [23]. But it seems that someone did and at best omitted to report it.

January 10, 2008

The Ground Offensive

Since more than a week, Israel has supplied its bombardments from the air and sea by a ground offensive, by which the universal destruction of the densely populated area has been augmented. Thereby, other war-crimes were added to the pre-existent ones. The army's methods for evacuating a home is to fire a missile toward its upper level. That is how B.'s house in Sajaiyeh was destroyed. It was bombed just a few minutes after a missile struck and 40 shell-shocked family members walked out of the house [24]. With the extensive destructions in the Gaza Strip, it is a desperate Situation for the surviving homeless to find a place to go to.

IDF attacks indiscriminately ambulances, and the Red Cross declared on Jan. 11 that it will no longer escort Palestinian ambulances in Gaza, after one of its ambulances came under fire during a 3-hour lull declared by Israel. Israeli forces have targeted several ambulances and has in the past accused Hamas of hiding militants inside ambulances. On Jan. 14, a young physician was killed by IDF while treating Gaza wounded in the Jabaliya refugee camp near Gaza city [25], while a paramedic was wounded at the same place [26]. On that day, the official number of persons killed in this holocaust passed 1,000 – not counting unidentified victims in the collapsed buildings.

Israel has admitted the (photographically documented) use of white phosphorous but denied that it was used in a prohibited way. In fact, the Geneva Treaty of 1980 stipulates that white phosphorus should not be used as a weapon of war in civilian areas, but there is no blanket ban under international law on its use as a smokescreen or for illumination. However, doctors in Gaza City have told that people have been admitted suffering burns consistent with the use of the controversial chemical white phosphorus, and residents in the densely-packed Jabaliya have described Israeli forces exploding shells that drop scores of burning fragments and spread suffocating smoke [27]. A Norwegian physician active in Gaza said, "There's a very strong suspicion that Gaza is now being used as a test laboratory for new weapons," and he had seen clear signs that Dense Inert Metal Explosives (DIME), an experimental kind of explosive, were being used in Gaza [28]. The International Court in den Haag, already called upon by Israel's second Lebanon War, should start collecting the evidences.

At least three Palestinians in Gaza were shot dead on Jan. 13 after Israeli soldiers fired on a group of residents leaving their homes on orders from the military and waving white flags [29].

Cut Diplomatic Ties to Israel

On January 14, Bolivia cut the diplomatic ties to the racist state [30] – Venezuela had already before expelled their ambassador before. Although I consider that a sensible step, I admit that there is no chance that the European countries will do the same. They are considering themselves allies to Israel and directed all their propaganda apparatus to serve its cause. Therefore, the presence of European politicians for facilitating a ceasefire must be seen only serving the purpose of giving them some profile at home. Instead, I recommend sending the respective Israeli ambassador home with the message not to come back if fighting continues and to stay away if further atrocities are committed,

23 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/massacre-of-a-family-seeking-sanctuary-1297577.html>

24 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1054461.html>

25 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1055233.html>

26 <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=Lb1rmLAuvM8>

27 <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/01/20091111392884765.html>

28 <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,24905242-5005961,00.html>

29 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-pushes-deep-into-gaza-city-1334238.html>

30 <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/0114/breaking58.html>

Silence is the best argument for pro-Israelis – talk about something else. For days my previous favourite, Swiss 'Basler Zeitung' banned the conflict from their first page, prompting me to seek another start page. The strategy was shown best in Germany, where a talk-show, to discuss the conflict at the 1st channel, was called off with short notice and replaced by an innocent theme (the suicide of a billionaire who lost a fortune in the finance crisis) [31].

Israel, which has declared itself 'the only democracy in the Middle East,' took a noteworthy step on Jan. 12, as it banned Arab parties from the coming parliamentary elections [32].

On January 15, 2009, the UN-headquarter in Gaza was attacked [33]. Tons of supplies were destroyed, ignited by phosphorous bombs. As usual, the Israelis initially claimed they had been attacked from within the building, but the lie was soon given up. Nearby a hospital was set afire, forcing the evacuation of desperate patients [34] – but where to?

January 16, 2009

A Strange Ceasefire

Having bombed all possible targets, killed more than 1.300 Palestinians – mostly civilians and 1/3 of them children – bombed the UN Central and four of its schools (all together 67 schools hosting refugees were bombed) and tested some chemical weapons, too new to be forbidden (apart from white phosphorous, which has been used in fire bombs towards civilian targets), Israel suddenly declared an unconditional cease-fire on Jan. 18. "Unconditional" means that no conditions were negotiated, and the troops remained in Gaza, with the borders to the Strip largely closed. Later that day, Hamas accepted the ceasefire, provided the Israeli army would retire within one week and blockade of the Ghetto would be completely lifted.

More details have emerged about Israel's experimental weapons: it was using so-called Dime (dense inert metal explosive) bombs designed to produce an intense explosion in a small space. The bombs are packed with tungsten powder, which has the effect of shrapnel but often dissolves in human tissue, making it difficult to discover the cause of injuries. The grenade dissipates its power within a range of 5-10 metres. The considerable cancer risk from tungsten powder is well known [35]. Neither white phosphorus nor Dime bombs are strictly illegal (Dime bombs may be too new to be banned), but campaigners say the way they have been used, especially in Gaza's densely packed urban areas, could constitute a war crime.

