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'Genocide' vs 'Self-defense':
Analyzing the debates amidst ongoing
extermination in Gaza

In fact, genocide appears as the only possible reaction to the rebellion of a whole people against its oppressors.¹

Jean-Paul Sartre
If there is hell on earth, it is north of Gaza.²
- Jens Laerke

There is a global movement demanding an end to the ongoing genocidal violence in Gaza. While many European countries, including Israel's allies, have expressed support for Israel, large rallies are being organized in favour of Palestinians, demanding an end to the violence. University students are leading an unprecedented movement, facing arrests and tear gas in response.³ The slogans 'Stop the genocide' and 'Cease the War' are being heard from various quarters. In Israel, protests are also calling for a ceasefire, with placards addressed to Benjamin Netanyahu stating, 'Blood on your hands.'⁴

Despite widespread accusations of genocide against Israel, the academic discipline known as Genocide Studies has dilemmas recognizing the recent violence as genocide. Many consider the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, as a

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form of genocide equivalent to the Holocaust, yet there is reluctance to label Israel's subsequent actions as genocide. Although South Africa brought genocide charges against Israel at the International Court of Justice, the court has not directly commented on whether the violence constitutes genocide. Israel argues that South Africa has failed to prove genocidal intent and claims its actions in Gaza are in self-defense, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

The 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention is the primary reference for debates on whether the violence qualifies as genocide. This convention is central to legal and intellectual discussions on the issue. Gaza has become a focal point for intense political and intellectual debate over the classification of violence as genocide.⁵ The primary aim of this essay is to highlight the arguments in Genocide Studies regarding Israel's actions: those who assert that the events in Gaza constitute genocide and those who oppose this view, particularly Israel's stance. Through this discussion, the essay will critique the Genocide Convention and illustrate how powerful states use interpretations of international law to legitimize their actions.

It is important to note that this essay does not provide a historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The focus is on the situation following October 7, 2023. However, the historical context of the conflict, including the oppression by Zionist Israel and the subjugated lives of Palestinians, will continue to be part of ongoing discussions.

From the largest 'open air prison' to largest 'open-air graveyard'

Although dozens of statements and articles condemned the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, many Palestinians, who have long lived in what is often described as the world's largest open-air prison⁶, saw the incident as a 'prison break'. After generations of living under severe restrictions in their own land, October 7 felt like a day of liberation from the Gaza' prison'.⁷

In response, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced a "total blockade" of Gaza, declaring, "There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and will act accordingly."⁸ President Isaac Herzog stated that "a whole nation" bore responsibility for the events of October 7, dismissing claims that civilians were unaware or uninvolved, and vowed to continue the fight until their "backbones" were broken.⁹ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu compared Palestinians to the biblical Amalek, invoking the command to eradicate them. He further described Palestinians as "monsters," framing the conflict as a battle of civilization against barbarism.¹⁰

The toll on Gaza has been catastrophic. As of this writing, 34,789 Palestinians have died in Gaza, including over 14,500 children and 9,500 women. This means almost two-thirds of the victims are children and women. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), more children have died in Gaza in recent months than in the last four years of

conflicts worldwide.¹¹ In the first month alone, 136 children died daily in Israeli attacks. UNICEF stated on October 31 that “Gaza has become a graveyard for thousands of children.”¹² More than 78,000 people have been injured, and over 8,000 are missing. Approximately 75 per cent of the injured are women, and 63 women die daily, including an estimated 37 mothers.¹³ In the West Bank, 498 people, including 124 children, have also died.

The destruction in Gaza is immense. Israel dropped about 25,000 tons of bombs (equivalent to two nuclear bombs) on Gaza’s buildings in the early months of the invasion, including 2,000-pound ‘bunker buster’ bombs on densely populated ‘safe zones’. About 60 per cent of Gaza’s homes, 80 per cent of commercial buildings, and 73 per cent of educational institutions have been destroyed. Of the 35 hospitals, only 12 remain functional, and 83 per cent of groundwater sources have been depleted. Additionally, 267 religious institutions have been destroyed. By April 5, over 100 journalists and 340 doctors and medical workers had lost their lives in Gaza. An American doctor returning from Gaza remarked, “I’m an American doctor who went to Gaza. What I saw wasn’t war — it was annihilation’.¹⁴

