

WHAT IS GOING ON IN GAZA



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ME



TAKE ACTION WITH US!

Palestine may seem far away. But the crimes we witness there are also European and Dutch crimes. Europe has always been indispensable in arming and protecting Israel, and in justifying atrocities against the Palestinians. The genocide taking place in Gaza today is made possible not just by Israel, but also by Brussels, by London, by The Hague.

Unfortunately, you are also involved. Your tax money funds the aircrafts that bomb Gaza. And the politicians who claim to represent you violate international law to justify genocide. However, you don't have to accept this. Take action. There are many (even easy!) ways in which you can support the resistance against violence, illegal occupation, and all forms of racism.

You can make a difference in the Netherlands as well. Learn how:



*What is the
meaning of the key?
Find out here as well!*

Through the QR code, you will find the sources cited in this zine. It also offers tips for further reading and viewing, as well as suggestions for organizations and initiatives you can join.



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GAZA AND THE MEDIA

Dutch media consistently refer to the situation in Gaza as a 'conflict' or 'war' between Hamas and Israel. October 7 – the day Hamas invaded Israel – is treated as the starting point. This leaves us with two impressions: One, this is a fight between two more or less equal parties. Two, Hamas started it.

But how accurate is this? The Israeli army (IDF) is one of the 20 largest armies in the world, with 634,500 soldiers and possessing advanced weaponry (IISS). Hamas has about 20-25,000 members and uses self-made rocket launchers (AP News).

More importantly, Israel has long used its advanced weaponry to violate the rights of Palestinians. From 1948 to 1967, the Israeli army expelled a million Palestinian civilians. Since then, Palestinians have been living as second-class citizens and under military rule. Deadly violence remained the norm. 6,417 Palestinian civilians were killed by Israeli forces between 2008 and October 6, 2023, at least 2,700 of them by the IDF (UN, Amnesty). Therefore, the violence started long before October 7 and did not initially come from the Palestinians.

Since October 7, 2023, most of the violence has also come from Israel. Hamas took 253 hostages and killed 1,139 Israelis. However, Israel has killed over 40,000 Palestinian civilians, including 15,000 children (UN). If we include indirect deaths from disease and starvation, the death toll is likely to be 186,000 or more: nearly 8% of the population of the Gaza strip (Lancet). IDF troops committed acts of sexual violence and rape (UN). 3,615 Palestinians are being detained without trial or charge - and often tortured - in Israel (B'Tselem, Amnesty).

Why, then, are Israel's actions often seen as "self-defense," and those of Hamas as "terrorism"? Why is Israel, according to Frans Timmermans, a "culture of life" and Palestine a "culture of death"?



IS CRITICISM OF ISRAEL ANTI-SEMITIC?

Politicians and media have recently condemned protests against Israel for their allegedly anti-semitic character. Jewish groups, however, have been playing key roles in recent protests against Israel in the West. The Dutch-Jewish organization Erev Rav, for instance, co-organized a demonstration at the opening of the Amsterdam Holocaust museum where Israel's president Yitzhak Herzog had been invited to attend. So what is going on here?

Zionism refers to an ideology that strives to achieve and maintain a Jewish ethno-state. Up until the early 1900s, it was a marginal movement. European governments, however, saw the movement as a valuable tool. When the British mandate in Palestine was facing severe crises, British politicians allied themselves with radical Zionists. If they could realize a state of European Jews in Palestine, prime minister Lloyd George reasoned, the West would be able to defend its interests from a safe distance (Peel Commission Report).

After the Holocaust, Zionism and Western guilt for the shoah became entangled. In an attempt at atonement, European governments supported the growing Zionist project in Palestine. Doing so, however, they offered persecuted Jews a solution that was rooted in the ideology that had also intensified Western antisemitism: ethnic nationalism. As a result, Palestinians were now forced to pay the price for Western antisemitism.

Zionist organizations, such as the Dutch CIDI, delegitimize dissenting voices by framing criticism of Israel as antisemitic (CIDI). And Western politicians avidly support them: after all, it is easier to vilify your opponents than to reflect on your complicity in a long history of genocides and persecution.



STEREOTYPES OF THE 'ARAB'

While Western media portray Hamas as a frightening terrorist organization, they tend to let Israel off the hook, in spite of the country's devastating use of violence. These double standards are rooted in a long history of stereotypes.

Europeans have long portrayed Arabs as exotic, frightening and mysterious. Such stereotypes came in handy when European powers colonized North Africa and the Middle-East beginning in the 19th century, and Europeans used them to legitimize their violent rule. Rich Arabic histories of science, art and commerce were downplayed, while the archetype of the angry, barbarous and fanatically religious goat herder was put center stage.

Western stories are full of stereotypical depictions of Arabs: books, films and songs depict the Middle-East as fascinating, but also as backwards and violent. The 9/11 attacks marked a boost to the image of the aggressive, barbarous Arab. Across Western media, the archetype was used to portray Islamic terrorists.

But Western leaders and media went further: they identified the entire Arab world with this stereotype. Libyan ex-communists like Gaddafi, secular Palestinian scholars such as Edward Said, and Christian politicians such as Lebanese president Aoun: in spite of their diversity, Western media depicted all of these figures as dangerous fundamentalists and terrorists.



ISRAEL AND WESTERN SUPPORT

The West plays a significant role in the unimaginable violence against humans, animals, and nature in Palestine. This is because Israel can count on almost unconditional Western support.

Since 1946, the US has invested nearly 320 billion dollars in Israel, more than in any other country (USA Facts). In recent years, the EU has invested tens of millions of euros in Israeli weapons by funding scientific research (Statewatch). The Netherlands currently supplies essential components for the aircrafts with which Israel bombs Gaza (Oxfam). All the while, Western countries block international efforts to restrain Israel (UN, ICC).

In this way, the West supports not only the destruction of human lives but also of the climate and ecology. When thinking of Gaza today, one immediately envisions ruins and arid desert land. Yet, Gaza had been a hub of culture and trade for a long time. The favorable climate allowed olives, figs, grasses, fruit trees, and wildflowers to flourish.

However, Israel cut off the water supply, and the land dried up (EU). Decades of bombings and military invasions eradicated the rich vegetation. As a result, ecosystems throughout the Middle East are now on the brink of collapse. According to climate experts, Israel is therefore also committing an ecocide (Guardian).



