



It's your day, but sorry, it's not your day



By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

Today is World Children's Day, yet children in Gaza wake up to nothing but the horrifying reality of living amidst an ongoing genocide, where their lives hang in the balance with each Israeli bombardment. It is the 44th day of Israel's retaliatory war against Hamas, which has transformed the enclave into a "graveyard for children," as UN Secretary-General António Guterres has put it. Over 5,000 Palestinian children have already lost their lives, and there appears to be no stopping the relentless Israeli killing machine. Each day, children of Gaza wake up to the calamitous reality of discovering that 100 or more of their fellow children were mercilessly murdered the day before. Instead of sleeping safe and sound, enjoying sleep as a necessary means to enhance their mental health, many children in Gaza experience stress due to the psychological effects of war. This often leads to symptoms such as vomiting and bedwetting, both of which are responses to extreme fear. In the daytime, instead of going to school and receiving an education that could serve as a stepping stone towards a better future, children in Gaza are forced to seek refuge inside schools that have been transformed into shelters from indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes. Even there, they are not safe, as Israel has even targeted UN-run schools meant to protect children against their brutality. With the ongoing campaign of relentless bombing, education in Gaza has once again been disrupted, and survival has become the only lesson children can learn

amidst such chaos.

Rather than waking up to the smell of freshly baked bread and delicious cheese, a breakfast that every child in the world should be able to enjoy, Palestinian children in Gaza open their eyes to the harsh reality of potential starvation. This is a direct consequence of Israel's total blockade of the enclave, which prevents the entry of essential food and water supplies into the territory. The murderous Zionists not only restrict the flow of sustenance but also demolish wheat mills and bakeries, adding to the plight of children in Gaza. As a result, these children are at a high risk of dehydration and malnourishment. Instead of being provided with the healthy and nurturing food environment they deserve, these children are subjected to the cruel reality of starvation within a war they have no control over and cannot alter.

Instead of being photographed on playgrounds, embellished in colorful clothes that children have the ability to readily sport, the children of Gaza are captured in heart-wrenching images within morgues, draped in body bags. If they are fortunate enough to survive, they are photographed with faces covered in dust, blood, and tears, devoid of those cheerful smiles that typically make browsing photo albums such a joyful activity.

The children of Gaza, who have long resided in what is often referred to as the "world's largest open-air prison," are far from enjoying the protections outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the past 15 years, over a million Palestinian minors residing in Gaza have endured five Israeli assaults on their

homeland. Not only are they denied the rightful legal status accorded to children globally, but they are also subjected to dehumanizing labels such as "human animals" by the Israeli defense minister, which serves to justify their targeting with minimal consequences.

Even if, by some miracle, this cruel war were to end today, many Palestinian children who have endured one of the most intense episodes of conflict in human history will continue to suffer from the long-lasting mental and behavioral consequences. A research paper authored by Palestinian psychologist Iman Farajallah reveals that children who survive wars do not emerge unscathed and often bear a significant psychological, emotional, and behavioral burden.

Also, Ghassan Abu-Sitta, a British Palestinian surgeon working with Medical Aid for Palestinians in Gaza, holds that for those fortunate enough to survive this war, they will have to learn how to go through life without the presence of their family members. He describes this conflict as "a war against children," as they are subjected to constant, indiscriminate air raids, resulting in the loss of lives, families, homes, schools, and hospitals.

And the world is only watching. As we sweep through pictures of Palestinian children being brutally murdered or injured, we would do well to recognize that the savagery of Israeli forces knows no bounds and Palestinian children are being deprived of their childhood.

Today is World Children's Day, and children of Gaza are left to fend for themselves by Western politicians who hesitate to demand an immediate cease-fire.

They didn't make it to World Children's Day



By Ebrahim Beheshti
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OPINION

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child, approved by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989, outlines four fundamental principles: First, no child should suffer from discrimination; secondly, when decisions are made concerning children, their best interests should be prioritized; thirdly, children have the right to live and grow; and lastly, children have the right to freely express their opinions and ideas, which should be taken into consideration in all matters that affect them.

This year, World Children's Day coincides with Israel's devastating attacks on the people of Gaza and the ongoing loss of innocent lives, including children. Throughout history, war has always posed the greatest threat to children. Even the establishment of World Children's Day in 1953 came in the aftermath of World War II, which resulted in countless child casualties, displacements, becoming an orphan, and psychological distress.

However, efforts have been made, both politically and legally, to prevent wars from violating established norms and to protect civilians from the horrors of conflict inflicted on them by warmongers. And yet, for the past 44 days, the world has witnessed heart-wrenching scenes of a new wave of violence in the Gaza Strip. More than 5,000 vulnerable children have been killed by Israeli bombings and didn't make it to the World Children's Day – and the surviving children still live in fear.

Today will be a different day for children in most countries around the world. And yet, in Gaza, November 20 is no different from November 19, or any day since October 7. Despite the fact that 193 countries have signed the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, it seems that they do not have the power to stop the child-killing machine of the monstrous vampire. It appears that the accepted universal rights of children have some unwritten exceptions, as if they depend on whether the children are from Gaza or Kiev.