Mass graves have been discovered in Nasser Hospital and Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza. After Israeli forces left Khan Younis, around 400 bodies were found in a destroyed hospital. Mass graves were also found at Al Shifa. The Israeli forces had long blockaded these hospitals, making them key targets. Some bodies recovered from the mass graves had mutilated hands, suggesting signs of torture. The United Nations has condemned these actions as

international human rights law violations.¹⁵ WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stated, during the blockade at Al Shifa hospital, 'The world cannot stand silent while hospitals, which should be safe havens, are transformed into scenes of death, devastation, and despair.'¹⁶

The continuous bombing and blockade have destroyed crops and agricultural land, leading to severe famine. Israel has been accused of using starvation as a weapon of war. A December Human Rights Watch report titled "Starvation Used as Weapon of War in Gaza" claims that Israel systematically deprives Gazans of food and water. Statements from Israeli officials indicate that starvation is being used as a war tactic.¹⁷ Senior UN human rights official Volker Turk told the BBC that 'there was a "plausible" case that Israel was using starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza'.¹⁸ By early December, 90 per cent of Gaza's residents faced severe food shortages. By February 2024, residents of northern Gaza were forced to consume grass and contaminated water. El Jamara, the mother in Rafah, said, "We are dying slowly. I think it's even better to die from the bombs, at least we will be martyrs. But now we are dying out of hunger and thirst."¹⁹ Additionally, over a hundred Palestinians have died due to ongoing attacks by Israeli forces during aid distributions in Gaza.²⁰

Dilemmas and Debates: Perspectives on Israel's Actions in Gaza

Before delving into how the above scenario fits within the concept of 'genocide', it is essential to outline the ongoing debate among genocide experts regarding the characterization

of this situation. Following the October 7 incident, various Holocaust and genocide studies institutions and researchers issued numerous statements condemning the Hamas attack. These statements referred to Hamas's actions as 'genocidal' and drew parallels to the Holocaust. Omar Shahabuddin noted a clear pro-Israel bias in the language used in these statements. Even as Israel's counterattacks have been more devastating, these institutions have largely remained silent.²¹ After the October 7 attack, over 150 researchers condemned Hamas in a statement, asserting: "The atrocities committed by Hamas, the indiscriminate killings of children, women, and men whose only crime was being Jewish, unavoidably bring to mind the mindset and the methods of the perpetrators of the pogroms that paved the way to the Final Solution."²²

Following this initial statement, more than 50 Holocaust and genocide scholars issued another statement condemning the Hamas attack while also acknowledging that Israel's response may contain genocidal elements. Didier Fassin highlights specific characteristics of the statements from those who solely condemn Hamas or accuse critics of Israel's actions of 'anti-Semitism'. One such characteristic is presentism. This perspective suggests that the history of Israel-Palestine seemingly begins on October 7, ignoring the past. The expulsion from their land in 1948, the establishment of settler colonies in Israel, ongoing displacement since 1967, daily oppression, murder, living as prisoners in their own land, and resistance to colonialism—these historical experiences are overlooked in contemporary discourse.²³

Recent works by several researchers provide diverse perspectives on the violence in Gaza and its classification as genocide. Israeli researcher Raz Segal calls Israel's attack on Gaza a textbook case of genocide.²⁴ Around the same time, Martin Shaw stated that Israel's violence and threats in Gaza undoubtedly had genocidal elements and remarked, 'This is not self-defence as international law understands it, and Israel's very legitimate grievance against Hamas does not justify it.'²⁵

Zoe Samudzi argued that the recent violence in Gaza fulfills all the criteria of Article II of the Genocide Convention. He emphasized that 'Because of the legal impunity that Israel has enjoyed, the question of genocide in Palestine transcends the applicability of the Genocide Convention and can be better sociologically understood through the eight techniques of genocide outlined by Lemkin himself.'²⁶ Similarly, Mark Levene asserted that accusations of genocide are valid under the current circumstances, pointing out that the targets are not just Hamas and that civilian deaths are not merely 'collateral damage' but 'a conscious, wilful effort to destroy the integrity of a society.' He, early in the conflict, also wrote that Israel was close to committing genocide in Gaza.²⁷

