

THE LAST WORD

A Human Tragedy

News is just coming in. Another massacre at dawn in Shaja'iyya neighbourhood in Gaza. Initial figures speak of sixty dead, four hundred and fifty injured. All civilians. All civilians.

Words fall short to express sorrow, anger, and frustration. Palestinians have no doubt that civilians are being deliberately targeted. No woman, child, or elderly person is spared; all are within the "target bank." It seems that the vast majority of Israeli society wants blood and its military is obliging. There will be more Palestinian blood spilt, more orphans, more widows and widowers, and more bereaved parents.

Among those who have died, those injured, and those traumatized, the children of Gaza have suffered the most. Images of screaming children will engrain Palestinian collective memory forever. Images of the torn corpses of the four children who were playing football and were shelled by an Israeli navy vessel will remain forever. We all know that with the sophisticated war technology available to Israel, it was impossible to mistake four young children playing on a beach as fleeing combatants. While Israel justifies these war crimes as exercising its right to defend itself from terrorism, it is the Palestinians—unable to defend themselves or evacuate—who are experiencing the real terrorism, inflicted on them by the government of Israel.

I pray the monstrosity of the Shaja'iyya carnage will change the course of this onslaught and bring some sense to those who advocate the continuation of this madness, and that they pause, search their souls, and hopefully cease their hostility. Unfortunately, my initial reaction is that there will be still more aggression. For whatever reason, the two-hour humanitarian cease fire called by the Red Cross was breached and Shaja'iyya was shelled again as the corpses were collected and the injured were being sent for treatment.

International condemnation of this unprovoked attack on Gaza is growing by the day. One hundred thousand demonstrators have marched in solidarity with the Palestinians in London and other British cities yesterday, and thousands more in Paris, Sydney, Melbourne, Toronto, Ankara, Istanbul, Tunis, Yemen, Rabat, Stockholm, and Capetown; indeed in most cities all over the globe. For crying out loud, there was a pro-Palestinian demonstration in the Maldives! I used to think that world leaders such as Obama, Merkel, Cameron, Hollande, and Harper were merely uninformed. But now I am certain they are fully aware of what is happening, and the sad reality is that they are accomplices to these murders by not enforcing international legitimacy and allowing Israel get away with crimes against humanity. History will judge them, and will judge those who didn't lift a finger to support a screaming child and or a father gone mad upon losing his only child.

Eight hundred thousand refugees live in Al-Shati' Refugee Camp, in an area of one square kilometre. Consider that level of population density and then try to imagine a missile exploding in the middle of the camp! What sort of response would you expect from 1.8 million inhabitants besieged for seven years with running water one day a week, and electricity two hours a day?

We are witnessing a human tragedy of colossal proportions. I pray that by the time this issue of *TWIP* is out, this madness would have stopped.

God have mercy.

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Publisher

