

The Gaza Strip Crisis: The Economic Impact of Israel's Siege on Gaza

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I. FOREWORD

This brief report attempts to analyze Israeli policy towards the Gaza Strip thus far. In particular, certain aspects of Jerusalem's plan of action reflect the unsustainable reality of the ongoing situation in addition to a lack of defined strategy among Israeli echelons. The following report will focus primarily on economic issues because this vital component of the Gaza crisis rarely receives enough attention.

“The historical right of the Jewish People does not invalidate the right of the rest of the land's inhabitants, who have a genuine right to the land due to generations of residence and work upon it. For them too this country is a national home and they have the right to develop their national potentialities to the uttermost. This, therefore, makes Palestine into a common possession of different peoples, each endeavoring to establish here its national home, and under such circumstances it is impossible that the national home of each of them should be complete and contain everything included in this conception. The Jewish people are denied the right to deprive the present inhabitants of their rights and of making themselves the sole rulers of the country”.

- Ahad Ha-Am, *'At the Cross Ways'*, 1921

Ahad Ha-Am, perhaps the most inspiring figure for the minority, altruistic, bi-national stream within the Zionist movement, died in Tel Aviv in 1927. Had the 'Agnostic Rabbi' witnessed certain Israeli policies towards Palestinians today, he may have decided to spend the remainder of his life inside the Pale of Settlement.

II. INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, Palestinians have experienced the stifling effects of restrictions on freedom. Until 1991, almost every Palestinian from the Occupied Territories was permitted into Israel during day time hours. However, in January 1991, Israel drastically altered its policy regarding Palestinian entrance into Israel. Checkpoints were erected and the residents of the Occupied Territories necessitated individual permits in order to cross the 1967 Green Line, as well as to enter East Jerusalem.

The first general closure was declared only two years later. Following the murder of fifteen Israelis in March 1993, Palestinians were prohibited, “until further notice,” from crossing the border between Israel and the Occupied Territories.¹ Israeli authorities thus institutionalized the most radical means of movement control, using security concerns as justification for the decision.

Since the nation’s establishment in 1948, Israel has sustained an unfaltering interest in its national security needs. Nevertheless, defining all the elements of the Jewish State’s national security doctrine remains a complicated task. Israel’s conduct can be examined through the analysis of a number of security-linked strategic concepts, mainly in response to low-intensity, unconventional threats.

Despite the fact that Israel has maintained the view that conventional war is a principal threat to the state’s survival,² low-intensity conflict has been a more

¹ Including 9 civilians

² Historically, Israel’s geographical situation has led its defense planners to the conclusion that the Jewish State could not “afford to ‘host’ a full scale war on its small territory.” Unlike other nations, Israel has repeatedly faced the danger of complete annihilation. For decades, Israeli politicians have sought to defuse this threat, through the implementation of retaliatory and preemptive operations on territories in neighboring

severe danger since the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1993).³ Israel's deterrent position in regard to these threats can be understood through the use of two military concepts: "massive retaliation" and "escalation." The inability of these policies to provide long-term solutions for the ongoing conflict, in addition to the deterioration of living conditions among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, have largely contributed to mounting international criticism.

Jerusalem's government has long made it known that any kind of military threat directed against the state of Israel or its citizens would result in military retaliation. Palestinians have come to learn, at their own expense, that the IDF rarely factors in criteria of proportionality into the execution of such military actions.

There is no doubt that a real threat to Israel's safety exists. Similarly, there is no dispute that the cabinet in Jerusalem is obligated by law to protect the life of every individual residing in territories under its jurisdiction. In addition, every modern, democratic nation must ensure that all measures taken to enhance security reflect the criterion of proportionality and respect the natural rights and dignity of people. Most importantly, any military policy, if in fact necessary, must integrate other diplomatic efforts aimed at peace. However, over the last six decades, Israel's echelons have failed to uphold these fundamental conditions in various efforts to ensure state security.

III. GAZA

The Gaza Strip, a narrow slice of land situated between Israel, Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea, boasts one of the highest population density figures in the

nations. In recent years, chemical warfare and the diffusion of nuclear weapons throughout the Middle East have been the Defense Cabinet's prominent concerns.

