Best way to secure Israel is Justice to Palestine

By Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj
Gaza, December 28, 2008

Israel's air force launched a major bombing campaign in the Gaza Strip today, killing over two hundred people and injuring many more. Typically, Israel justifies this horrific scale of killing as retaliation against the rocket launching from Gaza. The spate of Israeli bombing continued throughout the day and into the night. I was interrupted several times while trying to finish this note, by the devastating sound of bombing.

In the core of the vicious cycle of violence that has engulfed the region for decades and lead to the many wars of the Middle East and beyond, lies the tragedy of the Palestinian uprooting in 1948, the justice denied to their plight and the living under the oppressive
Israeli occupation for over forty years.

Instead of acknowledging the real issues of justice, mutual security and peace, the region was drowned into mutual hatred, revenge killing and insecurity.

Israeli policies and strategies rested always on the supremacy of its brutal force. Palestinians, in defiance of the Israeli scheme, were drawn into the resistance and some used homemade missiles and suicide missions.

Brute force and carnage in Gaza on the scale of today is a dangerous omen. Israel must restrain its military might and face up to the consequences of dragging the region into such a serious and intensified path of violence.

Palestinians must stop all forms of violence and unite in the pursuit of peace and justice. We, in the Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace-International, FFIPP-I, call for an immediate halt of the Israeli military attack on Gaza and ending the siege on the deprived strip.

The United States of America is the only power that could play a positive role in ending the unending tragedy in the Holy Land. We hope that the new administration of President Obama will make the necessary change; a fresh approach as an honest broker of peace.

Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj is the founder and director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) and the president of FFIPP-International

'The injured were lying there asking God to let them die'

Fikr Shaltoot
The Guardian, Monday 29 December 2008

Being a health worker, I had to check the needs of Shifa hospital and the other hospitals in Gaza. The situation in Shifa is really bad. There were corpses in corridors covered with blankets. The mortuary couldn't cope with the number of bodies. Two bodies were left on stretchers, one wrapped in a blanket. They leave them until families can recognise them.

There were mothers, fathers looking for children, looking for relatives. Everyone was confused and seeking support. Mothers were crying, people were asking about relatives, the medical team was confused.

Some people were just lying there, some were screaming, some were very, very angry. There were a lot of injured arriving, ambulances coming in and out. The injured were coming by private cars and they were being left wherever. You could see blood here and there.

There is talk [the Israeli air strikes] were targeting the police and security forces but in Shifa hospital, I saw many, many civilians, some dead, some injured, some were children, some were women, some were elderly people.

There are people without their legs in very severe pain. The doctors and nurses were trying to give them painkillers and to keep them alive. Patients are lying there knowing they've lost their legs. Some were asking God if they could die. They were in a terrible psychological state.

The doctors and nurses were trying to do their best. They discharged all the patients from the chronic diseases ward and from the oncology ward to make way for the injured. They were using whatever they could.

There's no gauze so they are using cotton, which sticks to the wounds. They can't sterilise clothes for the operating theatre. They're using wrong sized syringes. They're working 24 hours. They're referring cases from one hospital to the next. One hospital was running out of anaesthesia. They're also drawing blood and there's no alcohol. This is a disaster.

Fikr Shaltoot is a programme coordinator for Medical Aid for Palestinians, a British non-governmental organisation that provides medical supplies in Gaza

http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/29/israel-gaza-attack-shifa-hospital/print

Even our homes are not safe. There’s nowhere safe in Gaza

By Jaber Wishah in Gaza City

December 29 2008 19:34 | Last updated: December 29 2008 19:34

When I began to write this late on Sunday I was staying with relatives in a temporary shelter in an already crowded family home. I had left my own house on Saturday because my neighbours – the family of the wife of a Hamas executive force member – had received a direct Israeli threat.

As I tried to concentrate on writing, the local radio station announced that the home of my cousin, Hassan Wishah, had been targeted and bombed. A missile had hit the lower floor of his building while he and his family were inside. He lived next to our evacuated house.

It was not the only sad news we had heard since Saturday. My cousin’s wife has a sister who lives next to the Emad Akal mosque in Jabaliya, which was bombed and levelled at 5am on Monday morning, killing five children, the youngest of whom was four years old.

Upon hearing of the raids, my cousin’s wife tried desperately to reach her family over the phone. The lines were down and mobile phones were barely functioning. She finally got through to another relative, who told her of the child victims.

It is not easy to write when the blasts are multiplying. It is not the electricity cuts that prevents me from writing, not the words, or information I need. It is that the atrocious aggression that Israel has been waging since just after 11 am on December 27 continues at full speed, full strength, despite more than 300 dead and over 800 injured.

Monday morning, I travelled 15km to my office in Gaza City, a hazardous trip, as the roads are open to Israeli F-16s and Apache bombing. After arriving at my office, at the moment I resumed writing this article, I was again forced to leave, this time because the building next to my office received a threat that an Israeli F-16 strike was imminent.

Then someone called to say that many people, including my family, around Azzadin mosque, in the central Gaza Strip’s Nusseirat, were being evacuated. The building, he said, could be bombed in a campaign that is targeting mosques all over Gaza.

The outside world rightfully wants to know what is going on in Gaza, and I too want to know. Gaza has become a collection of isolated areas, where people are trapped in their homes for fear of being out on the streets. And, as it turns out, even homes are not safe. There is nowhere safe in Gaza.

Jaber Wishah is deputy director of the independent Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, based in Gaza City

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