

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

07.04.2024

Incident on the Al-Rashid Coastal Road



Still from BBC footage of Israeli drone attack on WCK convoy.

In the anodyne language of military slaughter, it's called a "triple tap"—three successive strikes to make sure you've eliminated your target—the target in this case being the occupants of three vehicles of the World Central Kitchen, who'd just unloaded more than 100 tons of humanitarian food to a warehouse in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.

The cars were white and clearly marked with the humanitarian group's logo. The route was in a deconfliction zone that had been cleared by the IDF for travel. The vehicles' trip and purpose to Deir al-Balah had been coordinated with and pre-approved by the IDF. None of this mattered to the IDF officials operating a Hermes 450 drone that stalked the cars from above as they left the food warehouse.

Or perhaps it *did* matter. Perhaps the intent of the strike was not just to kill the humanitarian aid workers, but to kill humanitarian aid to Gaza altogether.

How else to explain the logic of the IDF officers who ordered a drone strike on the first car after the convoy left the warehouse, then when survivors of the missile strike scrambled into the second car and called the IDF to describe being attacked, ordered a strike on the second car and then as the occupants of the last car rushed to rescue their injured colleagues, ordered a third missile strike, killing all seven aid workers.

If this was the goal of these murderous missile strikes, it seems to have succeeded. Within hours of the killings, World Central Kitchen executives announced it was suspending operations in Gaza and that the ship that sailing toward Gaza with aid shipments would return to Cyprus. WCF's announcement was swiftly followed by ANERA, which runs the second largest humanitarian operation in Gaza after UNRWA, suspending its work in Gaza.

Rebecca Abou-Chedid, board member of the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), told CNN that her group had tried to coordinate with the IDF, yet had one of its aid workers, Mousa Shawwa, killed in an Israeli airstrike. "There's something called 'deconfliction' in these war zones, where you let the military know where you're going to be providing aid, where you're staff is living, where they're sheltering. And we did that. We confirmed the coordinates just a few days before the house that Mousa was living in was struck and that is why, with a heavy heart, we had to suspend operations...As you see, Mousa had been working for the day. He still had his Anera vest on and he came home and he was struck by a missile and many of his family were also injured. So we can't keep people safe at home. We can't keep people safe in the field delivering aid, like our colleagues were at World Central Kitchens, who also let the Israelis know exactly when their convoy would be traveling. We spent a lot of time talking about getting aid into Gaza, by air, by land, by sea. But less time, I think, talking about the fact that it's human beings that reliably distribute that aid. And it's a network that was built up by organizations like Anera over decades. We have over 20 staff in Gaza, but we have over 450 volunteers who make sure that that aid is distributed in a calm, safe, reliable manner. If that network falls apart, you can't deliver aid by remote control. You can't recreate that network. And that's the red flag that we have been waving for weeks."

The WCF convoy was attacked along a 1.2-mile stretch of the Al-Rashid Coastal Road, near the temporary pier, built from the rubble of bombed buildings, that has been used by WCF and other aid groups to unload humanitarian goods that reach Gaza by sea.

"Knowing how Israel operates, my assessment is that Israeli forces intentionally killed the WCK workers so that donors would pull out & civilians in Gaza could continue to be starved quietly," said Francesca Albanese, the UN's special rapporteur on the Occupied Territories.

“Israel knows Western countries and most Arab countries won’t move a finger for the Palestinians.”

The IDF actually has a protocol for military strikes against humanitarian organizations. Let that sink in. The IDF has a protocol for strikes against humanitarian organizations. And the protocol is this, according to Haaretz, “the Army’s procedures state that those who must give the final approval for activities against sensitive targets, such as aid organizations, are senior officers at the ranks of division commander, commanding general, and even chief of staff.”

And this wasn’t the first time, WCF aid workers had been attacked by the IDF. Only two days earlier, an IDF sniper fired on a WCF car on its way to a food warehouse in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, shattering the car’s windshield. WCF filed a protest with the IDF.

“The Israeli government needs to stop this indiscriminate killing,” said José Andrés. “It needs to stop restricting humanitarian aid, stop killing civilians and aid workers, and stop using food as a weapon.” Andrés, who serves as co-chair of Biden’s Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition, described the WCK convoy as being deliberately targeted by the Israelis and attacked, “systematically, car by car.” He told CBS that Gaza “is not a war on terrorism anymore...it’s a war on humanity itself.”

The Biden White House made a point of leaking that Biden had phoned chef José Andrés to express, in the president’s uniquely garbled syntax, his condolences. At least 176 UN aid workers have been killed by Israeli airstrikes, how many of their families has Biden called? How many of those deaths, the deaths of people who work in an organization the US is a member of, has he even acknowledged?

Biden reportedly told Andres that he was “heartbroken” by what he called the “incident.” “Heart goes out” is the liberal version of “thoughts and prayers”—a kind of ritual self-absolution for the mass slaughter that is committed with the weapons they put on Israeli tanks, planes and drones. A day later, however, Biden, with a new \$18 billion weapons deal for Israel in the works, let it be known he had no plans to change US policy toward Gaza.