³ In addition to the rise of Hizballah in Lebanon.

world. Within its borders approximately 1.5 million people live in less than 360 square kilometers. The population growth rate is also extremely high in Gaza, the birth rate remains above the national average, recording in 2007 at an average of 43 childbirths per 1,000 inhabitants.

In the immediate aftermath of Israel's occupation of Gaza in 1967, the IDF issued an order that declared the Gaza Strip a closed military area. From 1967 until the completion of the "Disengagement Plan" in September 2005, all Palestinians needed a special permit from Israel in order to leave the Strip. Upon completion of the disengagement, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, Israel decreed an end to Israeli military governance over the area.

However, Israel has maintained control over every access point to the Strip. To the east and north, Gaza shares borders with Israel, and entry there is only permitted via IDF-controlled crossings. Entry and exit by sea, to the west, and by air, are under the sole authority of the Israeli army. Following the implementation of the Disengagement Plan, Israel withdrew its forces from the southern border between Gaza and Egypt. While many initially thought that the withdrawal would halt Israel's control over the border crossing between Gaza and Egypt (Rafah Crossing), this proved incorrect.

IV. RAFAH CROSSING

As time progressed, Israel's power over the opening and closure of the passage became evident. After September 12th, when the last settler was forcibly removed from Gaza, the Rafah Crossing remained closed for three months. It opened again on November 25th, 2005, and until the abduction of Gilad Shalit on June 25th, 2006, almost 300,000 Palestinians were able to cross through Rafah, averaging at about 1,315 crossings a day.

On November 15th, 2005, negotiators from Israel and the Palestinian Authority had:

“... achieved an agreement on facilitating the movement of people and goods within the Palestinian Territories and on opening an international crossing on the Gaza-Egypt border that will put the Palestinians in control of the entry and exit of people.”

Under the agreement (AMA, Agreement on Movement and Access), the Palestinian Authority, in cooperation with Egypt, was charged with the responsibility of operating the Rafah Crossing. However, the agreement stipulated certain significant restrictions:

- 1. To ensure compliance with the agreement, monitors from the European Union are posted at the crossing. The parties gave the EU monitors supervisory powers, including the power to prevent crossing in violation of the agreement.*
- 2. Israeli security forces monitor the handling of the crossing and inspect it via closed circuit camera and data systems which provide it with real-time video and data feeds on the persons entering and exiting the crossing.*
- 3. The Palestinian Authority is allowed to permit entry via the crossing only to "Palestinian residents", that is, Palestinians who are registered in the Palestinian population registry and carry Palestinian identity cards. Foreign residents, other than persons in a few excepted categories, are allowed to enter Gaza only via the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings, which are under Israel 's*

complete control.

4. *The Palestinian Authority's authority to allow Palestinian residents to pass through the crossing is subject to a restriction. Whenever Israel informs the Palestinian Authority that security preventions are listed against an individual wanting to cross, the Palestinian Authority must consult with Israel and the EU monitors and take into account their position prior to deciding whether to allow the person to enter. During the consultation, which may take up to six hours, the PA is not permitted to allow the person to cross.*

5. *Rafah Crossing has a terminal for the crossing of merchandise, but the agreement states that Rafah Crossing may be used only for exports. Exports via Rafah are of secondary importance, at best, because most of the exports from Gaza are intended for Israel or for Israeli ports for transport to third countries.*

While these restrictions may appear overbearing, the treaty represented an important step towards achieving an autonomous, Palestinian Authority led government. The conclusion of an agreement had in fact, somehow, put a seal on the end of a 40-year long process: Gaza had gained full autonomy. The restrictions included in the treaty became, therefore, Israel's only way to prevent residents of the Strip⁴ from traveling freely to and from Egypt. After Gilad Shalit's abduction, however, Israel decided to use its power to close the crossing, preventing what was then called a "freedom escalation." The method Israel resolved to employ in order to prevent daily movement at the crossing in 2006 is similar to its policies regarding Gaza and its citizens today. An almost total siege was imposed on the Strip, meaning no one could enter or exit the territory. In addition to the

⁴ Those in possession of a Palestinian identification card.

devastating effects on Gazans, who were prevented from traveling abroad to receive medical attention or education, the crossing's closure prevented many residents from returning to their homes from abroad.

