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Gaza's Unbreakable Resistance: A Historical Perspective on the War and Its Aftermath



Gaza's return, Youtube screenshot.

The problem with political analysis is that it often lacks historical perspective and is mostly limited to recent events.

The current analysis of the Israeli war on Gaza falls victim to this narrow thinking. The ceasefire agreement, signed between Palestinian groups and Israel under Egyptian, Qatari, and US mediation in Doha on January 15, is one example.

Some analysts, including many from the region, insist on framing the outcome of the war as a direct result of Israel's political dynamics. They argue that Israel's political crisis is the main reason the country failed to achieve its declared and undeclared war objectives—namely, gaining total “security control” over Gaza and ethnically cleansing its population.

However, this analysis assumes that the decision to go to war or not is entirely in Israel's hands. It continues to elevate Israel's role as the only entity capable of shaping political outcomes in the region, even when those outcomes do not favor Israel.

Another group of analysts [focuses](#) entirely on the American factor, claiming that the decision to end the war ultimately rested with the White House. Shortly after the ceasefire was officially declared in Gaza, a pan-Arab TV channel asked a group of experts whether it was the Biden or Trump administration that deserved credit for supposedly "pressuring Israel" to agree to a ceasefire.

Some argue that it was Trump's envoy to Israel, Steve Witkoff, who [denied](#) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu any room to maneuver, thus forcing him, albeit reluctantly, to accept the ceasefire terms.

Others counter by saying that the agreement was initially [presented](#) by the Biden administration. They argue that Biden's supposedly active diplomacy ultimately led to the ceasefire.

The latter group fails to acknowledge that it was Biden's unconditional [support](#) for Israel that sustained the war. His UN envoy's constant [rejection](#) of ceasefire calls at the Security Council made international efforts to stop the war irrelevant.

The former group, however, ignores the fact that Israeli society was already at a breaking point. The war on Gaza had proven unwinnable. This means that, whether Trump pressured Netanyahu or not, the outcome of the war was already sealed. Continuing the war would have meant the implosion of Israeli society.

On the Palestinian side, some analyses—affiliated with one faction or another—exploit the war's outcome for political gain. This type of thinking is extremely insensitive and must be wholly rejected.

There are also those hoping to play a role in Gaza's reconstruction to gain political and financial leverage and increase their influence. This is a shameful stance, given the total [destruction](#) of Gaza and the urgent need to recover the thousands of bodies trapped under rubble, as well as to heal the wounded and the population as a whole.

One thing all these analyses overlook is that Israel failed in Gaza because the population of Gaza proved unbreakable. Such notions are often neglected in mainstream political discussions, which tend to commit to an elitist line. This line is entirely removed from the daily struggles and collective choices of ordinary people, even when they achieve extraordinary feats.

Gaza's history is one of both pain and pride. It stretches back to ancient civilizations and includes great resistance against invasion, such as the three-month siege by Alexander the Great and his Macedonian army in 332 BCE.

Back then, Gazans resisted and endured for months before their leader, Batis, was [captured](#), tortured to death, and the city was sacked.

This legendary resilience and *sumoud* (steadfastness) proved crucial in numerous other fights against foreign invaders, including [resistance](#) to Napoleon Bonaparte's army in 1799.

Even if some of Gaza's current population is unaware of that history, they are a direct product of it. From this perspective, neither Israeli political dynamics, the change of the US administration, nor any other factor is relevant.

This is [known](#) as “long history” or *longue durée*. Far from being merely an academic concept, the long legacy of resistance against injustice has shaped the collective mindset of the Palestinian population in Gaza over the years. How else can we explain how a small, isolated, and impoverished population, living in such a tiny piece of land, managed to withstand firepower [equivalent](#) to many nuclear bombs?

The war ended because Gaza withstood it—not because of the kindness of an American president. It is crucial that we emphasize this point repeatedly, rather than seeking inconclusive and irrational answers.

It matters little how we define victory and defeat for a nation still suffering the consequences of a war of annihilation. However, it is important to recognize that Palestinians in Gaza stood their ground, despite immense losses, and prevailed. This can only be credited to them—a nation that has historically proven unbreakable. This truth, rooted in “long history,” remains valid today.

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