Abdelwahab El-Afendi, after analyzing the articles from scholars who joined a forum on the topic 'Israel-Palestine: Atrocity Crimes and the Crisis of Holocaust and Genocide Studies', stated that, while there was varying concern about the state of the field, there was a near consensus that Israel's actions in Gaza are certainly 'genocidal' if not outright genocide. He also said that 'if an action is so outrageous

that people are debating whether it is genocide or not, then it is evil enough to be condemned and harmful enough to make its prevention urgent.’²⁸

Conversely, Eva Illouz argued that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza resulted from war, not genocide. She wrote, ‘A military response, even a ferocious one, against an enemy who has violated borders and international law, and who uses many means to avoid civilian casualties, is not genocide. It is possible that the Israeli military actions constitute war crimes. We will see more clearly at the end of the war. But even war crimes do not constitute genocide.’²⁹ In a very similar fashion, Israel Charny also supported that the ‘Gaza fight is humanly and legally Just’. He also attempted to propose a new conception of self-defence: ‘Israel is fighting back legitimately in Self-Defense in Response and Self-Defense against Future Genocidal Attacks that Employ Citizens as Human Shields. The Geneva Conventions specifically outlaw the use of human shields and justify fighting back in response. Self-Defense does not include genocidal intent.’³⁰ Later on, we will explore how this concept of ‘Self-Defense against Future Genocidal Attacks’ could be elucidated through the permanent security’ lens’.

Genocide and the question of intention

The basis of all the debates regarding whether the Hamas attack on October 7 and Israel’s subsequent response should be labelled as genocide lies in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted in 1948, commonly known as the Genocide Convention. While

discussions on various aspects of this definition are available, I will briefly touch on a few key points. The definition included in the Convention is as follows:

‘genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.’³¹

Several crucial points arise from this definition, distinguishing genocide from other forms of killing or violence. Firstly, there must be intent behind the actions, indicating a deliberate aim to destroy the targeted group. Secondly, the scope of destruction is indicated by the phrase ‘in whole or in part.’ Thirdly, it specifies the categories of targeted groups, including national, ethnic, racial, or religious groups. Fourthly, it outlines certain acts that qualify as genocide. Notably, genocide encompasses not only killings but also intended actions aimed at threatening the existence of a group. Acts such as killing members of a group, inflicting severe physical or mental harm, deliberately imposing conditions of life that may lead to physical destruction, implementing measures to prevent births within the group, and forcibly transferring children

from one group to another are all considered genocidal acts. Therefore, according to this definition, genocide occurs when these actions are carried out with the intention to destroy or exterminate a group, either wholly or partially.

While the Genocide Convention holds significant weight in legal discourse, it has faced criticism within academic circles. Critics have raised various concerns, including the exclusion of political groups from designated victim categories, the oversight of cultural genocide, the tendency for states to manipulate their narratives, the legacy of colonial governance structures and the ambiguity of specific terms. Different discussions on genocide may emphasize different limitations based on the context, and the Eurocentric nature of the identified victim categories also warrants attention.

In our discussion concerning Palestine, intentionality is a critical aspect. Recent instances, such as Israel and Myanmar being accused of genocide, highlight the significance of proving intent. The Genocide Convention imposes a high standard for defining genocide, with intentionality being a key factor: destruction alone does not suffice; intent must also be established, specifically directed towards a targeted group. In the case of Palestinians, it would entail proving that killings occur solely due to their Palestinian identity, akin to the situation with Rohingyas.

States often attempt to obfuscate this equation by presenting alternative justifications for killings, such as counterinsurgency or national security concerns. We will delve into this aspect further within the context of Israel/Palestine shortly. Before that, it is crucial to explore

how intent can be proven. There are primarily two methods: statements and orders from state leaders or institutions and patterns of coordinated actions. Some scholars advocate for utilizing the second paragraph of the UN definition, as the acts mentioned - killings, physical harm, birth control, forced transfers of children - cannot occur unintentionally. These actions require planning and demonstrate an intent to destroy. Terms like 'premeditated destruction,' 'coordinated planning,' and 'deliberate destruction' elucidate the concept of intent, indicating central directives and systematic planning as evidence of genocidal intent.

