

Life in Occupied Gaaza

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on أحد, 24/11/2013 - 10:34 *Anonymous* , submitted by *Stephen Lendman* By

Life in Occupied Gaza

by Stephen Lendman

After Hamas won January 2006 elections, Israel imposed embargo conditions. In mid-2007, siege followed.

It has nothing to do with Israeli security. It's collective punishment. It's occupation harshness writ large. It's making an entire population suffer.

It's doing it maliciously. It reflects slow-motion genocide. It's lawless. It's ruthless. World leaders turn a blind eye. Doing so makes them complicit.

calls conditions worse than ever. Gazans are [3] [Oxfam update](#) Gazan suffering continues. An trapped. They're largely isolated. More from Oxfam below.

Crisis conditions persist. Over 80% of the population depends on humanitarian aid. Blockade devastated Gaza's economy.

Official poverty and unemployment figures way understate reality. Half or more of all young people have no jobs. Poverty and deprivation reflect daily life.

Israel bears full responsibility. Blockading Gaza constitutes a crime against humanity. Regular incursions and air attacks compound things. They're war crimes.

On November 19 alone, Israel warplanes conducted seven airstrikes. Multiple locations were struck.

Two Khan Younis area chicken farms were completely destroyed. Around 4,000 chicks and some sheep were killed.

No human casualties were reported. Other areas were attacked. Doing so reflects Israeli viciousness. It consider civilians legitimate targets. International law says otherwise.

Israel gets away with murder and then some. James Rawley is UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He addressed Gazan conditions, saying:

"...I am sorry to report that the situation for Gaza's 1.7 million people is worse than it was before" Israel's Operation Pillar of Cloud.

UNWRA director of Gaza operations Robert Turner added:

"The closures of the tunnels has led to a near total collapse of private sector constructions, as it compounded the constraints due to the pre-existing ban on construction materials from Israel for the private sector."

Outgoing UNWRA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi warned about Gaza "quickly becoming uninhabitable."

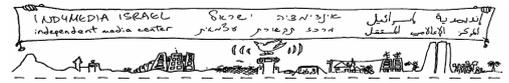
Nineteen of 20 agency construction projects "ground to a halt. (F)urther conflict is bound, as before, to affect civilians unless its causes are addressed."

"(F)irst and foremost, the Israeli blockade - which is illegal - must be lifted. Meanwhile, the United Nations must be allowed to at least continue construction projects and provide a few extra jobs for the beleaguered population."

Since March, UNWRA had no "construction projects cleared by the Israeli government, and for the past month, has been unable to import building materials."

"Gaza: One year since the ceasefire, the blockade goes on." [3] [headlined](#) Oxfam's update

Israel's Operation Pillar of Cloud was naked, premeditated aggression. Around 170 Palestinians murdered in cold blood.



Over 1,000 were injured. Nearly half were women and children. At least 963 houses were damaged or destroyed.

They included 10 health centers, 35 schools, 2 universities, 15 NGO offices, 30 mosques, 14 media offices, 92 industrial and commercial facilities, 1 UNWRA food distribution center, 8 government buildings, 14 police/security stations, 5 banks, 34 vehicles, 3 youth clubs, 3 cemeteries, and 2 bridges.

Conflict ending memorandum of understanding terms left disturbing wiggle room. Israel agreed to cease air, land, and sea attacks.

It said targeted killings would stop. It promised eased siege conditions. Palestinian resistance groups agreed to halt rocket and other attacks. They're launched in response to IDF attacks.

Israeli agreements aren't worth the paper they're written on. Israel's word isn't its bond.

Siege conditions are worse than ever. Targeted killings continue. So do regular incursions and air attacks. They're ordered for any reason or none at all. Israel operates unaccountably.

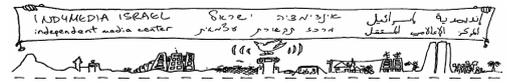
Gaza fishermen are accosted at sea. Farmers are shot in their fields. Israeli soldiers use children for target practice. War could repeat again any time.

Since November 2012 alone, Israel launched multiple air strikes. It conducted "over 300 incidents of border and naval fire," said Oxfam.

Security worsened. "So far in 2013, there have been over 150 incidents of Israeli naval fire against Gaza fishermen - a 40% increase over the past two years."

