

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

RAMZY BAROUD

04.10.2024

Words Kill – Why Israel Gets Away with Murder in Gaza and Lebanon



Image by Mohammed al Bardawil.

The official Israeli army version of why it has targeted civilian areas during the intense and deadly bombardment of September 20 in south Lebanon is that the Lebanese are hiding long-range missile launchers in their own homes.

This official explanation by the Israeli military was meant to justify the killing of 492 people and the wounding of 1,645 in a single day of Israeli strikes.

This ready-to-serve explanation shall accompany us throughout the Israeli war in Lebanon, however long it takes. Israeli media is now heavily citing these claims and, by extension, US and western media are following suit.

Keep this in mind as you reflect on earlier statements made by Israeli President Isaac Herzog on October 13 when he argued that there are no civilians in Gaza and “there is an entire nation out there that is responsible”.

Israel does this in every war it launches against any Palestinian or Arab nation. Instead of removing civilians and civilian infrastructures from its bank of targets, it immediately turns the civilian population into the main targets of its war.

A quick glance at the number of civilians killed in the ongoing war and genocide in Gaza should be enough to demonstrate that Israel targets ordinary people as a matter of course.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza, children and women constitute the largest percentage of the war’s victims at 69 percent. If we factor in the number of adult males who have been killed – a number that includes doctors, medics, civil defense workers and numerous other categories – it will become obvious that the vast majority of all of Gaza’s victims are civilians.

Only Israeli media, and their allies in the west, continue to find justifications of why Palestinian civilians, and now Lebanese, are being killed in large numbers.

Compare the following two statements, which received much attention in the media, by Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari, regarding both Gaza and Lebanon.

“ Hamas systematically uses hospitals to wage war and consistently uses the people of Gaza as human shields,” Hagari said on March 25.

Then, “ Hezbollah’s terror headquarters was intentionally built under residential buildings in the heart of Beirut, as part of Hezbollah’s strategy of using human shields,” he said on September 27.

For those who are giving Hagari the benefit of the doubt, just review what has taken place in Gaza in the last year.

For example, Israel claimed that the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital massacre was not of its doing, and that it was a Palestinian rocket that killed the nearly 500 displaced refugees and wounded hundreds more on October 17.

All evidence, including investigations by well-respected rights groups, concluded the opposite. Still, however, the false Israeli claims received much coverage in the media.

The Baptist Hospital episode was repeated numerous times. In fact, the lies started on October 7, not October 17, when Israel made claims about decapitated babies and mass rape. Even though much of that has been conclusively proven to be wrong, some in the media, and pro-Israel officials, continue to speak of it as a proven fact.

And though no Hamas headquarters were ever found under Al-Shifa Hospital, the unsubstantiated Israeli claims continue to be repeated as if they were the full truth.

The same logic is now being applied to Lebanon, where Israel claims that it does not target civilians and, when civilians are killed, it is the Lebanese themselves who should be blamed for supposedly using civilians as human shields.

The Gaza playbook is now the Lebanon playbook. Of course, many are playing along, not because they are irrational or unable to reach proper conclusions based on the obvious evidence. They do so because they are part of the Israeli narrative, not neutral storytellers or honest reporters.

Even the likes of the BBC are part of that narrative, as they use Israeli claims as the starting point of any conversation on Palestine or Lebanon. For example, “Israel has said it carried out a wave of pre-emptive strikes across southern Lebanon to thwart a large-scale rocket and drone attack by Hezbollah,” the BBC reported on August 26.

Israel gets away with its lies pertaining to the mass killings in Gaza, and now sadly in Lebanon, because Israeli propaganda is welcomed, in fact, embraced by western officials and journalists.

Thus when US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan described the September 20 airstrikes on Lebanon as “justice served”, he was indicating to mainstream media that its coverage should remain committed to that official assessment.

Imagine the outrage if the tables were turned, as in thousands of Israeli civilians were slaughtered in their own homes by Lebanese bombs. There would be no need to elaborate on the reactions of the US or western media as this should be obvious to anyone who is paying attention.

Lebanon is a sovereign Arab state. Gaza is an occupied territory, and its people are protected under the Fourth Geneva Conventions. Neither Lebanese nor Palestinian lives are without worth, and their mass murder should not be allowed to take place for any reason, especially based on utter lies communicated by an Israeli military spokesman.

Perpetuating Israeli lies is dangerous, not only because truth-telling is a virtue but also because words kill, and dishonest reporting can, in fact, succeed in justifying genocide.

Ramzy Baroud is a journalist and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of five books. His latest is “These Chains Will Be Broken: Palestinian Stories of Struggle and Defiance in Israeli Prisons” (Clarity Press, Atlanta). Dr. Baroud is a Non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Islam and

Global Affairs (CIGA), Istanbul Zaim University (IZU). His website is www.ramzybaroud.net

OCTOBER 3, 2024