

With Full Purpose and Intent

Israel's Attacks on Palestinians in Their Home, Refuge and Displacement



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by Joseph Schechla



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Cover photo: Israeli airstrike, destroying Jala Tower, a 13-floor residential building in Gaza, 17 May 2021.
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Abbreviations

ed.	editor/edition
GH	general headquarters
Gol	Government of Israel
HIC	Habitat International Coalition
HLRN	Housing and Land Rights Network
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICAHD	Israeli Committee against House Demolitions
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IDP	internally displace persons
IOF	Israeli occupation forces
IPS	Institute for Palestine Studies
JA	Jewish Agency
JNF	Jewish National Fund
km	kilometer
km ²	square kilometer
<i>lit.</i>	Literally translated
m ³	cubic meter
OCHA	Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PM	prime minister
UN	United Nations
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCO	Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
UNTS	United Nations Treaty Series
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
WZO	World Zionist Organization

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Abstract:

Israel's frequent attacks against Palestinian civilians at home and in flight are no accident. Rather, their pattern forms the core of the Zionist colonial project.

This paper frames Israel's displacement of the Indigenous population of Palestine and adjacent countries by its military consistently targeting homes, shelters and shelter seekers over eight decades. It seeks to fill a need left by serial commissions of inquiry,¹ mainstream media reporting,² the mandates of UN bodies, and common discourse that narrow the scope of time and space to report such 'incidents' without their historic context. Such treatment also fragments the people into temporal and spatial categories. It obscures a wider lens by overlooking this continuous military practice as fulfilling an underlying military doctrine rooted in the state ideology, expressed in international-relations terms as *raison d'état*. Israel's purpose has always pursued domicide, "the massive and deliberate destruction of homes, in order to cause human suffering." More than that, Israel's military doctrine also calls for the lethal pursuit of displaced persons and refugees in their places of refuge.

By routinely targeting homes, shelters and shelter seekers, Israel's military—supported in these acts by associated state institutions—prioritizes killing inhabitants in their places of residence. Israeli forces thereby forcibly displace survivors into columns and clusters, whereupon they repeatedly attack them in their locus of concentration, including places of refuge that international humanitarian custom and even Israeli commanders have deemed 'safe.' This retrospective on Israel executing its military doctrine 'connects the dots,' punctuated with Israeli written and oral statements of intent as elements of the serious crime of population transfer, the state's *raison d'état*.

Background

The historic record is rich with evidence of the Zionist Movement promoting population transfer³ as “the central task of the State [of Israel],”⁴ and “the chief purpose and function of the State itself.”⁵ To fulfill this function, Israel’s first Prime Minister (PM) David (Grün) Ben Gurion, clearly relied on military power, insisting “We must expel Arabs and take their places...and, if we have to use force... then we have force at our disposal.”⁶ He also succinctly affirmed, “Zionism is a transfer of the Jews. Regarding the transfer of the [Palestinian] Arabs, this is much easier than any other transfer.”⁷ Consistently attacking Indigenous People’s homes, shelters and shelter seekers for nearly a century has made it so.

The population-transfer vision of Zionism's 19th-century founders was first institutionalized in the form of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), in 1896, and Jewish National Fund (JNF), in 1901. Those proto-state bodies—forming Israeli parastatal institutions today⁸—share status and complementary operations with the Jewish Agency (JA), the WZO counterpart so named in 1921 to attract support from largely non-Zionist Jewry. These coordinate with the Government of Israel (GoI) and Zionist agents globally to continue demolishing and/or confiscating Palestinian homes and land⁹ by administrative means under apartheid charters exclusively favoring, “whether directly or indirectly,...those of *Jewish race or descent*.”¹⁰

Conquest (al-Nakba and al-Naqab), 1946–53

The War of Conquest and proclamation of the State of Israel (*al-Nakba*)¹¹ saw proto-state Zionist militias first perpetrating at least 34 massacres in strategically located Palestinian villages between December 1947 and November 1948,¹² followed by resisted-but-undeterred assaults on Palestinian cities, towns and villages, causing flight of some 770–780,000 Indigenous Palestinians.¹³ These acts followed the letter and spirit of JNF’s Plan D (a.k.a. Plan Dalet), issued while the massacres were underway on 10 March 1948. It refined three previous conquest plans,¹⁴ calling for Zionist militias to target all things Palestinian, specifically “the sources of livelihood and vital economic targets (water wells, mills, etc.); attack clubs, coffee houses, meeting places, villages and neighborhoods likely to assist in future resistance against Zionist colonization, etc.”¹⁵

