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The Fight for Dignity: Reshaping Gaza's Post-War

Narrative



Youtube screenshot.

Following every Israeli war on Gaza, numerous narratives emerge. Some claim victory for one side and defeat for the other, while others—knowingly or unknowingly—attempt to exploit the aftermath for their own purposes.

The latter is not always nefarious, as the humanitarian calamities resulting from Israel's actions are undeniable—especially as Israel and its allies often use aid to Palestinians as bargaining chips for political concessions or to exert pressure on the Strip and its leadership.

This dynamic often results in the exploitation of Palestinian suffering to raise funds, sometimes by organizations with high overhead costs, leaving independent researchers puzzled over the discrepancies between the funds collected and the funds allocated.

Additionally, Gaza lacks an independent commission to track all received funds and their usage, which leads to controversies and public accusations at times.

Exploiting Gaza

However, this is a topic for another discussion. The issue at hand here is the portrayal of Gaza's victims—particularly children—without dignity or respect for their privacy, all in the name of helping Palestinian victims.

Throughout the latest Israeli assault on Gaza, the desperation of many Palestinian families, faced with famine and extermination, led them to seek help from international donors, often turning to online donation platforms.

Many of these personal fundraisers were, of course, legitimate, as Gaza was entirely pushed past the point of starvation. Yet, suspicious accounts also appeared, raising money for individuals—real or imagined—who had not sought assistance.

Perhaps future researchers will uncover how Gaza has been exploited by online profiteers and determine how to regulate such practices.

We hesitated to raise this issue during the war, fearing that a single misstep could have dire consequences for an individual or a family. Now that a ceasefire has been signed, it is crucial to open the conversation to scrutiny.

Reclaiming the Narrative

The latest Israeli war on Gaza was not ordinary, but then, no previous wars have been anything but destructive and lethal. For Israel, it was a genocide—a war aimed at exterminating Gaza's population through mass killings and driving the survivors into Egypt.

Thanks to the legendary steadfastness of Gaza's resistance and the unbending spirit of its people, Israel failed. As Israeli writer David K. Rees said, "For the first time, Israel just lost a war"

This is the Gaza that most Palestinians want us to know and remember—a symbol of collective strength and resistance. Their hope is that this message can reverberate around the world, not only to elevate the centrality of Gaza and Palestine in all political discourse but also to inspire oppressed groups globally to fight for their rights unapologetically.

Sadly, though sometimes understandably, that message is not one many are eager to champion.

Many will continue to see Palestinians only as victims. While this narrative may hold Israel accountable for its genocide, it fails to recognize the agency Palestinians have earned and deserve.

However, at times, this viewpoint can be understandable, especially in charitable causes, where the immediate need for aid must be addressed. Yet, it is possible to strike a balance—between meeting the urgent needs of victims and honoring their dignity, resilience, and collective power.

Not Hapless Victims

The exploitation of Palestinians, especially their children, as tools for fundraising must end. Gaza's children, many of whom are amputees, should not be paraded in the most degrading manner to appeal to wealthy donors. The world already knows what Israel has done to the Palestinian people—especially the children of Gaza, who suffer the highest rate of child amputations globally.

This is not to deny the suffering. We are proud and humbled by every Palestinian child—whether martyred, injured, amputated, or emotionally scarred. However, instead of portraying them as helpless victims, we must celebrate them as poets, artists, reporters, and representatives of their people.

The time has come for a new narrative, one fundamentally different from those that have emerged in the wake of previous wars. The new narrative must position Gaza as the heart of the Palestinian struggle, as a model for humanity, and as the central path for the liberation of Palestine—which, thanks to Gaza, now seems closer than ever.

Don't Help Israel

To betray this fact is to betray Gaza and all its sacrifices. A victim-only narrative that ignores the larger political context risks undoing the gains made by Palestinian popular resistance in Gaza and inadvertently helping Israel reintroduce a fear-driven discourse. After 15 months of relentless genocide, Israel has failed to instill fear in Gaza's population—and it must not succeed in rebuilding it.

Yes, we must spare no effort to help Gaza rebuild and resume its historical role as the leader of the Palestinian liberation movement. But we must do so with sensitivity, compassion, and above all, respect for Gaza and its unparalleled sacrifices.

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