Israel's closure of the Rafah Crossing was partially due to its ability to prevent EU monitors from accessing the crossing.⁵ Because most of the EU monitors resided in Israel, they were prevented from physically accessing the Rafah crossing when Israel decided on its closure. In addition, EU monitors silently tolerated Israel's reinterpretation of the AMA and their imposition of new criteria regarding the crossing's management. The EU later claimed that according to the AMA, if any signing party raised opposition to Rafah's opening, an international presence along the crossing was not permitted. However, the EU failed to defend the original text of the agreement, and the Israeli authorities succeeded in securing absolute control over movement in and out of the Gaza Strip.

From June 25th to December 12th, 2006, the crossing was open twenty-four of the 168 days on which it was scheduled to be open, and an average of only 310 people crossed daily. When Israel did elect to permit the opening of Rafah, EU monitors were notified only a few hours in advance. Such last minute notifications made it extremely difficult for Gazans to plan their travels. Consequently, the sporadic openings rendered Palestinians living abroad uncertain as to when they would be permitted back to their homes.

V. KARNI CROSSING

The implementation of the AMA commenced with the opening of the Karni

⁵ For those who reside in Israel, as was the case at the time of the EU monitors, the Rafah Border Crossing is accessible only through the Kerem Shalom/ Karem abu Saalam Crossing, managed by the Israel Airport Authority.

Crossing at all scheduled hours in December 2005. The average daily number of trucks allowed to drive in and out of Gaza also doubled to 66 by the end of the month. However, the improvement was short-lived. In January 2006, the crossing opened for only ten days (fewer than 20% of scheduled hours). By April, Israeli authorities, citing security concerns, had kept Karni crossing closed 53% of the days it was scheduled to be opened. In comparison to prior years, the Karni was closed during a higher percentage of its scheduled openings. Karni was closed for a total of 18% of its scheduled openings in 2005 and 19% of its scheduled openings in 2004. Additionally, on average, only twelve truckloads of goods were exported each day during 2006, a figure that consisted only 8% of AMA's initial set target.⁶

VI. GAZA COLLAPSING

When viewed through an economic lens, the Gaza crisis has had devastating repercussions for the Palestinian People. Due to its massive retaliation policy, Israeli authorities are held responsible for the extensive destruction of houses, shelters, and medical centers in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, when targeted assassinations result in high numbers of civilian bystanders, Israeli is subjected to widespread international criticism, forcing the Israeli government to address accusations of 'cynicism', 'disrespect,' and the 'violation of human rights.' In addition to the deaths of civilian bystanders, the economic catastrophe in Gaza has resulted in an increasing number of civilian casualties.

The economy of Gaza was primarily composed of a tiny industrial sector, (9-10 % of the total output), an important, but fluctuating, agricultural sector (25-30%), a construction sector (approximately 15%) and a vast public service sector (40-

⁶ 150 per day by December 2005, and 400 per day by the end of 2006.

55%). Today in Gaza, there are only a few, exceptional cases of businesses relying exclusively on local products. Most of the factories, small enterprises, and shops heavily depend on imported raw materials, supplies that must pass through the border. Israel's closure of Gaza's borders has almost driven the Strip into an irreversible state of economic disrepair. If not salvaged in the near future, the Gaza Strip will be doomed to decades of economic dependence on humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, the Gaza labor force was highly reliant on the Israeli market. At the beginning of the first Intifada (1987), almost 45,000 Gazans (around 40% of Gaza's total labor force) worked inside Israeli territory. After the first Intifada, this figure declined by 15%, and continued to decrease after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

In recent months, Gaza's unemployment rate has peaked at an appalling 50%. In the last 10 years, agricultural output has declined by almost 20%. However, in 2006, this sector employed 80% more of the labor force than in 1995. A similar increase has been registered by the manufacturing sector. Since July 2007, more than 3,100 Gazan businesses have been shut down, and 65,000 workers put out of work. The PCBS (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) reports that 84% of households are now living below the line of poverty.

World Bank figures reported that by 2006, 71% of Gazans working in the public service sector had fallen under the poverty line, and 46% of them did not have enough food to meet their basic needs.⁷ International donor support helped to

⁷ When access to the Israeli labor market became more difficult, Gazans began relying on PA payrolls. This dependence covered around 45% of the region's population. Israel's closure of the Karni commercial crossing, a lack of support from Western governments, and Israel's withholding of tax revenues, have dramatically reduced already scarce resources.

reduce this figure to about 30%. However, following Hamas' seizure of Gaza (July 2007), the humanitarian situation has once again worsened. In spite of the resumption of salary payments to public employees, the new administration has been unable to maintain the support that Western donors had previously guaranteed. UNSCO estimates that the per capita income in the Strip now stands at 186 shekels (about 60% of the per capita income prior to the second Intifada). Almost 10,000 workers were forced to accept unpaid jobs with family members following the economy's collapse.

