

EDITOR'S NOTE

This is *Al-Muntaqa*'s first special volume, occasioned by the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. Ongoing since October 2023, this genocide has hitherto taken the lives of over 36,000 Palestinians, injured more than 83,000, and deliberately and systematically decimated all civilian infrastructure, including health, education, and water facilities. It has forcibly displaced almost two million civilians, leaving no safe haven for them as Israel continues to bomb Rafah, despite the International Court of Justice's order to stop the Rafah offensive.

This genocide is but one chapter in a long history of massacres committed by Zionist militias and Israeli Defense Forces against Palestinians, a chapter of an ongoing Palestinian Nakba. Thus, the Nakba of 1948 marked neither the beginning nor the end of the mass killing and expulsion of Palestinians and their dispossession of their homeland.

Nevertheless, the current genocide in Gaza is different. It is a "spectacle" to which the world is bearing witness, screened hourly as consecutive reels of high-tech warfare, of dystopian destruction and unspeakable human suffering, and of global protests upholding moral values amidst global immoral politics towards Palestinians. Student protests at Western universities have been the most significant and iconic ones. Defiant and persistent student-protestors have dealt Israel's narrative a most severe blow and made it clear that Gaza is a universal moral compass. This genocide as a spectacle has dominated the world stage and has drawn in world institutions, some of which have taken unprecedented measures, such as the International Criminal Court's applications for arrest warrants against Israeli leaders implicated in the genocide, and the International Court of Justice's order for Israel to immediately halt its military operations in Rafah.

Perhaps no other genocide has compelled the world to define its morality vis-à-vis unfolding war atrocities the way the genocide in Gaza has. Hence, the opening article of this special volume is Azmi Bishara's essay on the moral dilemmas posed by the genocide in Gaza, one of the earliest topics related to the war in Gaza that the author has probed. Bishara links moral values to innate human dispositions that potentially constitute universal human values. He takes aim at Israel's claim of self-defense to justify its acts as an occupying state. Bishara also exposes the moral deficiencies in Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib's bias towards Israel.

This volume consists of nine articles, the lengthiest volume ever produced by *Al-Muntaqa*. Two of them are translated from articles originally published in Arabic. The rest were produced in response to the atrocities in Gaza. Most of the contributors are faculty and researchers at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies respectively.

Following Bishara's article, Aicha Elbasri's timely essay examines the failure of the United Nations Early Warning Mechanism to Prevent Genocide to be applied in the case of Palestine, proposing five reasons behind this failure, and offering a number of recommendations for the reform of this vital mechanism.

Mohammed Hemchi, in a passionate essay, focuses on the legal debate over the relevance and applicability of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle in an occupied territory and population upon which the occupier does not exercise control on the ground, while the occupied has neither a state nor sovereignty.

Ibrahim Rabaia sheds light on the electricity sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 1967, with a focus on the Gaza Strip. He explores the determinants and outcomes of public policies regulating this sector following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1993.

Basim Tweissi dissects the Israeli propaganda narrative during the Israeli war on Gaza in 2023–2024 and notes the first shift in the global perception of the war following the bombing of the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza and the emergence of a new narrative, visible on digital Madeira platforms, that clearly contradicts the Israeli propaganda narrative.

Raja Khalidi and Qais Iwidat assess the socio-economic impacts of Israel's War on Palestine, and Gaza in general, and the possibility of rebuilding Gaza after a catastrophe of such a scale. They call for an urgent reimagining of the structures needed for Palestinian political and economic renewal.

Majd Abuamer offers an analysis of Gaza's massive tunnel network that is central to Hamas's defensive strategy against Israel. He examines the various Israeli initiatives to tackle the tunnels, and outlines the limitations of each of these technologies.

Adham Saouli analyses what he considers Hezbollah's puzzling engagement in the war in Gaza by drawing on Ontological Security Theory (OST) and primary data. He argues that Hezbollah engaged in constrained warfare that aimed to restore its ontological security while preserving the cohesion and survival of the regional Resistance Axis.

Ayat Hamdan's essay outlines the reasons behind Israel's incitement against UNRWA. She calls for the Palestinian refugee issue and UNRWA to be framed in explicitly political terms and not solely in humanitarian ones and offers possible scenarios of the agency's future and the implications on Palestinian refugees.

The volume also includes two book reviews related to Palestine and Gaza. Tariq Dana reviews Ali Jirbawi's *From Expulsion to Self-Rule: The Zionist Quest to Bury Palestine Alive*, and Omar Shaban reviews Mazen Ejlal's *Gaza: The Lost Years of Development (2007-2018)*.