

The Real Truth about the U.S.-Backed Israeli Invasion of Gaza

January 2009: Israel is waging a brutal war on the 1.5 million people in Gaza, trying to break the spirit of resistance of the Palestinian people. On January 3, after seven days of bombing, some 9,000-10,000 Israeli troops invaded Gaza. Now at least 870 Palestinians have been killed. More than 200 have been children. Over 3,300 have been wounded, an estimated 45 percent of them women and children. (During this period, a total of 13 Israelis have died, 4 by friendly fire).

As we write, Israel refuses to agree to a ceasefire and has instead sent tanks and troops deeper into Gaza, including into heavily populated urban areas. This promises even more slaughter and suffering.

Slaughter At A UN School

January 6: Israel fired mortar shells at a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza City. 280 families, some 1,674 people, had taken refuge there after Israel "warned" people to leave their homes. The school was clearly marked, and the UN had given the Israelis its GPS coordinates to avoid an accidental attack. Yet the Israelis struck anyway, killing 46 and wounding 55. Israel immediately claimed Hamas was firing at Israeli forces from the school grounds. This was quickly exposed as a lie. UN Relief and Works Agency spokesperson Christopher Gunness told *Democracy Now!* (January 7): "At the Jabalya school, we have done an initial investigation into what took place. We are 99.9 percent certain there were no militants in the school or the compound. There was no militant activity in the school or in the school compound."



Rubble from Israeli bombardment outside UN school, January 6, 2009.



Five Palestinian civilians were killed by an Israeli missile strike on Beit Lahiya, January 6, 2009.



Funeral for three children of the Samouni family slaughtered by Israeli shelling, January 4, 2009.

Massacre of the Samouni Family

At least 30 members of a single extended family, the al Samounis, were slaughtered in Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City. About 110 family members had taken refuge on January 4, in a crowded residential block after the Israeli army ordered them to leave their homes. The next day the area was repeatedly shelled by Israeli forces. The Israelis denied ambulance access to the area for four days. When aid workers were finally allowed in, they found four starving children lying next to their dead mothers; 40 to 50 dead bodies; and 100 other survivors. A Palestinian medical worker said they found bodies run over by tanks and dead children that had been partially eaten by dogs.

White Phosphorous and Cluster Bombs

Israel is using white phosphorous and cluster bombs. These weapons mainly harm or kill civilians. White phosphorous, used to create smokescreens, causes injuries and death by deep burns, inhalation, or being ingested. Cluster bombs explode into deadly fragments, which can kill or maim. The Fourth Geneva Convention bans the targeting of civilians.



Israel bombs Gaza with white phosphorous bombs, January 2009.

Killing Aid and Medical Workers

According to the World Health Organization, Israel has killed 21 Palestinian medical workers and wounded another 30. Israel suspended military operations for three hours one day, supposedly to allow the delivery of humanitarian relief. But Israeli soldiers then shot up an aid convoy, killing two Palestinians and forcing the UN to halt relief convoys.



Palestinians moving supplies and livestock through tunnels from Egypt to Gaza, December 4, 2008.

Covering Up War Crimes

Israel has blocked foreign reporters from entering Gaza, it destroyed Gaza's Al-Aqsa TV station, and has confiscated cell phones from Israeli soldiers entering Gaza.

First Siege, Then Slaughter

Israel's slaughter comes on top of an 18-month siege which made Gaza one of the world's most impoverished areas, with malnutrition widespread and half of all families eating only one meal a day. Now more than a million Gazans have no electricity or water. Many are cut off from food supplies. Gaza's water and sewage system is on the verge of collapse, threatening the spread of disease. Israel has bombed and destroyed tunnels between Gaza and Egypt which were a key source of food, medicines, and other needed supplies.

U.S. Congress Applauds Israel's Slaughter

Israel so far refuses to stop its slaughter. And when news of its massacres came to light, the Democratic Party-controlled U.S. Senate and House passed near unanimous resolutions giving full support to Israel and upholding its "inalienable right to defend against attacks from Gaza." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, "We support the state of Israel, very strongly as a national policy, because it is in our national interest to do so."

The U.S. gives Israel at least \$3 billion a year in aid to Israel and supplies many of its advanced weapons including F-16 fighter planes, Apache helicopters, and tactical missiles, as well as some of its cluster bombs. A study by the New America Foundation concludes, "So, when Israeli forces engage in combat in Gaza or the West Bank, they are more often than not using US-designed systems that were either made in the United States or produced under license in Israel."

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Background photo: Smoke rises from the Israeli air strikes on tunnels between Egypt and Gaza, January 3, 2009. Photo credits: White phosphorous—Israelindymedia; all other photos AP.