To reiterate, our focus remains solely on the violence post-October 7, although accusations of genocide or ethnic cleansing against Israel have persisted over time.³² Two notable reports shed light on the framing of the Palestinian situation as 'genocide' post-October 7. UN expert Francesca Albanese recently published a report titled *Anatomy of Genocide*, conceptualizing genocide not merely as an isolated 'act' but as a progressive 'process'. Through the lens of settler colonialism, Albanese asserts that the core of any settler colonial project inherently embodies genocidal intent and actions.

Albanese contextualizes recent events in Gaza within the broader historical narrative of Israel's settler-colonization project in Palestine since 1967. He categorizes the preceding acts of violence into three components, aligning with his definition of genocide: 'a) killing members of a group; b) causing serious physical or mental harm to members of the group; c) Deliberately imposing conditions of life on the

group which may lead to total or partial physical destruction/destruction'. According to her, 'Gaza has been completely sacked. Israel's relentless targeting of all means of basic survival has compromised the ability of Palestinians in Gaza to live on that land. This engineered collapse of life-sustaining infrastructure corresponds to the stated intentions to make Gaza 'permanently impossible to live in' where 'no human being can exist'.³³

Albanese outlines three primary methods to establish intent: analyzing the context and circumstances surrounding the incident, assessing the nature and extent of the atrocities, and identifying evidence of state planning. Direct evidence of intent can be gleaned from state officials' statements, speeches, and official announcements. Notably, dehumanization serves as a precursor to the genocide process, with such rhetoric often signaling intent. Albanese scrutinizes dehumanizing statements and comments from various echelons of Israeli society, including the Prime Minister, to substantiate intent in the Israel/Palestine context. She contends that 'The words of state authorities, including dehumanizing language, combined with acts, are considered a circumstantial basis from which intent can be inferred.'

Previously, I mentioned comments from three Israeli state officials following October 7. President Isaac Herzog stated that all Palestinians were accountable for the events of October 7, advocating for their "backbones" to be broken. The Prime Minister likened Palestinians to 'Amalek' and 'monsters', while the Defense Minister referred to Palestinians as 'human animals'. IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari articulated their objective as inflicting "maximum

damage”, and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel Avi Dichter labelled Israel’s actions as the “Gaza Nakba”. Additionally, another minister suggested a ‘nuclear bomb’ attack on Gaza, and a social media post (Bring down buildings!! Bomb without distinction!!...Flatten Gaza. Without mercy! This time, there is no room for mercy!) advocated for indiscriminate bombing. Such genocidal rhetoric has proliferated across various levels of Israeli society since October 7, encompassing religious leaders, journalists, artists, political commentators, and politicians.³⁴ Francesca Albanese asserts that these violent incitements directly influence troops on the ground, citing decades of Palestinian dehumanizing discourse as laying the groundwork for such rhetoric and incitement. Israel’s Prime Minister and President framed their actions as defending ‘all civilized nations and peoples’, echoing colonial power structures prevalent in Israel/Palestine. These attitudes align with the normalization of violence by colonial rulers under the guise of quelling rebellion or civilizing the ‘savage’. It is worth noting that Francesca Albanese faced threats following the publication of this report.³⁵

Another significant development concerning Israel’s actions in Palestine is South Africa’s case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. South Africa complained to Israel in December 2023, alleging violations of the Genocide Convention, specifically accusing Israel of committing genocide. They levied five charges against Israel, including killing Palestinians, causing physical and mental harm, forced displacement and food blockades,

destruction of the healthcare system, and prohibiting Palestinian births.³⁶ These charges align with crimes outlined in the Genocide Convention. Even the directive to evacuate a hospital within 24 hours without medical equipment or assistance in patient transfer was condemned as 'genocidal'.