Explaining its strategic significance, Israeli historian Benny Morris described Plan Dalet as “a strategic-ideological anchor and basis for expulsions by front, district, brigade and battalion commanders” providing “*post facto* a formal persuasive covering note to explain their actions.”¹⁶

The Plan complemented the parastatals’ land-acquisition schemes, which sought to eliminate, and then replace the Indigenous People belonging to that land by:

“Destroying villages (by setting fire to them, by blowing them up, and by planting mines in their debris), especially those populations centers that are difficult to control continuously;

Mounting search and control operations according to the following guidelines:

- Encirclement of the villages, conducting a search inside them;
- In case of resistance, the armed forces must be wiped out and the population expelled outside the borders of the state.”¹⁷

One such ‘instance’ was the Palmach 3rd Battalion’s emblematic 1 May 1948 attack on `Ayn al-Zaytūn village, 1 km north of Palestine’s town of Safad. The well-documented massacre¹⁸ terrorized Safad’s inhabitants so that the population scattered during the so-called Battle of Safad, which Zionists count among their “miraculous victories.”¹⁹

Zionist Attacks on Palestinian Homes and Habitat during al-Nakba, early 1948			
Operation Harel	Named after Harel Brigade	15–21 April	Haganah clearance of Arab villages near Latrun (Tel Aviv – Jerusalem) road (defeated)
Operation Bi'ur Chametz (Misparayim Plan)	<i>lit.</i> Breaking bread	21–23 April	Haganah capture of Haifa
Battle of Manshiyya	—	25–27 April	Irgun attack on the Manshiyya neighborhood of Jaffa, leading to British intervention
Operation Chametz	See Chametz	27 April–13 May	Haganah capture villages east of Jaffa
Operation Yevusi	Jebusites	22 April–2 May	Haganah to destroy villages surrounding Jerusalem
Operation Yiftach	Named for Yiftach Brigade	15 April–15 May	Haganah/Palmach capture of Safad and destroy/depopulate eastern Galilee villages
Operation Matateh	<i>lit.</i> Broom	3–4 May	Destroy villages connecting Tiberias to eastern Galilee (part of Operation Yiftach)
Battle of Safad		6–12 May	Palmach forces capture of Safad (part of Operation Yiftach)
Operation Maccabi	<i>lit.</i> Maccabee	8 May	Haganah to destroy villages near Latrun to open route to Ramallah, north of Jerusalem (defeated).
Operation Gideon		11 May	Haganah capture Beit She'an and expel Bedouin
Operation Barak	<i>lit.</i> Lightning	10–15 May	Givati Brigade destroyed villages in Burair neighborhood (partially completed)
Operation Ben-Ami	Named after Yehiam convoy commander Ben-Ami Fechter	13–14 May	Capture Acre and ethnically cleanse Galilee up to the Lebanese border
Operation Kilshon	<i>lit.</i> Pitchfork	14–18 May	Capture of homes in west Jerusalem
Operation Namel	<i>lit.</i> Port	22–23 May	Massacre of al-Tantura (near Haifa)

The Zionist militia, Haganah, later the core of the Israeli army, implemented Plan Dalet as military doctrine²⁰ in at least 16 operations within the first year of Zionists proclaiming their state.²¹ In an orgy of domicide²² across historic Palestine, Israeli forces depopulated and then razed at least 531 Palestinian villages²³ in the area that the UN General Assembly (UNGA) proposed²⁴ to be a 'Jewish state' alongside an 'Arab state' within an otherwise-integral Palestine with "economic union."²⁵

The destruction continued beyond that geographical limit, evicting and demolishing at least 154–156,000 Palestinian homes,²⁶ among an untold number of other structures. Israeli forces created a closed military zone over those localities to prevent displaced and refugee Palestinians' return to their homes, imposing martial law over the surviving Palestinian communities for the next 20 years. JNF subsequently afforested most of those former village sites, transforming crime scenes into "public"²⁷ green spaces.²⁸

Following the battle against Palestinian national resistance at Qastel,²⁹ Zionist militias were able to invade the international zone (*corpus separatum*) of Jerusalem on 1948, dispossessing some 73,256 Palestinians of their homes and depopulating surrounding villages on nearly 30,000 ha (3,000 km²) of land by year's end.³⁰ Zionist militias blew up many Jerusalem Palestinian homes after their bombing of Samiramis Hotel,³¹ threatening the same fate as those Palestinians they recently had massacred at Dhayr Yasīn,³² causing mass exodus. Israel's Custodian of Absentee Property then confiscated, and Jewish soldiers and settlers looted³³ and occupied some 10,000³⁴ spacious Palestinian homes in the newer city neighborhoods.

