

‘The West has given Netanyahu the licence to kill Palestinians’

Palestinian Ambassador to Bangladesh, Yusef SY Ramadan, speaks to Ramisa Rob of The Daily Star in an exclusive interview about the Israeli government's genocide of Palestinian civilians, West's hypocrisy and the urgent need to let humanitarian aid pass through the borders.

Almost four weeks since Israel declared war following the Hamas attack, how do you view the Israeli aggression in Gaza?

It is pure genocide. How do you justify killings of 4,000 children, 2,000 women, and more? This is not a war to “end Hamas,” as they say. It is a war with the intention to kill Palestinian civilians. Israel's government is doing the same thing in the West Bank where Hamas doesn't have power, where since October 7, more than 110 innocent people have been killed by settlers and soldiers.

Gaza Strip is such a tiny place, only spanning 360 square km. It's already under siege to start with. Before the conflict, there used to be 500 trucks a day carrying essential aid, such as food, fuel, medicines, etc, for the Palestinian population of 2.3 million in Gaza. Now, only 20 trucks are being allowed to pass through. The hospitals in Gaza don't have equipment to treat 50,000 wounded people. Nothing, no self-defence, can justify this inhumanity.

The Israeli government's plan is to make Palestinians suffer and suffer so that they finally leave. They want to tell Palestinians, “Look, it is too dangerous to stay. Please leave for a certain period of time as we finish the ground operations and then you can come back.” That's exactly what they did in 1948. But we're not going to accept this deal. They can't break our determination. We will die in our land but we will never emigrate to any other land.

Is Israel's aggression linked to the hostage situation?

If Israel wants the hostages to go back to their homes, they should sit and negotiate instead of committing genocide. There is a growing movement inside Israel to let the people come back home. But frankly speaking, Netanyahu is not interested whatsoever in bringing them back. We have known Netanyahu for over 30 years. We know how selfish he is. He will destroy as much of Palestine as possible, as he thinks by doing that, he can save his corrupt skin and remain in power in Israel.

Did you see the woman who was released by Hamas? She shook hands with Hamas because she said they treated her well in captivity, providing her with medicines and doctors. Palestinians suffocating in Gaza only want to be treated like humans. But the Israeli government calls us “human animals,” while they call themselves the Israeli Defense Forces. Are they really defending themselves? Israel has occupied parts of Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan as well. It's the Israeli Occupying Forces; that's the truth—like the killer calling themselves the judge.

Can you explain Hamas in relation to the Palestinian society? Is Hamas a terrorist organisation and what does Hamas want?

Hamas is an ideology and a resistance movement within the Palestinian society. It is part of the Israeli propaganda to demonise Hamas to justify their own killings. Hamas came to power winning the election. I belong to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). But today there is nothing between us. We are all Palestinians, united against one vicious enemy.

The people fighting today are fourth generation. They were born after we signed the peace agreement with Israel. They try to be peaceful people. But they are human, with flesh and blood, with feelings. They react according to what they witness in their lives—the oppression of the Israelis against

the Palestinians. So that's how they go to Hamas, because they want to fight against the ongoing injustice.

You see, people under occupation have three choices. First, to accept occupation and what they inflict upon you. Second, to leave the country. Third, to resist, using every option available. The Western media, unfortunately, has twisted this reality and presented fake narratives since October 7.

But I believe the world is changing for the better. Every day, we are seeing people challenging what their government tells them, thanks to the internet and social media. I read an investigation in *The Cradle*, published on October 24, titled “What really happened on 7th October?” The investigation talks about figures published in a report by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* that shows half of the Israeli people killed on the 7th were members of the military and the other half were killed in the heavy crossfire exchange between Hamas and the Israeli soldiers.

Slowly, the truth will start coming out. And the truth lies with the Palestinian people. It's not related to politics by the way. It's a humanitarian issue. It's humanity at stake. We just want to know, are we living in



Palestinian Ambassador to Bangladesh, Yusef SY Ramadan at the Embassy of The State of Palestine in Dhaka on October 29, 2023.

PHOTO CREDIT: ZIAUDDIN SHIPLU

a civilised world or a jungle? The real fight is being on the right side of humanity or the side which has the power.

On Friday, the United Nations General Assembly passed a non-binding resolution for “humanitarian truce,” but Israel's ground operations continued the next day. What can stop Israel?

Israel has not fulfilled any of the Security Council resolutions. How can you expect them to fulfil the General Assembly resolution? As you say, it's non-binding.

