



Dome of the Rock

Al Aqsa

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Al-Aqsa Mosque

MASSACRE IN JENIN

The greater world is incensed by the a cabre approach of the US, Britain and Israel as they play with technicalities on the number of Palestinians murdered and whether to define the Israeli atrocities as a massacre or not.

Irrespective of the number of dead, which are in hundreds, the fact remains that Israel unleashed its destructive force supplied by US in the form of F-16 Fighter Jets, Black Hawk helicopters and personal carriers with parts from the UK in subjugating a Palestinian civilian population only armed to defend themselves with guns.

Further, the Israeli Army carried out atrocities upon the civilian Palestinian population, there are reports of looting, damaging Palestinian property and denying the Palestinians the basic human right of burying their 'murdered' for over a week. The injured and medically needy were also restricted medical aid while the Israelis carried out the destruction of Jenin Refugee Camp.

President Bush dispatched Colin Powell at a snails pace from Washington, taking almost 7 days to arrive in Palestine. Thus, giving ample time for the Israelis to finish of their dirty work so that the Americans do not see Israeli hands soiled and drenched in Palestinian blood.

Despite the delay, Sharon and his Israeli destructive force were in no mood to listen to the Yanks and boomeranged Powell back to United States.

After having delayed the Americans, Israel first blocked all the international observers, world media and even aid workers including the Red Cross from entering Jenin. Even after the news of Israeli atrocities began to emerge from Jenin and the world condemned Israel for a massacre it seemed the UN under the pressure of the US could not find a way to investigate the Israeli barbarism.

Whatever, the outcome or statements from international institutes we believe in the basic fact that Israel is occupying Palestinian territory and must immediately withdraw. We also call upon the international community to impose sanctions upon Israel and urge individuals to boycott Israeli goods.

Israeli tanks rampage through Hebron, murder 10

"There is no justification under the sun for sending apache helicopters to rain death on orphan girls sleeping in their beds, this is terror, this is savagery, this is Nazism."

More than a hundred Israeli tanks and armoured personnel carriers, backed by helicopter gun ships', rampaged through al-Khalil (Hebron) on Monday 29 April 2002 and opened fire with heavy machineguns, killing and wounding scores of Palestinians, mostly innocent civilians.

Hospital sources in Hebron said at least ten people, including seven civilians, were confirmed dead and more than 40 injured.

Eyewitnesses said Israeli troops, who imposed a curfew on the city, were shooting at everything moving and preventing medical rescuers from evacuating the wounded from the streets.

The Palestinians also reported that the Occupation forces destroyed several buildings and vandalized homes and businesses.

"They are doing in Hebron what they did in Ramallah," said Majdee Marqa, a businessman and shopkeeper.

"They are breaking into businesses and shops and crushing electric appliances, computers, and other valuable objects... their aim is to destroy as much as they can... they are like Nazis." Earlier, an Israeli helicopter gunship strafed the western parts of al-Khalil with heavy machine gun, killing and injuring a number of civilians.

Among the buildings that were hit was a school-orphanage for girls run by the Islamic Charitable Society.

"They are attacking orphanages and schools, and they will tell the world that they are fighting terror. They (the Israelis) are the true terrorists, they personify and embody terrorism in its ugliest form," said Fadwa Natshe, a teacher.

"There is no justification under the sun for sending apache helicopters to rain death on orphan girls sleeping in their beds, this is terror, this is savagery, this is Nazism."

Israeli snipers were also posted on the rooftops of high-rising buildings throughout the city. The Israeli occupation army said it was searching for Palestinian resistance fighters and weapons. Israeli army spokesman described the operation as "limited in scope and duration." However, Palestinian sources described the Israeli incursion as a full-fledged reoccupation of the city.

Khalid Amayreh

Massive Rally in Support of Palestinians

One of the biggest demonstrations to be held in London for years took place on 13 April 2002, in support of the Palestinians and their struggle against the illegal Israeli military occupation of their land. Nearly 100,000 people attended the march from Hyde Park and the sub-sequent rally in Trafalgar Square, and heard from a number of speakers, including Tony Benn, George Galloway, MP, Jeremy Corbyn, MP, Muhammad Sarwar, MP, Azzam Tamimi and Ismail Patel. According to the veteran politician Tony Benn, this was "the biggest" demonstration that he had ever seen in the historic square.

Although the organisers of the event the, Muslim Association of Britain, Friends of Al-Aqsa and others were overwhelmed by the number of people taking part, they expressed their gratitude for the generally good-natured atmosphere, despite it being a very emotional topic. This view was agreed with by a spokesman for the Metropolitan Police who praised the marchers and the organisers' own security arrangements.

For Friends of Al-Aqsa Chairman Ismail Patel, "the demonstration was a clear signal of the political awakening of the British Muslims and a signal to the government that British Muslims will not be led like sheep to vote for the Labour Party. The government must listen to our concerns and more importantly address human rights issues".