In January 1949, shortly after signing the Armistice Agreements without Palestinian counterparts, Gol conferred one million dunams (100,000 ha) of Palestinian refugees' land and other properties to JNF and, in October 1950, another 120,000 ha. At the time, a JNF spokesperson explained the tactical meaning of such land transactions as ensuring JNF "will redeem the lands and will turn them over to the Jewish people—to the people and not the state, which in the current composition of [surviving Indigenous] population cannot be an adequate guarantor of Jewish ownership."³⁵

In 1951–53, Israeli forces targeted the southern Naqab, where Palestinian Bedouin were mostly sedentary.³⁶ Rather than settling nomadic communities, Israel evicted them from their homes and lands, forcing them into a so-called 'enclosure' (*al-siyāj*) on only about 10% of the Bedouins' traditional land holdings, and relegating survivors to Israeli state-planned and controlled townships.

Already in 1946, JNF, JA, Haganah and Mekorot, water company, launched a coordinated campaign to settle the Naqab to have the region included as part of the eventual Jewish state.³⁷ This was known as the "11 points" (11 colonies) in the Naqab. One such settler colony is Be'eri, founded as a kibbutz on the site of a settler land grab in the night of 6 October 1946 by the Ha-No'ar ha-Oved (Israel Working Youth Movement).³⁸ In military operations in 1948, Zionist Israeli

forces expelled the Indigenous inhabitants and land owners of the Jabarat tribe to today's West Bank, and the smaller Hanajra group to today's Gaza Strip.³⁹

In 1951, Israeli military and administrative authorities uprooted 11 tribes west of Bi'r Sabi` (Beersheva), making them landless overnight in an area JA had planned in 1946 for 11 Zionist settler colonies. In a bid to consolidate Israel's absorption of the Naqab into Israel, the Israeli army then depopulated and demolished 108 villages and habitation clusters.⁴⁰

By September 1953, Israel's army General Headquarters (GH) ordered Unit 101⁴¹ to drive the Indigenous Bedouins beyond *al-siyāj* southward to Egypt's Sinai. Israeli soldiers raided Bedouin settlements, shooting aimlessly, confiscating any arms and burning the fleeing Palestinians' homes and tents. For several days onward, Unit 101 pursued the escaping Bedouin until they exited the Naqab,⁴² becoming stateless persons in neighboring territories, including Egypt's Sinai, the Jordanian-administered West Bank and Palestine's Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip.

Tagmul operations

Simultaneously, Zionist forces—rebranded as Israel Defense Forces (IDF)⁴³—responded to any perceived resistance with *peulot tagmul* (reprisal operations, in Hebrew). Although officially against security and military targets, these operations mostly prioritized civilians and their habitat.⁴⁴ Between 1951 and October 1956 (when the Suez War erupted), Israeli soldiers retaliated against Palestinian resistance to Israeli military positions in recently captured Palestinian territories.

With its roots in the JNF's Plan C,⁴⁵ *tagmul* operations were “to kill the maximum number of Arabs”⁴⁶ in usually brief and rarely involved face-to-face combat, thus minimizing dissent among the Israeli soldiers.⁴⁷ However, following Israel's 1956 raid on Qalqiliya, the IDF abandoned this tactic, instead pursuing full-fledged war with continuous territorial occupation.⁴⁸

Early *tagmul* operations included a 6 January 1952 regular forces raid on Bayt Jala, in the Jordanian-annexed West Bank (now occupied Palestinian territory—oPt). Supposedly in reprisal for the unresolved rape/murder of a Jewish woman in Bayit VeGan settler colony, Israeli soldiers blew up three Bayt Jala houses, killing seven civilian inhabitants.⁴⁹

