

Genocidal intent: Amnesty International exposes malice aforethought in the Gaza genocide

Andre Damon
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On Wednesday, Amnesty International published an exhaustive, 296-page report proving that “Only an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza” can “explain the scale and scope” of the mass murder, forcible displacement, and deliberate starvation of the Palestinians in Gaza by Israel.

Since October 2023, Israel has killed at least 44,580 people in Gaza, according to official statistics, and the death toll has been estimated to be 186,000 or more in a study published in *The Lancet*. More than 1.9 million people, or 90 percent of Gaza’s population, have been internally displaced. In a report last month, the UN’s human rights office alleged that 70 percent of verified deaths in Gaza were among women and children.

In its report, Amnesty International conclusively establishes that the mass killing has been done with conscious genocidal intent. With the publication of this report, Amnesty International became the first major international human rights organization to formally accuse Israel of genocide.

If it has taken so long for major human rights organizations to make this assertion, it is because of the vast implications of this finding. Whatever Amnesty International may say or write, to accuse Israel of acting on the basis of genocidal intent is to accuse the leaders of the world’s “democracies”—US President Joe Biden, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron—of conscious complicity in one of the highest international crimes.

On November 27, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, accusing the two men of “the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare; and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.” This followed the July 19 declaration by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that the Israeli occupation of Palestine was illegal and ordered all countries to cease their cooperation with the occupation.

On December 9, 1948, 39 countries signed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, a treaty that officially made genocide a crime and required participants to enforce its prohibition. It has since been ratified by the vast majority of the world’s states.

The treaty was a response to the Holocaust, the deliberate, systematic effort by the leaders of Nazi Germany to exterminate

the Jews of Europe, which led to the industrial massacre of 6 million European Jews. The convention systematized the writings of Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide” to describe both the Holocaust and the Ottoman Empire’s earlier genocide of Armenians.

Lemkin worked closely with the legal team of Robert H. Jackson, chief US prosecutor at the Nuremberg tribunal, which exposed and prosecuted the conspiracy by the leaders of Nazi Germany to launch an aggressive war to conquer Europe.

Under international law, the crime of genocide requires not only the physical killing of members of a particular national, racial or ethnic group. For such acts to constitute genocide, they must be committed by the perpetrators with the intent to destroy the targeted group and to be part of a manifest pattern of similar conduct directed against that group. The Amnesty International report establishes that both of these elements are satisfied in Gaza.

The American government, the primary financial, military and political backer of Israel, denies that the Netanyahu government is perpetrating a genocide in Gaza. In December 2023, President Joe Biden alleged that Israel was carrying out “indiscriminate bombing”—a statement the White House immediately attempted to walk back. But in the 14 months since Israel began its onslaught on Gaza, the US government has asserted hundreds of times that while Israel may be exercising insufficient care in striking Gaza, it has no intent to kill Palestinian civilians.

The Amnesty International report exposes this argument as a deliberate and absurd lie. The report compiles dozens of statements made at every level of the Israeli state, from the president to key cabinet leaders, to local officials, down to the statements, writings and testimony of Israeli soldiers.

Amnesty International explains that its report:

Reviewed 102 statements made by Israeli government officials, high-ranking military officers, and members of the Knesset made between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, which dehumanized Palestinians or called for or justified genocidal acts or other crimes under international law against them. Of these, it identified 22 statements that were specifically made by members of Israel’s war and security cabinets, high-ranking military officers, and

Israel's president between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024 and appeared to call for or justify genocidal acts.

These statements verify entirely with the actions of the soldiers carrying out the destruction of Gaza and extermination of its people.

To consider further the possible influence of these statements over the military's conduct, Amnesty International analyzed 62 videos, audio recordings, and photographs posted online showing Israeli soldiers making calls for the destruction of Gaza or the denial of essential services to people in Gaza, or celebrating the destruction of Palestinian property, and examined the extent to which they echoed statements made by senior government and military officials.

On the basis of these statements,

Amnesty International finds that genocidal intent is the only reasonable inference. Sufficient evidence exists to find that Israel's purpose and goal in Gaza is the destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, and there is no reasonable alternative explanation. Because Israel is acting in the context of an armed conflict, it obviously has military goals as well, which may operate in tandem with genocidal intent or which the destruction of Palestinians serves. But these military goals are insufficient to explain the scale and scope of Israel's ongoing unlawful actions. Only an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza does so.

At this point, it is necessary to continue where Amnesty International's report stops. What happens when the statements of American leaders are held to the same legal tests to which Amnesty International subjects the statements of Israeli leaders?

Amnesty International attributed great significance to the biblical references made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "Amalek," a mythical tribe of people whom the biblical texts allege were exterminated by the mythical King David.

In October, former President Bill Clinton justified Israel's killing of Palestinian civilians by declaring, "Hamas makes sure that they're shielded by civilians," adding, "They'll force you to kill civilians if you want to defend yourself."

He then went on to justify Israeli actions by referencing the myth of King David, declaring, "Well, I got news for them [the Palestinians]. They [the Israelis] were there first before their faith [Islam] existed. They were there in the time of King David, the southernmost tribes had Judea and Samaria."

The same biblical texts that assert the existence of King David declare that in his campaign against the Amalekites, "David struck the land, leaving neither man nor woman alive." David was acting

according to the biblical commandment of Yaweh to "go and smite Amalek ... slay both man and woman, infant and suckling."

In December 2023, Senator Lindsay Graham raised the prospect of Israel using nuclear weapons in Gaza and openly advocated the killing of civilians. "This is a radicalized population," Graham said. "I don't want to kill innocent people, but Israel is fighting not just Hamas, but the infrastructure around Hamas."

The undeniable fact is that these statements, too, are not merely a defense of war crimes but declarations of genocidal intent.

The only logical inference from the Amnesty International report is that Biden, Macron, Starmer, Scholz and the other government heads who are accomplices of Israel must be immediately arrested.

Where is this incitement to mass murder coming from? In the 2008 book, *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History*, genocide scholar A. Dirk Moses explains that far from being coined just in response to the Holocaust, "Extra-European colonial cases also featured prominently in [Lemkin's] projected global history of genocide." These included "genocide against the American Indians," as well as against the Incans and Aztecs, and in the "Belgian Congo."

In other words, the Holocaust was the expression, on a massive, concentrated and industrial scale, of all the murderous traditions of capitalism, which, to use the words of Karl Marx, comes into the world "dripping with blood and filth from every pore."

The imperialist powers have proclaimed, in the words of President Joe Biden, a "new world order," to which he adds, "and we're going to lead it." This new world order is a return to naked colonial domination, imposed through violence not seen since the Second World War. The Gaza genocide is not an accident or aberration but rather the deliberate and concentrated expression of this struggle to reshape the world by the imperialist powers.

The open embrace of genocide by the "democratic" states marks a turning point. The era in which the imperialist powers could deck themselves out in a democratic toga, to pretend to uphold constitutional, legal and democratic traditions, is over. They have shown the world what they are: a gang of blood-drenched murderers and cutthroats.

History teaches that changes in objective circumstances take time to find their reflection in politics. But when they do, the consequences are earth-shaking. The role of the imperialist powers in perpetrating the Gaza genocide will be a powerful impetus for the building of a movement by the working class to put an end to the capitalist system.



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