They aim to establish intent before the court through three avenues. Firstly, they assert that Israel's consistent pattern of military assaults suggests genocidal intent. This includes forcibly relocating Gaza's population to areas where they are vulnerable to attack and deliberately fostering conditions that lead to their slow demise. Secondly, they point to clear trends in the attacks, such as the death of approximately 1% of Gaza's Palestinian population and the injury of 1 in 40 individuals since October 7. These two factors collectively indicate Israel's genocidal intent to eradicate the Palestinian population in Gaza. Thirdly, they present statements and speeches made by authorities in charge, explicitly endorsing the killing and destruction of Palestinians. Numerous instances of such declarations have been cited before the court.³⁷ After hearing arguments from both sides, the court, while refraining from explicitly labelling Israel's military aggression as 'genocide', acknowledged that it might have genocidal characteristics and mandated 'immediate and effective measures' to safeguard Palestinians in Gaza from genocide. However, a month later, Amnesty International reported that Israel had taken no meaningful action in response.³⁸

In both instances, Israel's military incursions in Gaza can be and are being demonstrated as 'genocide' within the

framework of the Genocide Convention. Most of the destruction inflicted by Israel aligns with the 'acts' outlined in the Convention, a fact not contested by Israel itself or those inclined to characterize its aggression as not genocide. Instead, the contention lies in whether this annihilation includes the 'intention' to constitute 'genocide'. Furthermore, the assertion that these massacres qualify as 'genocide' based on 'intent' is corroborated in the reports, as mentioned earlier and in court cases. Proving intent, the challenging aspect, is accomplished by analyzing trends or patterns of aggression and scrutinizing statements and declarations made by Israel's authorities.

Self-Defense as a Shield

The question is: what is Israel's main argument, or what argument does it use, regarding its military actions? Conversely, what arguments do researchers who label Israel's military aggression as genocide present? Both sides refer to the Genocide Convention in their arguments.

Israel attempts to justify its subsequent military actions on October 7 as acts of 'self-defense' in response to Hamas's 'aggression.' The Genocide Convention was originally designed to address crimes of an exceptionally heinous nature, not the severe consequences of intense hostilities on civilian populations.³⁹ Researchers who criticize Israel, like Eva Illouz, argue that even if an enemy violates international boundaries and laws, a military response against that enemy is legitimate. Such a response, while potentially brutal, is not necessarily genocide; it may

constitute war crimes but does not meet the definition of genocide.

To understand how Israel justifies its actions through different interpretations of Genocide Convention, we must examine two perspectives.

Firstly, the Holocaust experience significantly influenced the creation of the Genocide Convention. During the negotiations, the Holocaust was seen as a 'unique' event, much like the colonial experiences of various states. This context created complications because the Holocaust fit the legal definition of genocide perfectly, while subsequent events did not. The simplistic 'good versus evil' narrative of Nazi brutality was effective in formulating the Genocide Convention, but such a clear-cut narrative does not apply to post-colonial state violence or other violent events. Consequently, the Holocaust is often regarded as a 'unique' case, and Israel, seen as a logical consequence of the Holocaust, is assumed by some to be incapable of committing genocide. This assumption is reflected in public discourse, where the Holocaust is frequently evoked in response to attacks against Israel, but there is silence regarding Israel's subsequent military actions.

Additionally, a hierarchy exists in public discourse regarding genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Genocide is considered an exceptional crime that 'shakes the spirit of human society.' This problematic approach means genocide is often compared only to the Holocaust, and other violent events are judged in light of the Holocaust experience. Facts must be reduced to fit the

law, leading to considerable debate over labeling post-Holocaust violent events as 'genocide.' Revolts against colonial rule and state violence in suppressing rebellions complicate the simplistic 'good versus evil' narrative, making it challenging to recognize these events as genocides.

Second, when states negotiated the Genocide Convention in 1948, they set very high standards for defining 'genocide'. A central aspect of this criterion is distinguishing 'genocidal intent' from 'military intent' or military necessity. Military intent aims to defeat an enemy, while genocidal intent aims to destroy a group. Let's delve into this further.

Israeli lawyers and researchers commonly present two main arguments: 'self-defense' and 'military necessity.' These concepts are closely related. In the context of a colonized population revolting, the colonial power might suppress the revolt under the guise of 'self-defense,' deeming the military response necessary. Although genocide is a serious crime, when a state's security is challenged by a rebel group (such as Hamas), it becomes a security issue framed as 'military necessity.' If ten people die in a mutiny and a thousand die in suppressing it, the suppression is seen as having a 'military intention' rather than a 'genocidal intention.'