There are at least four of José Andres’ restaurants which are within walking distance of the Biden White House: The Bazaar, Jaleo, China Chilcano and Minibar. I hope they refuse to serve anyone associated with this murderous administration.

The darkly ironic thing, of course, is that WCK was supposed to serve as Biden’s replacement for UNRWA, a private relief effort under the control of the US, instead of the UN. Some Palestinians had even come to view Andrés as a US agent, his group a kind of Blackwater in humanitarian garb. And the Israelis just blew it up: one, two, three. Because

any sustained aid to the Palestinians subverts their goal of using starvation to force them to either die or leave Gaza. The arrogance would stun anyone but the benumbed Biden.

The excuses and rationalizing came faster than normal. The White House's John Kirby claimed that there is no evidence that Israel deliberately struck WCK aid workers in Gaza and said the Biden administration hadn't seen any evidence that Israel has violated international humanitarian law in Gaza. Kirby "You want us to hang some sort of condition over their neck. ... We continue to work with the Israelis to make sure that they are as precise as they can be." "Precise as they can be?" ... These missile strikes were so precise they hit the WCF logo on the roof of the car they were aiming at.

Former British Major General Charlie Herbert dismissed the idea that the WCK strike was done by some rogue officer: "I don't accept that the strikes were the result of a 'lack of discipline'. They were the result of systemic flaws in IDF rules of engagement whereby everyone in Gaza is viewed as a legitimate target to be killed. It's as plain and simple as that." Kirby would have defended the Massacre at Wounded Knee...

Yet, Israel has attacked food as it was being delivered, while sitting in warehouses and as it was being grown in fields. They have attacked starving Palestinians trying to reach food dropped on a beach or while waiting in line at food stations. They called food delivery agencies, such as UNRWA, terrorist organizations. And now they've attacked the aid workers who delivered the food on their return trips. If you try to feed, house or stem the bleeding of a Palestinian, you are, almost by Israeli definition, a terrorist...

The IDF claims it saw an armed man enter a truck traveling with the World Central Kitchen convoy during the trip to Deir al-Balah. The truck remained at the warehouse and the IDF admits that it did not see the man leave the warehouse. Still, it decided to strike the entire convoy and kill everyone based on the assumption this suspected terrorist had snuck into one of the cars. Netanyahu was typically churlish, writing it off as the kind of thing that happens during a war.

Israel used a similar defense to justify its November 3 attack on Red Crescent ambulances, where 21 Palestinians were killed in an IDF, including 3 children: "Our forces saw terrorists using ambulances as a vehicle to move around. They perceived a threat and accordingly, we struck that ambulance."

It's worth noting that the Biden administration has been providing Israel with the coordinates of humanitarian aid operations since at least early November, and Israel has used that information to repeatedly bomb those sites.

There have been nearly 200 aid workers (and 100s of medical workers) killed by Israel since October 7. To put this death toll of humanitarians in perspective: In the last six months alone, Israel has killed more aid workers than have died in all of the countries in the rest of the world combined in any of the last 30 years. Where is the ICC's chief prosecutor Karim Khan? If Khan had taken action on any of the previous deaths, he might have prevented the 7 deaths Western elites seem to finally care about.

If you are killed by Israel you automatically become in death a legitimate target—unless you're in the employ of a famous chef to US elites, in which case your targeted killing becomes after its exposure in the international media an “unintentional” accident caused by the fog of war.

“I'm not sure an investigation is needed,” the great Israeli journalist Gideon Levy told the BBC. What do you think you will find out, the name of the commander who gave the order? Who cares. It's the policy...”

BBC Presenter: “I suppose the investigation would establish whether it was a mistake...”

Levy: “How can it be a mistake?”

On the same day the Israelis launched their attack on the WCK humanitarian convoy, the US State Department authorized the transfer of more than 1,000 MK82 500-pound bombs, fuses for MK80 bombs and more than 1,000 small-diameter bombs.

With each fresh Israeli atrocity, we are tempted to think: this is the one, this is the one which will wake the world up, this is the one that will stop the flow of arms, this is the one that will finally end the slaughter. And the next day there's a new massacre and a new sale of arms and the days' old war crimes—as did the assassination of the poet Raftet Alareer, the killing of Reuters reporter Issam Abdallah, the killing of Al Jazeera's Saber Abu Daqqam, the murder of Hind Rajab and her family, the Flour Massacre, and the destruction of Al-Shifa hospital—fade from view...

Jeffrey St. Clair is editor of CounterPunch. His most recent book is [An Orgy of Thieves: Neoliberalism and Its Discontents](#) (with Alexander Cockburn). He can be reached at: sitka@comcast.net or on Twitter [@JeffreyStClair3](https://twitter.com/JeffreyStClair3).

APRIL 5, 2024