Timing of the War

The preparations for the war started in June with the beginning of the ceasefire [36]. In spite of the expected conditions, the strip was within closed border crossings, and it was increasingly hungered out. The comparison with the Warsaw ghetto prompted the organisation of international helping initiatives. With the killing of 6 Palestinians on Nov. 4, Israel provoked a strong reaction; a similar attack took place 13 days later, giving Hamas in Gaza the recognition that the ceasefire was unsubstantial and a prolongation senseless. Now we approached the real purpose, for which the Israeli government proceeded towards war.

The poll of summer and autumn showed that Kadima and Labour were both behind their rival Likud. Then on December 27, the warfare started, utilizing the recognitions from the unsuccessful 2nd Lebanon War, summarized by the Winograd commission. In that, Israel suffered 147 fatalities (and never mind the 1100 Lebanese dead and the rich amount of war crimes). With only 3 civilians and 10 soldiers killed, a part of them by

31 <http://www.steinbergrecherche.com/09rundfunk.htm#Will>

32 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3654866,00.html>

33 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZ00qwcvm1M>

34 <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=82490§ionid=351020202>

35 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/tungsten-bombs-leave-israels-victims-with-mystery-wounds-1418910.html>

36 <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2009/01/18/1232213448835.html>

friendly fire, Israel can now be proud of minimal losses and large support. The polls for the February elections are favourable and the European and American allies talk about concern for Israel's security – and no concern for the victims of the war. It is, of course, difficult to foresee an end of a war, but as things went, the Zionists finished just in time for Barack Obama to have a squeaky-clean inauguration with all the world looking at the streets of Washington rather than the rubble of Gaza, as Robert Fisk concluded [37].

January 20, 2009

The Smuggling Tunnels

When Israel, through its blockade of the Strip, created a humanitarian catastrophe in the autumn of 2008, the tunnels to Egypt became vital importance. The tunnels, of which some 400 existed before the war, are dug 25 Meters or more beyond surface [38]. Contrary to the Israeli claims, only few are used for smuggling weapons. There is a need of enough vital products for keeping the 1.5 million inhabitants alive. The Ghetto-Inhabitants even managed to arrange for pipelines for transferral of diesel, which kept functioning even when the surrounding tunnel collapsed. Before the war, around 3 humans were killed weekly through collapses. With some 90% of the tunnels destroyed during the war, there are still quite a lot functioning and huge efforts are made to restore the rest – efforts justified by continued Israeli blockade.

Support for the Terror

The devastation of Gaza is incredibly thorough. This notwithstanding, a strange support for the culprits was found. France promised a frigate along Gaza's coast "to prevent Hamas from rearming" [39], a parallel to what happened after Israel's 2nd Lebanon War when Israel's weapons, among them cluster bombs, depleted uranium bombs and chemical weapons, were rapidly replenished while some ignorant governments thought they could influence the fragile ceasefire by sending a naval presence with the declared purpose to prevent Hezbollah rearming.

Fortunately, the outcry is louder this time. It has nothing to do with Anti-Semitism, a claim to which the reader can reluctantly turn a deaf ear – after all, racism is to be found at the other front. The strong antipathy towards the Israeli position originates from a humanitarian point of view and is nourished by photographic evidences. Still, the European and North-American governments and most of the mainstream media are, others than their readers, dominated by strong pro-Israel forces.

The claim by Hamas, that they won the war, is a masochistic outcry, even less justified than Hezbollah's similar postulate in 2006. It has claimed that only 48 [40] or 95 [41] of its fighters were killed by the Israelis, in addition to 230 Policemen [42], who are certainly not to be considered fighters but ironically belonged to a force which managed to stop irregular groups use of the desperate rockets until Israel broke the ceasefire on November 4, 2008. The high civil losses and the pulverisation of houses and infrastructure cannot mean nothing to Hamas. Ridiculously, Israel and its allies claim that a rebuilding should not be entrusted to Hamas, the democratically elected entity in Gaza (with a very undemocratically led coup against its competitor Fatah recently).

Compared to Fatah, Hamas has won sympathy, first of all in the West Bank. President Abbas has posed with a miserable figure while not opposing the Israeli slaughter sufficiently hard and even given Hamas part of the guilt. If a democratical election were carried out now, Hamas would have a sweeping victory in all regions.

37 <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-so-i-asked-the-un-secretary-general-isnt-it-time-for-a-war-crimes-tribunal-1419289.html>

38 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/smugglers-back-at-work-in-tunnels-beneath-gaza-1488650.html>

39 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1058245.html>

40 <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/01/19/64513.html>

41 <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail.aspx?id=82939§ionid=351020202>

42 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1057499.html>

On Jan. 21, the Israelis completed (for this time, at least) their pull-out from Gaza, leaving the most complete destruction of a densely populated area since Nagasaki.

January 25, 2009