In 2008, and especially since January 18th, the situation in the Gaza Strip has escalated. Since January 18th, between thirty and fifty truckloads of supplies have been permitted into Gaza each week. Until June 2007, about 250 truckloads entered Gaza per day. The World Food Programme is unable to provide a full ration of food to 84,000 of their poorest beneficiaries as a result of the border closures.

On January 18th, following a surge in conflict between the IDF and armed Palestinians, Israel closed all crossings from Israel into Gaza. The closure cut off all food supplies, medicine, and fuel from Gazan inhabitants. The Erez crossing, however, remained open for Palestinians in need of urgent medical treatment⁸ and for international humanitarian aid workers. The Sufa and Kerem Shalom supplies crossings were completely closed down on January 27th. On January 22nd, restricted fuel deliveries resumed and limited humanitarian goods were allowed into the Strip. On January 23rd, Hamas destroyed the fence that separated Gaza from Egypt, resulting in thousands of Palestinians flooding into Egypt. While

⁸ According to WHO, 216 patients crossed for further treatment into Israel/West Bank from January 18th to 28th, 2008.

access to Egypt may have provided some psychological and physical relief for a few thousand Gazans,⁹ 1.5 million Gazans still rely solely upon Israel for supplies.



VII. THE PROLOGUE OF THE CRISIS

Following the Israeli Political Security Cabinet decision on September 19th, 2007 to classify the Gaza Strip as “hostile territory,” a series of controversial high-pressure actions, aimed at weakening the Hamas-controlled government in the Strip, were authorized. The Cabinet stated that Israel intended to respond heavily to the Qassam rocket fire on the Southern part of the country, and that retaliatory

⁹ Hundreds of thousands of Gazans have crossed into Al Arish and Egyptian Rafah since 23 January to purchase fuel and goods. Gazans are not allowed to travel beyond Rafah-Massariyah in Sinai.

action would include electricity cutoffs and limitations on the movement of goods, fuel supplies, and people to and from the Gaza Strip.

On October 28th, 2007, Ehud Barak, Israeli Minister of Defense, declared that Israel would authorize cutting off electricity in Gaza in response to the continued and indiscriminant firing of Qassams on Israel. The Israeli government initially suggested cutting power by a total of 1.5 megawatts, but it has now introduced plans to cut an average of 0.5 megawatts per week, to “*diminish the dependency of the Gaza Strip on Israel.*” The Ministry argued that “*it is now up to Gazan authorities to ensure that electricity flowed to homes and hospitals and not to workshops where rockets are produced.*”

The new policy encountered firm opposition from a number of Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations who filed a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court claiming that the policy violates numerous international humanitarian laws regarding collective punishment. In response to such accusations, Barak claimed that as long as Gaza was governed by a militant terrorist organization, economic sanctions, as part of a broader policy of economic warfare, constituted the only alternative to large-scale ground operations. The Minister further argued that Israel’s only obligation to Gaza’s civilian population was to avoid a humanitarian crisis. This statement emphasized Hamas’ responsibility for effectively distributing electricity and resources to its civilians rather than to militants. The Court of Justice agreed with the Ministry of Defence in that sanctions on fuel would not cause a humanitarian crisis. Consequently, the petition was rejected.

As a consequence of the Court’s decision, on February 7th, 2008, the Ministry of Defense authorized a reduction on the amount of electricity provided to Gaza by the IEC (Israel Electric Corporation). When the decision was made, Gaza had

already suffered from a 20% deduction in electricity, which has interrupted power supplies to various institutions, including hospitals.

