

Netanyahu, Israeli protesters on same genocidal page



By Belén Fernández
Author, Columnist

OPINION

In July 2014, shortly after the kickoff of Israel's "Operation Protective Edge" in the Gaza Strip — a 51-day affair that ultimately killed 2,251 Palestinians, including 551 children — Danish journalist Nikolaj Krak penned a dispatch from Israel for the Copenhagen-based *Kristeligt Dagblad* newspaper. Describing the scene on a hill on the outskirts of the Israeli city of Sderot near the Gaza border, Krak noted that the area had been "transformed into something that most closely resembles the front row of a reality war theatre". Israelis had "dragged camping chairs and sofas" to the hilltop, where some spectators sat "with crackling bags of popcorn," while others partook of hookahs and cheerful banter. Fiery, earth-shaking air strikes on Gaza across the way were met with cheers and "solid applause". To be sure, Israelis have always enjoyed a good murderous spectacle — which is hardly surprising for a nation whose very existence is predicated on mass slaughter. But as it turns out, the applause is not quite so solid when Israeli lives are caught up in the explosive apocalyptic display.



Protesters rally in Tel Aviv on September 1, 2024 after six Israeli captives were found dead in Gaza earlier that day.
● FLORION GOGA/REUTERS

For the past 11 months, Israel's "reality war theatre" has offered a view of all-out genocide in the Gaza Strip, where the official death toll has reached nearly 41,000. A July *Lancet* study found that the true number of deaths may well top 186,000 — and that is only if the killing ends soon. Now, massive protests have broken out across Israel demanding that the cabinet of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu enact a cease-fire and captive deal to free the remaining 100 or so Israeli captives held in Gaza. Last week, when the Israeli military recovered the bodies of six captives, CNN reported that some 700,000

protesters had taken to the streets across the country. On Monday, a general strike spearheaded by Israel's primary labour union succeeded in shutting much of the economy down for several hours. Although certain wannabe peaceniks among the international commentariat have blindly attributed the protests to a desire to end the bloodshed, the fact of the matter is that Palestinian blood is not high on the list of concerns. Rather, the only lives that matter in the besieged, pulverised, and genocide-stricken Gaza Strip are the lives of the captives — whose captivity, it bears underscoring, is entirely a

result of Israeli policy and Israel's unceasing sadistic treatment of Palestinians. The captives, then, have assumed centre stage in Israel's latest bout of blood-soaked war theatrics, while for some Israelis, the present genocide is evidently not nearly genocidal enough. During a recent episode of the popular English-language Israeli podcast "Two Nice Jewish Boys," the podcasting duo in question suggested that it would be cool to just press a button and wipe out "every single living being in Gaza" as well as in the West Bank. Time to break out the popcorn and hookahs.

At the end of the day, the disproportionate value assigned to the lives of the Israeli captives in Gaza vis-à-vis the lives of the Palestinians who are being annihilated is of a piece with Israel's trademark chauvinism. This outlook casts Israelis as the perennial victims of Palestinian "terrorism" even as Palestinians are consistently massacred at astronomically higher rates by the Israeli military. During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, for example, no more than six Israeli civilians were killed. And yet Israel maintained its monopoly on victimisation.

Family, friends, and supporters of Israeli captives in Gaza take part in a protest on the Israeli coastal road outside Kibbutz Yakum on September 2, 2024.
● ILIA YEFIMOVICH/AP

In June of this year, the Israeli army undertook a rescue operation in Gaza that freed four captives but reportedly killed 210 Palestinians in the process — no doubt par for the disproportionate course. Meanwhile, following the recovery of the bodies of the six captives on Sunday, Netanyahu blamed Hamas for their demise, declaring: "Whoever murders hostages doesn't want a deal." But what about "whoever" continues to preside over a genocide while assassinating the top cease-fire negotiator for Hamas and sabotaging prospects for a deal at every turn?

As the protests now demonstrate, many Israelis are on to Netanyahu. But the issue with the protests is that genocide is not the issue.

Even among Netanyahu's detractors, there persists a general consensus as to the unilateral sacrosanctity of Israeli life, which translates into the assumption of an inalienable right to slaughter Palestinians.

And as the latest episode of Israel's "reality war theatre" drags on — with related Israeli killing sprees available for viewing in the West Bank and Lebanon, too — this show is really getting old. One would hope Israeli audiences will eventually tire of it all and walk out, but for the time being, bloodbaths are a guaranteed blockbuster.

The full article first appeared on Al Jazeera.

The captives have assumed centre stage in Israel's latest bout of blood-soaked war theatrics, while for some Israelis, the present genocide is evidently not nearly genocidal enough. During a recent episode of the popular English-language Israeli podcast "Two Nice Jewish Boys," the podcasting duo in question suggested that it would be cool to just press a button and wipe out "every single living being in Gaza" as well as in the West Bank.



Tens of thousands of Palestinians murdered

Why would six Israelis receive more attention?



By Jamal Kanj
Author

OPINION

September 1, 2024, twenty-seven Palestinian families woke up to mourn their loved ones, including at least 11 who were killed at a "safe" shelter, Safad School in the Zaitune neighborhood east of Gaza City. On the same day, the Israeli occupying army recovered the bodies of six Israeli captives, who died as a direct or indirect result of an Israeli incursion into a tunnel in Rafah.

By the end of the day, the smiling faces and names of these six Israelis were prominently featured across digital and print media, while the murdered Palestinians, were reduced to mere statistics, nameless and faceless. Both groups, however, share one tragic commonality: their demise was caused by the same killer. Bombing without discrimination is a murder without distinction.

Despite being warned of the risk of attempting to release the prisoners by force, Netanyahu opted to sacrifice the Israeli captives to eliminate a political burden that could be seen as an obstacle to achieving his "war goals". Their disappearance — by a deal or death — would free Netanyahu's hand and ease pressure from the public, who otherwise supports his war of genocide in Gaza.