Unit 101 Commander Ariel (Scheinerman) Sharon's petitioned to conduct *tagmul* operations when, on 28 August 1953 night, Unit 101 attacked UNRWA-administrated al-Buraij Refugee Camp in Gaza, 2km west of the demarcation line.⁵⁰ Sharon ordered his soldiers to forge ahead through the camp and withdraw only from the other side, attacking Palestinian refugees in their shelters. The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) chief reported the ensuing massacre of some 15–50 inhabitants: “Bombs were thrown through the windows of huts in which the refugees were sleeping and, as they fled, they were attacked by small arms and automatic weapons.”⁵¹

Beyond borders

On 14 October 1953 night, Palestinian *fedayi`in* (commandos) killed a Jewish settler with two children while sleeping when they infiltrated Yahud settler colony, built on the site where the Irgun militia had attacked and depopulated the Palestinian village of al-`Abbasīyya, attacking villagers in a local coffeehouse and detonating homes on 13 December 1947. But IDF's High Command singled out the distant Jordanian-administered West Bank village of Qibya for *tagmul* "Operation Shoshana." Sharon personally ordered Unit 101 to achieve "maximal killing and damage to property,"⁵² whereby troops broke into houses, "clearing" them of inhabitants with grenades and gunfire.⁵³ A paratrooper company joined Unit 101 in the attack, equipped with 600 kilograms of explosives. Sharon's soldiers detonated village houses, a school and a mosque, killing 69 Palestinian inhabitants, half of them women and children who died sheltering in the detonated houses.

Meanwhile, IDF fired at least 25 mortar shells from three sides of the neighboring village of Budrus, blowing up 41 homes and the village school, killing 42 villagers and wounding 15. UN observers noted that: "Bullet-riddled bodies near the doorways and multiple bullet hits on the doors of the demolished houses indicated that the inhabitants had been forced to remain inside until their homes were blown up over them."⁵⁴

Also emblematic is the 29 March 1954 Unit 101 raid on an Arab Legion base four kilometers inside the Jordanian-administered West Bank at the village of Nahalīn. Varying testimonies put the death toll at 9–19 men, women and children as they surrounded the village from three directions, then penetrated it, opening automatic-weapon fire, tossing hand grenades and blowing up seven houses, as well as the village mosque.⁵⁵

In an unprovoked attack on 29–30 April night 1966, IDF acclaimed a *tagmul* operation against Tal al-Arba`īn village, 4 km inside the Jordanian-administered West Bank. Israeli forces blew up about ten stone houses. Witnesses reported, "in some places, where a group of houses were close together, the destruction was so total that it was impossible to tell the exact number of houses involved."⁵⁶ Israeli forces also carried out a massacre of 11 villagers, wounding three, all civilian farmers.⁵⁷

On 13 November 1966, Israeli forces launched a cross-border attack on Samu` village (pop. 4,000), in the then Jordanian-controlled West Bank. Ostensibly, Israel's massacre there was a *tagmul* response to a landmine explosion that killed three Israeli soldiers patrolling two days earlier near the West Bank border, but that incident was never investigated.

Code-named "Operation Shredder" had 3,000–4,000 Israeli soldiers, backed by tanks and aircraft, occupied four hills south of al-Khalil (Hebron), penetrating in two columns eastward, 6km into Jordanian territory. The first column headed toward al-Samu` village, while the other column aimed northeastward to Khirbat al-Markaz, where Jordanian police were posted.⁵⁸

Then IDF personnel carriers entered al-Samu`, firing in all directions, while troops advanced into the village and planted explosives so powerful that houses made from 50-pound stone blocks were shattered in all directions.⁵⁹ Israeli aircraft bombed the village five times and launched three rocket attacks on vehicles, until the IDF withdrew at 09.45 AM.

In al-Samu`, IDF destroyed 125 houses, including two shops, a village medical clinic a six-classroom school, and over 20 vehicles. Troops damaged at least 23 other houses, a dwelling tent and a mosque, killing four cows, a goat and eight monkeys, while wounding a camel.⁶⁰ Eye-witnesses reported that, while the Israel army was killing innocent people and destroying property with tanks, artillery and air cover, soldiers “were celebrating all these crimes with joy and singing.”⁶¹

Rather than ‘reprisals,’ the pattern of such Israeli military behavior suggests not to retaliate for resistance operations, or even criminal acts, as claimed at Bayt Jala and Yahud. Rather a continuum points toward civilian targets, in particular, homes, shelters and shelter seekers, compliant with Israeli military doctrine.