Despite the size of the demonstration, and the subject involved, coverage in the British media has been minimal and inaccurate. Seasoned activists for the Palestinian cause have again expressed their concern that the Zionist influence in the media is still able to ensure that the British public, through a supposedly free press, are fed a distorted view of arguably the most serious conflict threatening world peace.

Eyewitness reports from Jenin

"The soldiers destroyed houses. They killed children. The helicopters bombarded us day and night. After the houses were destroyed, the bulldozers came to clear away the rubble, burying the dead in the earth. Fifteen, 20 people, were buried at a time, in different places. The dead spilled on to the streets. Thirteen were buried in the hospital. Five near the Mosque. I saw with my own eyes.

The soldiers went into the houses, separating older men, women and the younger men. They went into one house and dragged out five young men. They killed them, executed them, in front of us. They were not fighters. There was no fighting. I saw this with my own eyes."

42 year old Mother of four Atra Hussein Najm.

"I was taken with nine others. The soldiers handcuffed us. At first they told us to crawl on our hands and knees. Then I was taken alone. They put a gun to my head. They told me to walk in front of them into houses. I was their human shield. When they found the houses were empty, they smashed the furniture. We were taken from one place to another in the camp. They hit us. I remember one man sitting hand-cuffed on the floor. A soldier stubbed out cigarettes on his arm. He did this again and again. The soldiers would say, "You are from Hamas" I said I wasn't. They said, "We found explosives in your house". I said, "No you didn't"."

35 year old Amjad Kazan

Israel stall UN mission

Israel fearing international condemnation and possible incrimination is employing cynical tactics to stall a UN fact-finding mission to look into recent Israeli massacres at the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank.

The idea it appears is to bury all the evidence of Israeli atrocities and further to create doubt and confusion on the actions carried by Israel in Jenin. Sharon, a certified war criminal, described the set-up of the fact-finding mission by the Security Council as "a terrible mistake."

He vowed that Israel wouldn't allow the mission to question Israeli soldiers who took part in what Palestinians and human rights activists describe as a terrible massacre at the camp. "We will not allow them to interrogate our soldiers who only carried out their national duty in defence of their country," said Sharon.

Other Israeli ministers, such as Education Minister Limor Livnat and Interior Minister Eli Yeshai, reportedly urged Sharon to refuse to allow the mission to arrive in Palestine.

My day in the Jenin Refugee Camp

After visiting the Jenin refugee camp yesterday (Sunday April 28), I feel ashamed to be part of a world that has allowed such a monstrous crime to occur.

All of the pictures on the internet, the images on satellite television, the thousands and thousands of words written already about this crime by others, did not prepare me adequately for the scenes of devastation and despair that I witnessed.

I know, too, that my words cannot paint a thorough picture of what I felt walking through the camp yesterday, but I would like to share a few "random thoughts" and sample observations, upon which you may individually reflect.

I am so numbed by what I have seen that the rush of emotions blurs the cohesiveness of my thoughts. But I feel I owe it to the people of Jenin to say something, anything.

Upon entering the camp and passing a huge mound of rubble--the remnants of an earthquake--a horrible, foul, spine-tingling odour struck me. It was the smell of death. We have all heard about it--seen survivors of this massacre talk about it--but I somehow did not expect it to still be present one-and-a-half weeks after the Israeli pull-out. Yet there it was, greeting the dozens upon dozens of foreign and NGO delegations walking through the camp. Nobody knows how many are buried underneath, but there is no question that life was extinguished below this mound of rubble.

Camp residents were walking around as if in a trance, still clearly not able to comprehend--or accept--the wholesale destruction of their homes. It was as if the entire camp was drugged.

Everywhere I went, there were stories of terror. Stories of executions. Stories of Hughe D-11 Caterpillar bulldozers that would knock down a home with a single push...in some with entire families still inside.

The story of the 85 year-old partially blind man whom I visited in a Jenin hospital. He had been struck by shrapnel from an Apache helicopter shell fire while sitting in his home. The story of a young man who lost his right leg and part of his right hand when his home was shelled as well.

The story of an 18-year old boy killed in front of his home. We sat to offer our condolences to his uncle and cousin. Then I learned that the boy's mother was shot dead--also in front of the house--a mere 24 hours later.

Stories of ambulances prevented from entering to evacuate the injured and dead. Stories of women being virtually strip searched by soldiers before being allowed to escape the camps. Stories, like that of the young man who was used as a "human shield" by the Israelis searching a school. They would open each door to a classroom and push him inside, to test for any booby traps.

An old man who stated he had lived in his home in the camp for 30 years. "What will I do now? Where will I go?" He walked away, stooped over, with a tear welling up in his eye. The story of the woman who said she had received donations of food, but had no gas or electricity with which to cook them. Multiple stories of burned out bodies of victims pulled from the rubble, days after they were killed.