The West has given Netanyahu the licence to kill Palestinians by singing the same song, “Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East.” What about the fact that Israel is the only power that occupies other nations? What kind of democracy would be killing women and children and wiping Palestinians out?

The truth is that if Joe Biden tells Netanyahu enough is enough, then Netanyahu has to stop. Only he has this power to play the role of the referee.

Unlike the Trump administration, Biden tried to restore relations with the Palestinian authority in 2021. Why do you think he has taken such a sharp turn against Palestine now?

The day Biden came to power, he showed his interest in peace talks with Palestinians. He was not happy with Netanyahu on many

occasions; there were disputes between them. But when this Hamas incident took place, with US elections just around the corner, Biden suddenly forgot how Netanyahu embarrassed him for the past two years. The administration doesn't actually care how many people or children die. For them, the most important objective is to remain in the White House. It is very clear. Otherwise, Joe Biden would not be helping people commit genocide. What I don't understand is: how much pressure is Biden under from the pro-Israeli lobby that he is not able to stand his ground as a human being?

The US is supposed to be the most powerful country speaking about human rights, values and morality. Where are all these nice things they have been lecturing the world to abide by? How can I believe that they don't mean business while talking about human rights? If you don't apply it to yourself, then you have no right to lecture anyone. When you're a criminal yourself, you have no right to lecture anyone about criminology.

Do you think there is any possibility of diplomacy and peace between the current Israeli government and the Palestinians?

It is impossible. If the Western world was genuine about peace, it would pressurise Netanyahu to act according to the two-state solution that it itself has presented, which leaves only 22 percent of the land for the Palestinians who are the majority. They must tell Israel that if you don't accept this deal, there will be consequences, in the form of economic sanctions, for example.

But the Western world has just talked and talked while Palestinians have lost more and more lives and land. We have almost 6,000 Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank. We have several cases of Palestinian mothers delivering their babies inside ambulances because the Israeli checkpoints don't allow the ambulances to pass through, and the Israeli forces watch the women delivering babies, laughing and joking. They force us to hate them and force us to call them enemies. We don't hate anybody but with what they are doing to us, they don't leave us with a choice but to fight them with everything left in us.

We Palestinians ask for the possible right, not even the absolute right. We gave up 78 percent of our country. Israel's population is 5.6 million and we are eight million people inside Palestine. Can you imagine how painful the concession is for us? But we have done it for the sake of peace. What has Israel done for the sake of peace? We just give and give and they just take and take. So what should we do?

What do you think about the Global South's response?

Relating to Bangladesh, I highly appreciate the position of the Bangladeshi people, the government and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressing her support publicly. Bangladesh also suffered from occupation and fought for freedom. Bangladeshis know that the fight for freedom comes with a price.

What is your message for the world?

We hope the world is united with humanity, not just Palestinians. The demonstrations for Palestinians around the world show that people have sense. We only need humanitarian aid to be allowed in for the basic rights of the Palestinians suffering in Gaza. Is that too much to ask? We just want the whole world to unite and protect humanity from being slaughtered. Palestinian people want one thing only: for justice to prevail.



A Palestinian man carries a wounded girl at the site of Israeli airstrikes in Khan Younis in the Southern Gaza Strip on October 14, 2023.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Dehumanising Palestinians: Israel's rationale for genocide

MOHAMMAD AUWAL

As the war in Gaza enters a second phase of ground invasion by Israel, a rationalising rhetoric is being used by the Israeli government, with the US backing, which seeks to dehumanise Palestinians and justify the strategic massacre and displacement of civilians.

Dehumanisation is a psychological phenomenon enabling people to morally disconnect from the suffering of others. It was used in the Nazis' portrayal of Jews, Romas, and others as “sub-human” and the colonisers' portrayal of native populations as “savage.” Israel's recent approach has been criticised for echoing this manipulative rhetoric. Following a discredited report about “40 beheaded babies,” Israeli President Isaac Herzog presented a document during an interview with Sky News, alleging that it proved Hamas' similarity to Al Qaeda and intentions to produce chemical weapons. However, social media users exposed that Herzog's document was actually a page from a 2010 Al Qaeda book available online.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu went a step further. In the Israeli Knesset, Netanyahu framed the conflict as a struggle between the “children of light and the children of darkness,” promising victory to the Israelis as the children of light. While he retracted the tweet after the blast in the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, his words still reverberate as the death toll keeps mounting by the day. Similarly, Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant, announcing a complete siege of Gaza, restricting electricity, food, water, and fuel, stated, “We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly.”