The 1967 War and after

With Israel’s *tagmul* operations intensified in cross-border attacks on the Jordanian-administered West Bank, escalating hostilities may have provoked the June 1967 War.⁶² Whatever other pretexts for Israel’s 1967 military operations acquiring the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, IDF was unambiguous in its purpose to expel civilian population from the acquired territory. In addition to conducting chemical and concussion bombings, Israel’s army also loaded local inhabitants onto trucks, depositing them under guard across the Jordanian border.

As ground forces swept across the West Bank, Israeli planes, guided by U.S. military reconnaissance,⁶³ dropped napalm on thousands of Palestinian refugees fleeing across Allenby Bridge into Jordan. By that method also, they depopulated `Ayn al-Sultan Refugee Camp at nearby Jericho, which had housed some 20,000 Nakba refugees. Jordanian Army survivors later testified that Israeli aircraft had napalmed entire field hospitals in the process.⁶⁴

After the fighting ended, IDF completely destroyed three Palestinian villages Yalū, Bayt Nūba and Imwas, now landscaped as JNF-managed ‘Canada Park.’ Even some dutiful perpetrators of those operations in the ‘Lutrūn Salient’ have questioned its moral and strategic justifications.⁶⁵ When a Canadian journalist requested to visit, in 1967, Israeli military-occupation authorities refused, saying “There isn’t any Beit Nuba!” Nevertheless, he learned from survivors how Israeli bulldozers demolished houses atop less-mobile elderly villagers who perished under the rubble of their own homes.⁶⁶

In the West Bank town of Qalqīliya, for example, the Israeli army drove out many families by force after demolishing some 850 (42.5%) of the town's 2,000 homes.⁶⁷ Also after the end of the fighting, IDF attacked and depopulated other villages, including Bayt Likqia, Bayt Sira and Bani Harith, in the central region. In the Hebron area, IDF troops destroyed more than 90% of the approximately 400 houses in Bayt Awa (original population of 2,500), and damaged the rest. Nearby, IDF also completely destroyed Bayt Marsim (population 500).⁶⁸

Many other rural and marginalized Palestinians who witnessed the expulsion of villagers in the West Bank, evoking their collective memories of 1947–48, also joined the exodus for fear of a similar, or worse, fate. Under both direct bombardment and threats of the same, 57% of those escaping or transferred across the Jordan River reported intense Israeli bombardment as their reason for flight.⁶⁹

In prosecuting the 1967 War, Israeli forces expelled, or otherwise displaced the vast majority of 135,000 indigenous Syrians (109–120,000⁷⁰) of the Golan, preventing their return and forbidding those remaining from entering their own country. After the *preemptive* 1967 War⁷¹ on the Syrian Golan's two cities, 163 villages and 108 farms,⁷² Israel destroyed the main city of Quneitra and 134 villages, amounting to about 20,000 demolished homes.⁷³

With the collaborating WZO/JA, bound by a common apartheid charter requiring the dispossession and exclusion of Indigenous Syrians (those not of "Jewish race or descent"), Israel's physical planning regime perpetuates the assault on Golan's households by systematically denying them building permits. This institutionalized material discrimination manifests also in the continuous demolition of Syrian structures, while facilitating illegal settler-colony expansion on land Israel illegally annexed in 1981.⁷⁴ WZO maintains this regime, imposing 'administrative' (effectively punitive) demolition orders on 80–90 Syrian homes as of 2016,⁷⁵ thus complementing military doctrine.

Military Administration in oPt

With military occupation in 1967, Israel's previous military-administration policy of demolition imposed on Palestinian Arab citizens (1948–66) was transplanted across the Green Line into the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.⁷⁶ Israeli forces demolished at least 2,000 Palestinian houses immediately following the war, among them were dozens of ancient homes in the Mughrabi Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City to create a plaza at the Noble Sanctuary's Western Wall.