Stories of curfew and snipers. The story of the mosque whose loud-speaker was used as a toilet by Israeli soldiers. It is all too painful!

Riad Zuhdi

Blair honoured with a PhD by the University of Haifa

Mr Tony Blair, the UK Prime Minister received an honorary doctorate from the University of Haifa on 17 April 2002. The doctorate was presented in a private ceremony, without media, at 10 Downing Street.

A report in Jewish Chronicle, 29/3/2002, quotes the university's president, Yahuda Hayth as saying the doctorate "would acknowledge the 'tenacity' of Mr Blair in upholding the 'values of justice, advancement and community'."

Many question Mr Blair's acceptance of this doctorate at a time when Sharon's tenacity has seen over a thousand Palestinians murdered, massacre of Jenin is underway and the whole Palestinian population placed under siege and being denied basic human rights.

As justice is denied to the Palestinians and Israel reneges on all international norms, law and UN resolutions an honour to Mr Blair raises the crucial question of what services has he offered the Israelis for such an accolade?

Boycott Campaign Takes off

The campaign started by Friends of Al Aqsa at the start of Al Aqsa intifada has gained momentum and is moving in the right direction as almost all organisations concerned with human rights are playing an active role in promoting a boycott of Israeli products.

The British public has been at the forefront in assisting us and many individuals are now becoming morally conscious consumers.

In Europe things are even more advanced as two counties in Belgium have announced a boycott of all Israeli products. Norway's second largest supermarket chain the Coop Norge has become the first foreign company to unilaterally impose a boycott of Israeli products.

The need for British citizens to actively encourage and partake in boycotting is now even greater, especially after the Palestinian refugees of West Bank have decided to boycott US aid. In a statement issued by the Popular Committees in the Palestinian Refugee Camps – West Bank, of 26 April 2002, states:

To Our Steadfast People, To Our People Rooted in the Land of Palestine, Jenin al-Qassam, the site of the massacre, heralds the voice of Palestinian sacrifice and dignity from among the stench of the war crimes committed in this steadfast and heroic camp. In each Palestinian town, village and refugee camp, this voice is carried by our determination to survive, to challenge the policy of genocide, to rise above the dust of destruction and to remain steadfast in pride. Despite the bloody crime and despite the silence of the world, there is no surrender. The people of the Jenin refugee camp have refused to receive the aid sent to them by the US government and its agency US AID. The massacre was committed with US approval and weapons, which killed our people and fighters and destroyed our homes. The crime committed is large and extensive. Its traces can-not be erased by the aid and assistance which is now being provided in order to humiliate our people and to desecrate the blood of our martyrs. All our greetings and all our respect to the people of Jenin, who have returned this aid to its owners, partners in the crime. The Popular Committees in all West Bank refugee camps appreciate the position of the heroic people of Jenin and its martyrs and affirm the following:

1. We refuse to accept any kind of aid and assistance provided by the US government and its agency US AID.
 2. We call upon non-governmental organizations in Palestine to refuse to accept assistance and funds provided directly or indirectly by the US government and its above mentioned agency.
 3. We demand that the Israeli perpetrators be prosecuted by a war crimes tribunal for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against our people in the Jenin refugee camp and in other areas of the occupied Palestinian territories. Eternal glory to our martyrs – Freedom for our prisoners and detainees!
- Friends of Al Aqsa encourages all to boycott all Israeli products and further to contact your local supermarkets to immediately stop stocking Israeli goods in their shops.

Volunteers Needed to Stop Massacres by Israel

Friends of Al Aqsa urgently call upon the morally conscious individuals to assist us by visiting Occupied Palestine.

We desperately need international volunteers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to assist in non-violent resistance to the Israeli Occupation.

We need European and American passport holders willing to assist us by offering unofficial peace presence in the West Bank and Gaza.

International volunteers are crucial. Without international presence, no matter how small and unofficially mandated, Israeli soldiers would be even more brutal than they are now.

Friends of Al Aqsa, believes a UN force should have carried out this task. But with the US veto to such assistance we call upon the public directly to intervene and avoid the genocide of Palestinian people.

If you are willing to live in a war zone for a short period of time and help save lives, PLEASE CONTACT US.

Lawyers Needed

Lawyers are needed urgently with expertise in the investigation of War Crimes. The NLG [National Lawyers Guild] is sending a team of lawyers in the near future to investigate Israeli War Crimes for one week. But what is needed immediately are attorneys who have previously been in Kosovo or Rwanda and gathered on the ground expertise in the investigating, documenting and applying of the Geneva Conventions in this milieu. Further there is a need for experts in forensic medicine. Of course those with expertise in war crimes would be wonderful. Housing, food, etc., will be provided. We are looking for a one-month commitment. Please con-tact Friends of Al Aqsa immediately.

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