In wartime scenarios, strategic rhetoric has historically been misleading, as its primary goal is to psychologically win wars. Showing the US' unwavering loyalty to Israel, Biden also readily accepted Israel's reported death toll without doubt. In contrast, he expressed reservations about the mostly live-televised Palestinian death toll, remarking, “I'm unsure if Palestinians are truthful.”

In response, the Palestinian health ministry released names and images of the citizens killed by Israel's indiscriminate bombing. Critics suggest Biden's approach “dehumanises” Palestinians, especially as his administration opposes investigations into potential Israeli war crimes. Israel restricts media access to Gaza, but organisations such as the UN and Human Rights Watch confirm the accuracy of Palestinian reports. Yet, Biden's high officials are playing Nero while the US-funded Israel bomb-rains turn Gaza into ashes.

Biden's bias against the Palestinians is deeply culturally rooted in the West. They inherently trust the Israelis even when they may be lying, and think instead that Palestinians may be lying even when presenting their

ultimate truths about life and death. Western media and education have taught them to view Israelis as white and thus human; while seeing Palestinians as non-white, making them unworthy of trust as humans. This sentiment reflects a broader unconscious prejudice rooted in racism in the West.

But unlike before, Israel and the US are facing intense scrutiny, particularly on social media. The digital realm has become a vibrant space for a growing grassroots movement to counter bias in the mainstream media. Showing solidarity with Palestinians, grassroots movements—both in street protests globally and online—have been drawing comparisons between Nazi atrocities and Israel's carnage in Gaza.

Remarkably, a vast number of anti-Zionist Jews are dissociating their religion from Israel's actions, using phrases like “Never again is now” and “Not in my name” in protests.

And even Israelis, many directly affected by the war, are rejecting their government's revenge sentiment that harvests the dehumanisation rhetoric. Noi Katsman, grappling with her brother's demise, urged the government “not to use our deaths... to cause the death and pain of other people.” Yotam Kipnis, reflecting on his father's tragic fate in the Hamas attacks, remarked, “Do not write my father's name on a [military] shell,” emphasising the dignity of memory. Maoz Inon, who lost both parents, stated, “Revenge is not going to bring my parents back to life.” Such voices underline the growing demand for peace, understanding, and respect for the wishes of the bereaved.

More people are also increasingly challenging the narrative that seeks to demonise Hamas. Elderly Israeli hostages, Narit Cooper and Yitz, recounted unexpected acts of compassion during their captivity by Hamas. In another instance, an Israeli woman interviewed by UK-based *Middle East Eye*, described a surprising encounter with Hamas fighters who entered her residence and reassured her, saying, “Don't worry, I am a Muslim; we will not hurt you,” and one even asked for permission to eat a banana. These emerging accounts challenge previously accepted dehumanisation narratives to rationalise the industrial scale of genocide in Gaza.

Wars, as Unesco states, begin in the minds of men. While the current situation between the US, Israel, and Palestinians is complex, one fact remains clear: dehumanising rhetoric only deepens divisions and forestalls meaningful dialogue. And this time, in this war, the hope lies with the people in the global fora who are actively challenging Israel's —dehumanisation.

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Israel's path to genocide in Palestine

The first few steps took 75 years.

01

Classification

02

Symbolisation

03

Discrimination

Then, it took “Israel's own 9/11” to accelerate -- in just 3 weeks -- the extermination process of Palestinians.



04

Dehumanisation

“I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we act accordingly.”

— Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.



05

Organisation

Largest mobilisation of Israeli troops since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, calling up more than 300,000 troops. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commented, “Though Israel did not start this war, we will finish it”.



06

Polarisation

“This is a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle. ...”

— A now deleted tweet on X, by Israeli PM Netanyahu.



07

Preparation

Israel cut off electricity, water and gas to the Gaza Strip before bombing it mercilessly, plunging the area into darkness ahead of “an expansion of ground operations” by the IDF. Palestinian telecom operator PalTel confirmed that all telecom infrastructure was knocked out, cutting off Gaza from the outside world.



08

Persecution

“Human Rights Watch verified videos taken in Lebanon and Gaza on October 10 and 11, 2023, respectively, showing multiple airbursts of artillery-fired white phosphorus over Gaza...”

— HRW Report. Use of white phosphorus is prohibited by the 1980 Geneva Convention.

09

Extermination

10

Denial