

Ongoing genocide and United Nations' standing



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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

For me and many graduates of law and international relations, whose understanding of global developments is rooted in concepts such as the principles and goals outlined in the United Nations Charter, the norms and rules of international law, the principle of non-use of force or threat of force, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, these days have been marked by ambiguity and contradiction—if I may say, exceedingly disheartening days. Indeed, all the most valuable moments we've spent learning throughout our lives have been tested over the past year.

As we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the renewed genocide in occupied Palestine, which coincides with the UN's founding anniversary, it presents a timely opportunity for a genuine reflection on the organization's operations and the norms and institutions that have arisen from it.

Who would have thought that in the 21st century, 79 years after the UN's establishment, an entity that is ironically one of the organization's first products - albeit a woeful and ill-fated one - would so brazenly defy all its principles and objectives, tear up its founding document, label its secretary-general persona non grata, and insult him, while killing 230 of its staff members over the past year and using its General Assembly as a platform for saber-rattling, intimidation, and bullying?

Who would have imagined that, more than two decades after the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—a court intended to prevent the commission of international crimes—and in a context where everyone



had pinned their hopes on the existence of the court and the criminalization of four heinous international crimes as a guarantee against their recurrence in the 21st century, the most horrific crime, namely genocide, would become a commonplace occurrence before our astonished eyes and, regrettably, continue to this day?

The explosion of paggers in Lebanon has left everyone aghast at the boundless cruelty and inhumanity of which humans are capable. The transformation of a technology meant to connect humans into a tool for killing is not only a nefarious, unethical, and indefensible conspiracy but also a perilous innovation in the lexicon of war and enmity.

Unbridled brutality of past year

Over the past year, we have realized that cruelty, when combined with narcissistic racism and ideo-

logical superiority, creates an insatiable thirst for killing, burning, and destruction, and generates a strange talent for justifying brutality.

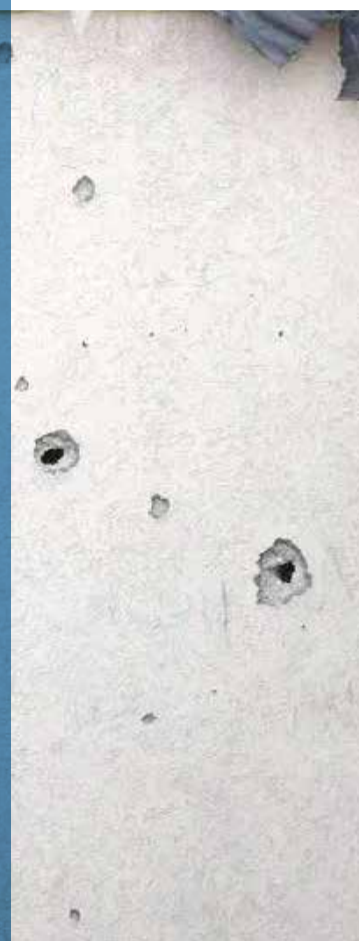
The extent and continuity of aggression, the level of brutality and killing, and the immense scale of destruction that has occurred over the past year in Gaza and now in Lebanon have not only expanded the boundaries of human savagery to an unprecedented level in the history of human cruelty, showcasing new manifestations of human creativity and innovation in killing one's kind, but have also simultaneously caused a semantic transformation, creating a new and stark form for the discursive concept that has so far been imposed on the minds and thoughts of the nations of the world as human civilization (or, better put, Western civilization) through a distortion of reality. This civilization has proven itself to be,



The world is in dire need of a coalition to put an end to Israel's brutality, lawlessness, and slaughter.



Destruction left by the Israeli air and ground offensive is seen in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Sep. 13, 2020.
● ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP



● GETTY IMAGES

more than ever, a ruthless, profit-driven, and self-serving entity, tainted by racism and a sense of superiority, justifying oppression, shying away from fairness and justice, and submissive to power and harsh against the oppressed.

Over the past year, the credibility of human rights advocates in North America and Western Europe has been called into question more than ever before, and the instrumentalization of human rights by these advocates has been laid bare. The statement by Jürgen Habermas, the renowned German philosopher long regarded as a champion of ethics, peace, and tolerance, in explicit support of Israel's genocide, left no doubt about this. Although Habermas's statement was unexpected for many, it served as a stark reminder of the philosophical and political unity of the West in its view of the "non-Western" human being and the racist and nationalist underpinnings of Western philosophy and politics. In other words, Habermas's statement, while reflecting the moral decline of the West, is entirely aligned with and justifies the policies of the German government in supporting Israel and its practical (military, financial, and political) involvement in the massacre of Palestinians. Over the past year, "the world has awoken from its slumber, realizing the true nature of European nationalist philosophy. Today, we owe this awakening to the suffering of the people of Palestine, who, through their heroism and sacrifices, have laid bare the barbarity at the heart of Western civilization". But what has the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the aggression against Lebanon and other countries in the region done to the United Nations, its goals and aspirations, and the institutions that have emerged from it?

Erosion of UN credibility

Over the past year, the credibility of the United Nations system, its structure, and institutions, as well as the rules and norms that underpin it, have been called into question in an unprecedented manner. The functioning and position of the United Nations as an organization based on a set of principles and lofty goals for the revival of lost civilization, resulting from two world wars that originated solely in the West, as well as the international legal system born out of the UN Charter, have suffered an unprecedented erosion. This has posed a fundamental challenge to the integrity and functioning of the post-war global order and the institutions spawned by it. In this past year, the principles and objectives of the UN Charter, the principle of non-use of force or threat of force, the principle of promoting human rights, and all the norms and tenets derived from these principles and objectives have been ridiculed by a UN member state, while influential players have merely played the role of bystanders or even condoned such actions. The prime minister of the Zionist regime brazenly announced his decision to use force, commit genocide against Palestinians, and invade Lebanon in the UN General Assembly, threatened regional governments with force, and issued orders for attack and terror from the UN headquarters. The regime's ambassador insulted the UN secretary-general and tore up the UN Charter in a show of contempt for the organization, while the regime's foreign minister labeled the secretary-general persona non grata, and its military has carried out its mission to humiliate and undermine the UN, killing over 230 UN staff members in the past year. The latest move in the regime's chain of actions to erase Palestinians from their ancestral land was the Israeli Knesset's resolution to completely ban the activities of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in occupied Palestine, effectively denying the Palestinian people access to the only available means of enjoying their most basic human rights. Once, the realization of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter was a lofty aspiration. Now, after a year of blatant and persistent violations of these principles, with no consequences for the occupying regime, they appear to be nothing more than an unattainable ideal.

Blow to international humanitarian law

The international humanitarian law system and human rights were the first casualties of the genocide and brutality that unfolded over the past year. In this past year, the systematic slaughter of children and women in Gaza, the widespread killing of journalists, the deliberate attacks on hospitals and aid centers, the destruction of mosques and churches, and the annihilation of historical sites and civilian