



Palestine and the Information War

“If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.” — Malcolm X

Over two thousand years ago, the Chinese general and military strategist Sun Tzu recognized that wars are fought not only on the battlefield. *“To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the height of (military) skill”,* he said. *“To subdue the enemy without fighting, that is the height of (military) skill”.*

To achieve this, Sun Tzu further said, ‘A leader who wants to go to battle must first unite his people behind him. The people must be convinced he has their interests at heart, and that these interests are fair, righteous and just. If at the same time the enemy can be divided and demotivated, the battle is likely to be won well before a sword is drawn or a shot is fired.”

In the modern world, countries follow Sun Tzu's sage advice by engaging in information warfare. Information warfare is a narrative or a storyline that gives meaning to a series of events and occurrences. As such, a narrative guides people to a specific understanding, and thereby to specific opinions and feelings regarding what is happening around them.

A famous example of narrative warfare is America's effort to win “hearts and minds” as part of its war in Iraq.[1] In order to unite Western audiences behind America's plan to invade and occupy Iraq, the American military hired a private company, the Rendon Group, to change the image of Saddam Hussein from “evil but weak dictator” to “powerful evil dictator with weapons of mass destruction intent on causing war globally”.[2] And in order to discourage the people of Iraq from fighting in support of Saddam Hussein's regime, America dropped more than 25 million leaflets in Iraq which encouraged Iraqi civilians and soldiers to not only see Saddam Hussein as the evil dictator he was, but also America as a benevolent liberator.[3] Thereafter, when the American military in Iraq began to be confronted by a popular resistance movement because it failed to act as a benevolent liberator, America launched a propaganda campaign to make the people believe the popular resistance was in reality a branch of Al Qaeda, led by a Jordanian with the name Musab Al Zarqawi. This was done firstly to hide the fact there was a popular resistance in Iraq, and secondly to get Western and Iraqi audiences to support America's military actions against this popular resistance.[4]

Information Warfare in Gaza

When it comes to the war in Gaza, a large discrepancy is noticeable between what is heard from (most) Western politicians and professional journalists on the one hand, and what is seen happening on the ground to ordinary Gazans.

We are being told by Western politicians and professional journalists that the Zionist entity is acting in self-defence in Gaza, that it is responding to a terrible crime committed by Hamas on the 7th of October, that its objective is to free hostages held by Hamas, that it is aiming to re-establish order and security by destroying Hamas' military capabilities, and that it is doing all this in the most careful and humane manner possible.

Meanwhile, what we see happening on the ground is complete destruction of Gaza. From October 7 to November 1, ‘Israel’ struck over 12,000 targets in the area, dropping over 25,000 tonnes of explosives. In comparison, the Little Boy nuclear bomb dropped by the United States on Hiroshima during World War II was the equivalent of 15,000 tonnes of explosives and it destroyed everything within a one-mile (1.6km) radius.[5] In Gaza, the bombardment has left 45% of all housing units either destroyed or severely damaged.[6] Since Gaza has a population density comparable to that of Hong Kong, this has caused civilian casualties on a massive scale. More than 11,400 Palestinians have been killed, two-thirds of them women and minors. A further 2,700 people, including 1,500 children, are missing and believed to have been buried in the ruins.[7]

This large discrepancy between narrative and fact is the result of narrative warfare. It is clear that there is a deliberate attempt underway to make the global audience understand what they can see happening in the way that will allow the Jewish entity to achieve its objectives. In other words, in addition to the physical war being fought in Gaza, targeting the Palestinian people, there is a narrative war underway, targeting the global audience with propaganda in order to make them support what the Zionist entity is doing – whatever it is doing.

Deconstructing the Zionist propaganda

A variety of narratives are being pushed that try to paint the Zionists actions in Gaza as “reasonable” and even “just”.