The Court's decision posed some serious questions regarding the impartiality of Israel's judicial system as a whole. In reaction to the sentence, petitioners accused the Court of having dealt superficially with a number of core issues. In particular, they specified that:

- The judges had avoided clarifying the official political status of the Strip, i.e. whether or not Gaza is to be considered an occupied territory. It is universally accepted that the occupier of a given territory is held responsible for upholding various conditions.
- The Court did not sufficiently challenge the Ministry of Defense's claim that electricity cutoffs and food supply limitations would effectively halt the launching of rockets into Israel.
- The Court failed to clarify the definition of 'humanitarian crisis,' and to define the point at which a 'grave humanitarian situation' becomes in fact a 'crisis.'

VIII. FUEL

Since the absolute border closure implemented on January 19th, Israel has allowed a restricted amount of fuel to enter Gaza. This restricted supply satisfies 75 percent of Gaza's electricity needs, which has led to the closure of various public services. Due to limited reserves of fuel, the Gaza power plant has reduced its daily power output to 45 megawatts, resulting in power cuts of up to eight hours per day everywhere in Gaza, except Rafah.¹⁰ Gaza's sewage system is only partially

¹⁰ The Gaza power plant is currently producing 45 megawatts during the day and 65 megawatts at night. The Gaza Strip requires an estimated 240 megawatts of power, of which Israel provides 120 megawatts and Egypt 17. The current supply is 182 megawatts

functioning, leading to the daily disposal of 40 million litres of untreated sewage into coastal waters. Only around 50% of Gazan households have access to running water between four to six hours a day.

From January 18th to January 29th, UNRWA has provided Gaza with 6,500 litres of fuel for Shifa Hospital, 3,500 litres for the Gaza European Hospital, 1,500 litres for the Gaza Pediatric Hospital, 2,000 litres to the Patients Friends Benevolent Hospital, and 1,500 litres for the central pharmacy. In addition, UNRWA provided 112,500 litres for the Gaza municipalities and solid waste management councils.

IX. WATER AND SANITATION

During the last week of January, the CMWU (Coastal and Municipalities Water Utility) did not receive any diesel supplies due to a distributors strike.¹¹ During that week, Gaza's three sewage treatment stations were unable to operate normally. Consequently, the sewage level in the lagoon near Beit Lahia rose considerably. In 2007, the inability to remove the sewage from the lagoon's filtration basin resulted in bursting of the basin's walls, and the consequent death of five nearby residents.

Another health risk is posed by the accumulation of garbage in the streets of Gaza. Due to the lack of fuel, trucks cannot consistently operate. Consequently, waste often remains uncollected on Gazan streets for weeks. Additionally, children often play in and around areas where garbage collects which can lead to the contraction of infections. While an epidemic has not yet been reported in Gaza, medical

or 76 per cent of Gaza's requirements.

¹¹ The diesel supplies are stored on the Gaza side of Nahal Oz because the distributors' association has refused to collect them in protest of the low amounts of fuel allotted for the commercial market. The association has announced that they will allow humanitarian agencies to collect petrol and diesel, but they have failed to do so.

institutions in the Strip have remained in a state of constant alert.

X. GAZA'S ELETRIC STORY

In June 2006, after the capture of Gilad Shalit, an IAF strike destroyed the six transformers of Gaza's only power plant (Nuseirat). The plant, completed in 2002, had an output capacity of 140 megawatts. Even though eight new small transformers have been installed since the bombing, they only reach a maximum output of 80 megawatts. Consequently, the Gaza Strip has remained utterly dependent on Israel for the territory's fuel supplies.

Israel currently allows a supply of about 2.2 million liters to enter the Gaza Strip weekly, divided among five or six shipments per week. The powerplant can operate autonomously for approximately two days without additional fuel supplies from Israel. The standard one-month reserve capacity of 20 million liters has already depleted.

After the destruction of the transformers, Israel increased its direct supply of electricity to Gaza. Power from Israel reaches Gaza via ten feeder cables, each of which supplies different sections of the Strip with 12 megawatts of power, totalling around 120 megawatts. Two Egyptians feeders also supply Gaza with 17 megawatts of power.

There is no electricity grid covering the entire Gaza Strip. One network operates in conjunction with Egypt, another with the Nuseirat Power Plant, and the others rely on the Israeli feeders. The lines are not interconnected, which means that one system is not able to compensate for the loss of power of another. The lines were originally installed under Israeli authority, but were later extended in order to meet the needs of Gaza's rapidly increasing population. GEDCO, Gaza's distributor of

electricity, does not work via a central control room, but instead, relies on small substations located in different parts of the Strip. When it needs to redistribute electricity as result of power cuts, engineers travel to one of the substations, and manually pull a switch. The switches are designed to be operated once a year for maintenance, but they are currently being used five times a day. In some cases, Gazan residents switch their electricity back on when the engineers have left the area, driving the system into overload. According to GEDCO, 30 percent of Gaza's supply is impacted by technical complications caused by the strain put on the electrical system and the lack of spare parts.