Territorial waters extend at least 12 nautical miles offshore. Oslo permits 20 NM. An exclusive economic zone includes a maximum of 200 nautical miles from the territorial sea baseline.

Costal nations legally control their fishing, mining, and resource exploration rights. Israel lawlessly denies them to Gaza.



It maintains exclusive economic control. It restricted Gaza fishermen to three miles offshore.

Following Operation Pillar of Cloud, permission up to six miles was granted. "The Israeli military regularly uses live fire against fishermen, in violation of international law - even within the six NM zone," said Oxfam.

"Fishermen have reportedly been shot and arrested within the six NM limit." In 2000, 10,000 Gazan fishermen were registered.

Today it's one-third that number. An estimated 1,300 metric tons of fish a year are lost. Around 95% of fishermen receive humanitarian aid.

Before Pillar of Cloud's ceasefire terms, Israel's "buffer zone" put around 35% of agricultural land off limits.

Some farmers can now use limited portions of previously inaccessible land. It's too little to matter. Getting too close to Israel's border risks getting shot and killed.

Kerem Shalom is the sole Israeli-controlled crossing. Entrance of goods is about half pre-siege levels.

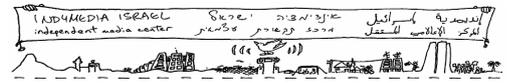
Exports are practically nonexistent. Limited amounts allowed halved since ceasefire terms. Exporting to the West Bank and Israel remains almost entirely prohibited.

"So far in 2013 (through end of October), 111 commercial export trucks had left Gaza - compared to 254 trucks in 2012 and 270 in 2011," said Oxfam.

"This year is on track to see the lowest level of exports since 2009. Currently, exports from Gaza to third countries represent less than 3% of pre-blockade levels."

Gazans remain "trapped on all sides." Israel maintains harsh movement restrictions.

In 2000, around half a million Gazans exited through Erez crossing monthly. Today it's less than 6,000.



Israel's blockade causes severe economic, educational, healthcare, familial, cultural and social hardships.

It bears repeating. It has nothing to do with security. It reflects police state harshness.

Rafah crossing into Egypt remains Gaza's "main gateway to the world," said Oxfam. Before Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) deposed President Mohamed Morsi, around 20,000 people crossed monthly.

Now it's one-fifth that number. Thousands can't travel freely. Students registered in foreign universities can't attend. Professionals working in other countries are hard-pressed to get there. Others find themselves trapped in Gaza.

Its tunnel economy provided a vital lifeline. It supplied vital goods, food, fuel and other supplies.

"During the first half of 2013, over 50% of total imports entered Gaza through approximately 300 tunnels," said Oxfam.

Since Morsi's July ouster, Egypt destroyed most tunnels. In mid-October, only a dozen or two remained.

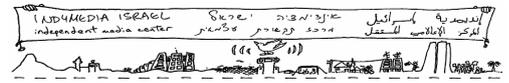
Pre-July, around a million liters of fuel arrived daily. It's enough to run Gaza's power plant.

It supplied basic needs for hospitals, water treatment units, businesses, other basic services, and household needs.

"Today, Egyptian fuel is almost non-existent in Gaza," said Oxfam. "Although fuel is available through Israel, only 3-400,000 litres a day (40% of what is needed) is currently entering through Kerem Shalom."

"The Israeli fuel is twice the price of Egyptian fuel, pushing it beyond the reach of many families, businesses and service providers."

Lack of fuel causes severe hardships. Power outages up to 16 hours daily are routine.



"Last year I'd get 200 customers a day, but now it's less than half that. Most people here don't have any work since the tunnels closed, and they have no money to spend. My outgoings have gone up while my profits have gone down."

"The crisis affects every part of our lives. Last week my daughter had a chest problem and needed an examination."

"I drove around looking for an open health centre, but everywhere was closed because they had no power. We had to drive all the way into Gaza City to find one open."

Israel enforces Gazan suffering. It bears repeating. Doing so is collective punishment. It's a crime against humanity.

It's compounded by regular incursions and air attacks. Survival in Gaza remains a day-to-day uncertainty. Israeli impunity lets Gazan suffering continue.

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His new book is titled "Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanII.html>

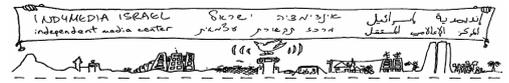
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