The self-defence narrative frames the Zionists entity’s bombing of Gaza as a response. The objective of this narrative is clear: if the Zionist entity’s actions are a response, they can be justified based on what the Zionists are responding to. The manipulative element in this narrative is that while it asks you to look at the Zionist entity’s actions in the context of the Hamas attack of the 7th of October, it does not allow you to ask whether there was a context for the 7th of October or not. Was Hamas perhaps also responding to something? Anyone who asks this is shut down by statements such as “there is no defence for crimes such as those committed by Hamas on the 7th of October! This manipulation of the conversation is designed to present the Zionist entity as the victim and Hamas as the aggressor. The Zionist entity has a reason to respond, while Hamas has no reason to do what it did.

A fair assessment of the event would investigate if there is a context to the attack by Hamas. Obviously there is one. According to Human Rights Watch, *‘Israel’ has turned Gaza into an “open air prison”, which “forms part of ‘Israeli’ authorities’ crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution against millions of Palestinians”*.^[8] This broader context immediately changes one’s perspective on the current Zionist war on Gaza. If the Hamas attack on the 7th of October was a response to strangulation, apartheid and persecution, then the current war loses its self-defence justification.

This is why the manipulative self-defence narrative tries to erase context and history in the conversation on the Zionist entity’s war on Gaza.^[9] It does not allow conversations about context and history, because once the conversations go down this path, they will eventually reach 1948 and the Nakba, when Zionist terrorists used violence to drive the people of Palestine out of their homes and from their lands, into tents in refugee camps, such as Gaza. This context and history makes clear, without doubt, that the root cause of all crimes being committed in Palestine, irrespective of whether the victim is Zionist or Palestinian, is the Zionist entity. This explains why even the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was attacked harshly by Zionist officials when he said, *“It is important to also recognise the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum”* and *“The Palestinian people have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation”*. Zionist officials described his remark as a justification of terrorism and murder and called for him to resign.^[10]

The ‘free the hostage’s narrative’ is a play on the ‘self-defence narrative’. The difference is that this narrative focuses on a single specific event on the 7th of October, namely the hostage taking by Hamas of ‘Israeli’ citizens. It is similarly designed to justify the Zionist entity’s war on Gaza through creating a limited context: “Hamas committed the crime of hostage taking, ‘Israel’ now has a right to do whatever it needs to do to free its citizens”. This extremely limited context is created by not allowing anyone to ask “why did Hamas take ‘Israeli’ hostages?” This manipulation of the conversation too is designed to present the Zionists as the victim and the Palestinians as the aggressor.

A fair assessment of the event would investigate if there is a context to the Hamas hostage taking. Obviously there is one. According to the human right organization in the Jewish entity, B’tselem, Zionist authorities hold over 1,000 Palestinians in so-called “administrative detention”. This is where a person can be held without trial, and without being charged of having committed a crime, for an indefinite period. Palestinians in administrative

detention do not have access to a fair judicial process to challenge their detention, which means that practically speaking, they are held hostage by the Zionist entity. Of the over 1,000 Palestinian hostages held by the Zionist entity, 18 are teenagers, below the age of 18. One of those teens has been held for over 18 months already. In total, almost 200 Palestinians have already been held for over 18 months.[11] Hamas has declared that its objective in taking 'Israeli' hostages was to free such Palestinians held hostage by the Zionist entity.[12]

The manipulative "free the hostages" narrative is further exposed by the information that the Zionist entity has refused to negotiate in earnest about the release of hostages. According to Zionist sources involved in the negotiations quoted by The Guardian, "Each time [Hamas made an offer] the 'Israeli' counter-demand got harder" and "Each time a deal would go back to Bibi [Netanyahu] it would come back with tougher demands". Furthermore, according to these sources, Hamas has offered to give up the hostages in exchange for an end to the Zionist bombings of Gaza.[13] The Zionist entity's decline of this offer, evidenced through its continued bombardment of Gaza, is proof that its real motive in its war on Gaza is not the freeing of hostages.