Power cuts affect every aspect of civilian life. Without power, Gaza's water authority, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), cannot pump and distribute water, nor process sewage. Power-cuts also force hospitals to suspend operations in order to ensure emergency services. Access to emergency services is particularly vital for Gazan children, who compose 56 percent of the population, and who are exposed to grave health problems related to contaminated water and non-functioning sanitation and heating systems.

XI. CONCLUSIONS

This report dealt primarily with the economic face of the Gaza crisis. By concentrating on the economic factors, this paper does not serve to underestimate the impact of targeted assassinations, civilian deaths, or other crippling psychological factors on Palestinian society and future negotiations for peace in the region.

Since the beginning of January 2008, the Israeli retaliatory policies have dramatically escalated, burying recent hopes for negotiations, peace, and an autonomous Palestinian state. The question now remains: is there any way to

repair the insurmountable damage that has been caused and progress towards peace?

Israel has consistently refused to conduct serious peace talks with Hamas. Such refusal held firm even when the Islamic Resistance Movement suggested that a long-time truce be taken into consideration. As repeatedly stated by Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, formal¹² discussions between Israel and Hamas can only begin once Hamas recognizes the Jewish State's legitimate existence.

By maintaining this position, Israel has demanded that Hamas leadership relinquish its most vital 'bargaining ace,' thus unilaterally 'normalizing' the reality of the Jewish State once and for all. Such a price is too high for Hamas leadership to pay, and Israeli echelons have recognized this reality.

There are few remaining models that can be utilized to resolve the Gaza crisis. Presently, Israel recognizes two possibilities:

- Increased internal turmoil that will drive civil society in the Gaza Strip to rise up against Hamas (and thereby end rocket launching into Israel).
- Launching a major land operation in the Strip, an action intended to annihilate Hamas and free Gaza and southern Israel from the threats of radical Islamism. However, such a measure would result in a large number of victims on both sides, massive international criticism, and potentially, Israel's reoccupation of the Gaza Strip.

Unfortunately, a shared feature of both possibilities is the induction of tremendous

¹² On the other hand, informal negotiations to release prisoners, as in occasion of Gilad Shalit's kidnapping, are generally carried out with the help of a "mediator country" (Egypt in most cases).

desperation and destruction among the population of the Gaza Strip. One may wonder whether room for hope and peace remains under the strain of such future possibilities.

The answer to this uncertain question is yes, even though hope is a challenging notion that can not develop on its own. Israel possesses the strength and the power to rediscover, spread, and enable hope.

As David Grossman bitterly admitted at Yitzchak Rabin's 2007 memorial in Tel Aviv, "*at this time there is no king in Israel.*" However, various steps towards reconciliation must be taken as soon as possible. Even if initially they are small due to strong mistrust and weak leadership, in time, these steps will expand if hope does not fade.

Presently, Israeli authorities could carry out several goodwill efforts to relay their dedication to respecting the rights of the Palestinian People and their desire to continue the peace process:

- Halt the construction of new settlements and the expansion of existing settlements, and effectively pursue the elimination of all illegal outposts;
- Strictly monitor the behavior and activity of Israeli residents in the West Bank in order to prevent Palestinian human rights abuses committed by settlers;
- Emphasize that Israel has remained proud of its Arab citizens, and remains committed to their unique needs within Israeli society.
- Publicize more comprehensive, nuanced accounts of the conflict; i.e. pressure the media to broadcast more information regarding the internal dynamics of Palestinian society.

However, most importantly, Israeli society as a whole must come to understand that the Palestinians are not the Amaleks¹³, their historical foe.

Ultimately, this 40-year long conflict eventually can and *must* come to an end.

¹³ The Biblical relationship between the Hebrew and Amalekite tribes was that of perpetual warfare, mainly due to Amalek's waging war against Israelites on their way out of Egypt: "*Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, (...). Therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.*" (Deuteronomy 25, 17-19).

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