Historically mass state violence against civilians has long been justified as 'self-defense.' Since the 16th century, settlers labeled indigenous resistance as 'terrorism' and portrayed their own violence as heroic and necessary for a

‘noble’ cause, rooted in racial and civilizational hierarchies. This colonial mindset persists, as seen in efforts to impose ‘democracy’ on the Arab world and the portrayal of Israel as the sole ‘democratic state’ in the Middle East. Consequently, attacks on Israel are viewed as attacks on ‘civilization,’ and Israeli violence is justified as ‘noble,’ even when extreme.⁴⁰

Dirk Moses provides a crucial analysis of these issues, explaining the genocidal violence of modern states with the concept of ‘permanent security.’⁴¹ States seek not only immediate security but also aim to permanently eliminate threats in the name of ‘self-defense,’ envisioning a utopian ideal of ultimate security. This perspective allows states to violate international laws, justifying attacks on civilian populations. For example, Israeli officials argue for ‘permanent security,’ suggesting that Gaza must be made uninhabitable to ensure Hamas never poses a future threat.

Under the pretext of self-defense and the rationale of ‘eternal security,’ genocide can become a military imperative. The distinction between genocide and military ‘intentions’ negotiated in the 1948 Genocide Convention allows states to sidestep accusations of genocide and continue such acts. The strategic reasons for states to suppress insurgencies often extend beyond the scope of genocide, driven by military logic. Israel exemplifies this, as noted by Dirk Moses in a recent interview about the limitations of the Genocide Convention:

“The aim of the [U.N.] delegates – and they said this, if you read the transcripts of 1948 – in creating this very high

threshold of exceptional violence is precisely so states can engage in the kind of warfare that Russia is engaging in, that Israel is engaging in and that America engaged in in Korea in the early 1950s, where they killed 2 million North Koreans and later killed millions with bombing and Agent Orange in Vietnam – and not be prosecuted for genocide.”⁴²

As a result, the Genocide Convention, in Dirk Moses’s words, fails to reflect the perspective of the victims. The Convention shields states that seek or invoke permanent security from accusations of genocide.⁴³ Even though the use of starvation as a tactic of war is against international humanitarian law, Israel seeks to justify its actions on the grounds of ‘destiny.’ In this context, instead of framing it as an ‘intention’ to destroy the Palestinians, Israel explains it as a ‘strategy to defeat the military enemy.’⁴⁴

An Unending Tragedy of Relentless Violence

This article sheds light on the debate within the academic field of genocide studies regarding whether Israel’s October 7 violence against Palestinians can be termed ‘genocide.’ The discussion highlights recent talks and focuses on the complexities of the ‘genocide’ concept as defined in the Genocide Convention. Essentially, while Israel can be accused of genocide by the conventional definition, it can also evade these accusations using the same definition and convention. The UN Genocide Convention inherently allows powerful states to carry out genocidal acts under the guise of self-defense and military necessity.

The ongoing case against Israel in the International Court of Justice is significant. Israel’s attacks continue, and the

genocide case is ongoing. Simultaneously, global protests and resistance under the slogan 'Stop Genocide' persist. While legal and academic circles debate whether the violence should be legally termed 'genocide,' public opinion already identifies it as such. Many view the worldwide protest movement against the genocide accusation as an indicator of international law's failure to address war crimes and crimes against humanity effectively.

For those living in subjugation, like the Palestinians, the situation remains dire and unending. They face daily violence and are being slowly wiped out. When they resist, state violence increases manifold, while ongoing violence against them is generally accepted under the guise of multifaceted agreements and peace processes. Their resistance is often seen as an 'incitement' to state violence. For example, Palestinian resistance or Hamas violence in the recent conflict is widely considered a 'provocation.' Despite decades of systematic violence, destruction, and displacement of the colonized population, the international community expects 'non-violent' behavior from them. This expectation is a tragic reality, as Abdal Jawad Omar aptly highlights:

'There is violence in this insistence on nonviolence by the international community because it is effectively an invitation for Palestinians to lie down and die.'⁴⁵

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