Through the decontextualizing of the "self-defence" and "free the hostages" narratives, Hamas is effectively portrayed as inherently and purely evil. For according to these narratives, it acts in a criminal manner, without justification or even reason.[14] Upon this foundation the narrative "this is war against Hamas, not against the people of Palestine" is built. The objective of this narrative is to make Hamas responsible for the Zionist entity's destruction of Gaza and resulting casualties: "If Hamas had not been evil, doing evil acts, 'Israel' would not have had to bomb Gaza, and there would have been no Palestinian casualties". This narrative is supported by side-narratives such as "Israel is the victim of terrorism", "The Israeli military is the most moral army in the world" and "Hamas uses the Palestinian people as human shields". The objective of these side narratives is to portray the Zionist entity as inherently peaceful, empathetic to the Palestinians even, but ultimately forced by Hamas to do what it is doing in Gaza.

As to the side narrative "Israel is the victim of terrorism", this can only be upheld if today's events are decontextualized, meaning their relevant history is ignored. For once history is brought into the conversation, it becomes clear that the Zionist entity was founded on the basis of terrorism. For example, the Irgun group, a Zionist underground organisation founded by Ze'ev Jabotinski, used terrorism to push the British out of Palestine and expel the Palestinians from their land. In 1946, the Irgun committed an act of terrorism by blowing up a wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 91 people. In 1947 it committed a terrorist atrocity in the Arab village of Deir Yassin, killing about 100 of its inhabitants. After creation of the state of 'Israel' in 1948, this terrorist group were absorbed into the Zionist military while its political leaders established the Herut Party, which eventually merged with other political parties to form the Likud party of current Zionist Prime Minister Netanyahu.[15] Another example is the Stern Gang, a similar Zionist underground organisation that relied upon terrorism to further its Zionist objectives. In 1944 it assassinated Lord Moyne, British Minister of State in the Middle East, in Cairo.[16] And in 1948, it assassinated the United Nations' appointed mediator for Palestine, Count Greve Folke Bernadotte, because he told the Jewish that it should allow Palestinians to return to their homes in Palestine.[17] Eventually, the Stern Gang terrorist units were also absorbed into the Zionist military.

As to the side narrative "The Zionist military is the most moral army in the world", it is not supported by the facts on the ground. Human rights organisation have long criticised the Zionist entity for its warnings to civilians before launching an attack are essentially fake. For example, regarding the Zionist warning to civilians in the northern Gaza Strip to evacuate for their safety, Human Rights Watch said, "Ordering a million people in Gaza to evacuate when there's no safe place to go is not an effective warning".[18] Additionally, 'Israel' is on record as having attacked hospitals[19], ambulances[20], churches[21], schools and buildings run by the United Nations[22] and other aid organisations[23].

As to the side narrative “ Hamas uses the Palestinian people as human shields”, a practical reality of Gaza is that because the area is so congested, it is impossible for fighters and non-fighters not to be mixed. This enables the levying of the accusation, which is why the Zionist entity has been using it since long, not just during this conflict, but also during the 2014 and 2008 Zionist attacks on Gaza. During its 2014 attack on Gaza, journalists from The Independent and The Guardian found no evidence of Hamas forcing Palestinians to act as human shields. During 2008, meanwhile, Amnesty Internationally explicitly refuted the Zionists claims.[24] Amnesty Internationally also noted, however, that even if “human shields” were being used by Hamas, under international humanitarian law, the Jewish entity remains obligated to protect these civilians.[25]

