

The raging war on Gaza: The killing of innocents

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Dear Editor,

The onslaught on the innocent people of Gaza and the decimation of its infrastructure by Israel is incomprehensible and truly beyond all imagination. We've not seen destruction and the loss of innocent lives in such a short time in which children and women are the main target. The world is reaching a point of no return where deliberate disregard for international law and human rights scars our shared consciousness, and is making it an unsafe place to live in.

When a child in Gaza was asked about his dreams as to what he wishes to be when he grows up, he answered "Uncle, children of Palestine do not have dreams as children in Gaza are killed before they are allowed to grow up". This is the lost childhood and hope of children in occupied Palestine. This is vividly exposed by the ongoing war in Gaza in which innocent children are specifically targeted and killed. It also exposes the 75 years of harsh and brutal occupation, oppression, displacement, aggression and extermination of the Palestinian people and their culture.

A record of what every 16-year-old Palestinian in Gaza has already been through in their short life from losing parents, to surviving death is accurately described as a lost childhood from which the world is turning a blind eye.

Israel has continued its attacks across the Gaza Strip, including hospitals. In every hour in Gaza, 15 people are killed - 6 are children, 35 people are injured, 12 buildings are destroyed and 42 bombs are dropped (in the first six days of the war according to the Israeli army). The prohibited white phosphorus was also used. Here are the latest casualty figures as of 18th December 2023, at least 19,453 Killed, including at least 7,729 children and 5,153 women. More than 52,286 injured, thousands of whom

are critically injured, including at least 8,663 children and 6,327 women and more than 8,000 missing.

Almost all of Gaza's population are now displaced from their homes. Families forced to flee multiple times and are staying in overcrowded and unhygienic shelters or sleeping on the streets as winter worsens. Israel's indiscriminate bombardment and siege for almost 17 years is making it impossible to sustain human life in Gaza. People are living in constant fear of death and there is no safe place in Gaza.

During this war, Israel has arrested dozens of doctors, and their whereabouts remain unknown. The head of the main hospital (Al-Shifa hospital) in Gaza City Muhammad Abu Salmia has been under Israeli arrest since November 22nd and many other senior doctors have continued to be held by the Israeli military without charges and no one knows their whereabouts.

Palestine red crescent Society announced earlier in the ongoing conflict that operations of their ambulances in Northern Gaza and other places have stopped due to the lack of fuel, hospital closures and it is now impossible to evacuate wounded people in many areas in Gaza. These patients are essentially left to die. There is insufficient hospital space to treat even a fraction of these patients in massively cramped facilities. United Nations shelters have been overcrowded and have become havens to spread infectious diseases including hepatitis A, meningitis, lice skin infections, scabies and multiple diarrhoeal illnesses. Today, if Gazan people are not killed by the indiscriminate bombardment, they will be most likely die from lack of food, clean water, electricity, drugs and health care, a slow and painful death.

Devastation across Gaza is another dimension of this brutal and unjust war on Gaza, according to the latest

data from the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Palestinian government, and as of December 13, Israeli attacks have damaged at least over half of Gaza's homes - 305,000 residential units have been destroyed or damaged, 339 educational facilities damaged, 26 out of 35 hospitals not functioning, 197 places of worship damaged and 102 ambulances damaged. Frontier ambulance Convoy and Red Cross Ambulance convoys were bombed. The remaining hospitals are only partially functional but they are operating at more than double their capacity with critical shortages of basic supplies and fuel, these facilities are also providing shelter to thousands of internally displaced people.

The number of injured people who have faced amputation has soared. There were also reports that major surgical procedures including amputations and caesarean sections were performed without anaesthesia or painkillers. The only mental health hospital, eye hospital, dialysis unit and cancer hospital in Gaza were all bombed.

The two medical schools in Gaza, the Islamic University of Gaza and Al-Alazar University Medical School, have both been demolished, an ominous development for the future of healthcare and medical education in the area.

The plight of the Palestinian people has exposed colonialism and the western myths and hypocrisies of human rights, international laws, the United Nation, justice and equality. Palestinian truth, faith, bravery and resilience have exposed the ongoing manipulation, weaknesses, cowardness, racism, greed and injustice in the world. Hope for Palestine has brought unity and hope to the world. There must be a ceasefire immediately and a recognition that whatever happens justice will eventually prevail. A ceasefire will stop further deliberate and preventable suffering and killing of innocents.