Then as to the core narrative “this is war against Hamas, not against the people of Palestine”, it is contradicted by statements from various Zionist officials. For example, Zionist President Isaac Herzog said “It is an entire nation [of Palestinians] out there that is responsible [for the 7th of October]. This rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved, it’s absolutely not true. They could have risen up, they could have fought against that evil regime”.[26] The inevitable conclusion from such a baseless allegation is that all Palestinians are legitimate targets for the Zionist military. That this is how the Zionists see things was confirmed when its defence minister Yoav Gallant ordered a “complete siege” of the Gaza Strip with “no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed”. He said, “We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly.”[27] Because of this mindset, the Zionist army has at no point shown any concern for the ordinary Palestinian civilians. One spokesperson for the Zionist army said, “the emphasis [of Israeli military operations] is on damage and not on accuracy”.[28] Another Zionist official confirmed that under this approach of collective punishment, eventually every building in Gaza would be destroyed, saying “Gaza will eventually turn into a city of tents. There will be no buildings.”[29] Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu even supported dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza as “there is no such thing as uninvolved civilians in Gaza”.[30]

In conclusion, therefore, the actions of the Zionist army past and present run counter to the narratives that are being pushed. They are not “surgical” or “compassionate” military interventions. They are a brutal force, destroying and killing indiscriminately. The verbal expressions of Zionist officials indicate these actions are purposely undertaken, with a clear understanding of their likely consequences. The broader context and history of the conflict between the Zionist entity and the Palestinians, meanwhile, proves that the Zionists are the original aggressor, that the Palestinians are the victims of Zionist crimes against humanity, which leaves the Zionist entity without any excuse for its violence, while the Palestinian acts of violence are (desperate) acts of self-defence.

The Islamic perspective

What is very clear is that the narratives that are being pushed in support of the Zionist entity disregard the truth. The objective of these narratives very clearly is not to find a truthful explanation of a series of events and occurrences, one that aligns with facts. This, evidently, is the meaning of information warfare as understood by western elites. They push manipulative narratives that serve their interests and oppress the truth.

The Islamic perspective on life is fundamentally different. Allah (swt) instructs humanity to search for the truth in everything: ﴿وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“And do not cover the truth with falsehood, and do not knowingly suppress the truth”** [Al Baqarah 2, verse 42].

Prophet Mohammed (saw) similarly said: إِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ لَيَصْنُقُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ صَدِيقًا. وَإِنَّ الْكُذْبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا. **“I enjoin you to be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man may continue to tell the truth and endeavor to be truthful until he is recorded with Allah as a speaker of truth. And beware of lying, for lying leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to Hell. A man may continue to**

tell lies and endeavor to tell lies until he is recorded with Allah as a liar.” (Narrated by Imam Muslim)

As such, the Muslims’ objective is to find the narrative which gives the meaning to a series of events and occurrences that is aligned with the facts even if this narrative might not serve our interests as we see them: **﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ؕ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللّٰهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ؕ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا ؕ وَإِنْ تَلَوُّا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾** **“O you who believe, be upholders of justice, witnesses for Allah, even if this might be against [the interest of] yourselves, or parents, and those close to you. One may be rich or poor, Allah is better caretaker of both. So do not follow desires, lest you should deviate [from the truth]. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, of what you do, Aware.”** [An Nisa 4, verse 135].

With this in mind, the Islamic narrative to make sense of events related to Palestine does not recognise what is called “Israel’s right to exist”. Upholders of truth and justice do not recognise United Nations resolution 181 from 1947, which declared that the British Mandate in Palestinian was to be divided into a Jewish and an Arab state as of May 1948, for the simple reason that the United Nations do not have the authority to decide on the lands of Palestine. Rationally, only the people of those lands, the Palestinians, have this right. Hence, if the Americans and Europeans believe that the Jewish people have a right to a homeland, then let them give from their own lands for this purpose. And if they believe the Jewish people deserve compensation for the crime of antisemitism committed against them over centuries, then again, then let them give from their own lands for this purpose, for they are the ones who committed these crimes, not the Palestinians (or the Africans, or the Asians or the Latin Americans).

If anyone were to challenge this foundation of the Islamic narrative regarding Palestine, arguing this fundamental position makes Islam and the Muslims obstacles to peace, then let them remember the fact that not even Zionists have accepted resolution 181, as evidenced by its continuous efforts to expand beyond the borders established by this resolution. As recent as the 22nd of September 2023, the Zionist entity Prime Minister Netanyahu’s speech in front of the United Nations assembly, brandishing a map of the Zionist entity, he imagines, where all the lands “from the [Jordan] river to the sea” were ‘Israeli,’ leaving no room for the Palestinians.[31]

The Islamic narrative therefore does not accept any of the attempts to justify Zionist actions in Gaza, or more broadly across Palestine. The Zionist entity is, in its origin, a colonial project, that can never be justified. Colonial projects have no right to fight, because their fighting is oppression. The extent to which the Zionist entity in particular is taking its fighting even makes it a textbook case of genocide.[32]

Nevertheless, the Islamic narrative does not call upon the so-called International Community to intervene and settle the affair. For this international community unjustifiably created the Zionist entity against the so-called fundamental human rights of the Palestinians. This so-called International Community has remained unscrupulously biased in favour of the Jewish entity, as evidenced by its response to the current war in Gaza. Today, across Europe, governments have banned protests in support of the Palestinian people, and detained hundreds of protesters, even for something as deeply humanitarian as calling for an end to violence.[33] How then could this International Community possibly be considered an honest and fair intermediary? How could it possibly be expected to promote justice? **﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغُضُنِّهِمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ؕ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾** **“As for the disbelievers, they are guardians of one another.”** (Al Anfal 8, verse 73)

Instead, the Islamic narrative calls for the International Community to stop its interventions in Palestine, for these interventions are not only the root of the injustices committed against the people of Palestine, but also the branches. America and Germany are the ones that supply the Jewish entity with the weapons it uses to bomb Gaza, killing and

maiming indiscriminately. America has maneuvered its navy to the Mediterranean coast of Palestine[36], not to force an end to Zionist's bombing, but to prevent anyone with sincere intentions from intervening! So we ask again, how could this International Community possibly be considered an honest and fair intermediary? How could it possibly be expected to promote justice?

The Islamic narrative therefore does not support the call from this International Community to solve the "problem of Palestine" through instituting its so-called "2 state solution". This Zionist war in Gaza has clearly exposed the enmity of this International Community towards not just the Palestinians, but to Islam and the Muslims in general; and not just in the US but also in Europe. It is therefore irrational to think that the solution preferred by this International Community will serve the interests of the Palestinians, or of justice. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفَىٰ

O believers! Do not take as your close advisors except from among yourselves. [Others] will not miss a chance to harm you. Their only desire is to see you suffer. Their hatred has become evident from what they say—and what their hearts hide is far worse. We have made Our revelations clear to you, if only you understood.” (Aali ‘Imraan: 118)

The Islamic narrative notes that the Muslim nation that stands for truth and justice has already been divided into 52+ nation states, which have brought us nothing! We really don't need another one. Therefore, our Islamic narrative calls for reunification of the Muslim World. ﴿وَأَعِصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا﴾ **“And hold firmly together to the rope of Allah, all together, and do not be divided.”** (Aali ‘Imraan:103)

Such that all the power and strength of the Muslim World will once again be brought together. And collaboratively we can finally launch the singular, coordinated effort, that the enemies of truth and justice know will liberate the lands of Palestine from colonial oppression.[37]

Lastly, and this is of the utmost importance, the Islamic narrative holds that the efforts against oppression should not replace one form of falsehood and injustice with another. That is why it rejects the plan of the International Community to “unify the Palestinian territories under the leadership of the Palestinian Authority”. [38]

Instead, to ensure justice prevails again, the Islamic narrative says the unification of all Palestinian lands, together with all Muslim lands, should be based on the guidance of Islam, with the objective to implement Islam. ﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ

Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and with them We sent down the Scripture and the balance [of justice], so that people may administer justice. And We sent down iron with its great might, benefits for humanity, and means for Allah to prove who [is willing to] stand up for Him and His messengers without seeing Him. Surely Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty.” [Al Hadeed57, verse 25]. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوْمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا

O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.” [Al Ma'idah5, verse 8].

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

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