Across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Israeli Military Orders (MOs) empowered a Higher Planning Council (HPC) to transfer planning authority to "anyone appointed by the commander,"⁷⁷ who also appoints other HPC members. Three HPC subcommittees oversee (1) Israeli settlement, (2) (Palestinian) house demolitions and (3) local planning and development. These military structures still operate in 61% of the West Bank designated Areas C during the Oslo II (1995) phase of occupation.⁷⁸

Across the oPt, Israel military administration has demolished Palestinian homes under four broad pretexts: (1) Punitive demolitions (3%), including collective punishments against families of security-offense suspects; (2) administrative demolitions in East Jerusalem and Area C for lack of a building permit, which Israeli planning authorities deny to 97% of Palestinian applicants; (3) land-clearing and military operations (about 66% of demolitions since 1967), whereby Israeli forces variously clear land, including for extrajudicial executions; and (4) undefined demolitions, mainly resulting from land-clearing operations and Palestinian depopulation.⁷⁹

In the first decades of Israel's occupation, its military government attempted to "thin out" the Gaza refugee camps with housing projects outside major camps. In 1971, Sharon's Southern Command cleared 2,000 houses in Gaza refugee camps to facilitate military control.⁸⁰

House demolitions formed a persecutory pattern, notably invoking the cruel precedent of the British Mandate's (revoked) Defence (Emergency) Regulations (1945).⁸¹ By 1985, annual IOF demolitions spiked to 81 Palestinian homes across the oPt.⁸² During the first Intifada, punitive IOF operations actions between December 1987 and June 1991 razed or sealed between 1,882 and at least 2,000 Palestinian homes.⁸³

IOF demolitions spiked again during the second (al-Aqsa) Intifada. In 2000–04, IOF demolished 4–5,000 Palestinian homes in military operations, including hundreds in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, al-Khalil and other West Bank cities. Israeli forces also rendered tens of thousands of other Palestinian homes uninhabitable, with an estimated 50,000 inhabitants made homeless. IOF also destroyed or damaged beyond repair hundreds of shops, workshops, factories and public buildings, and destroyed 3,000 hectares of cultivated land, some 10% of the Strip's agricultural land.⁸⁴

The so-called "Battle of Jenin" saw the IOF attack Jenin Refugee Camp, in the northern West Bank, on 1–11 April 2002. Palestinian resisters were prepared for a fight, booby trapping locations throughout the camp. After an Israeli column walked into an ambush, the army used armored Caterpillar D-9 bulldozers to plow a 160-by-250-meter swath through the camp, levelling the Hawashīn neighborhood's homes and infrastructure.⁸⁵ In the al-Damjī neighborhood of the camp, IOF demolished homes on top of the residents without warning. Many of the killed and injured were trapped under the ruins, as the army prevented entry of rescue teams into the camp.⁸⁶ The IOF completely destroyed at least 140 buildings and severely damaged 200 additional buildings rendered uninhabitable or unsafe.⁸⁷

When petitioners sought an injunction from Israel's Supreme Court to end the destruction, the state admitted that, in certain cases, the army's bulldozers began demolishing houses while Palestinian inhabitants were still in them. However, during the hearing, Justice Levine questioned the petitioners' insistence that the army obey humanitarian law during war to avoid civilian targets and allow noncombatants an opportunity to leave their homes before an attack. Comparing the Israeli army attack on the Jenin camp with the Allies' World War II bombing of

Dresden, the judge suggested that, in Dresden, there was no need to warn civilians of the impending attack, or to give them an effective opportunity to leave the targeted area.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, under Prime Minister Sharon (2001–06), IDF demolished over 2,500 Palestinian houses in the occupied Gaza Strip, mostly near Rafah, including the Pink Zone, and razed two large tracts of agricultural land away from the border without any military objective. Over 10% of Rafah's population (16,000), lost their homes. Most were refugees whom Israel already had dispossessed multiple times.⁸⁹ Israeli officials falsely asserted that, under the Oslo Accords, they had no IHL obligations and, thus, wide latitude to destroy property there.⁹⁰

Elsewhere in the oPt, the IOF house-demolition policy continued apace. A significant year was 2016, when Israel demolished 418 residences, rendering 1,852 West Bank Palestinians homeless, including 848 children.⁹¹

Lebanon

Israel's first invasion of Lebanon came after an 8 May 1970 Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine cross-border attack on an Israeli school bus, killing 12 and injuring 22. In response, IDF killed some 400 Lebanese and Palestinian resisters and civilians.⁹² By August 1974, IDF declared a policy of *preemptive* raids, which Israel's Cabinet belatedly endorsed in 1979. Attacks on Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) bases in border villages became daily occurrences.⁹³ Israel's warplane attacks on Palestinian refugee camps were especially deadly: One June 1974 camp attack, killed 27 and wounded 105, and a May 1975 raid killed 60 and wounded 140.⁹⁴ That operation made internally displaced persons (IDPs) of 150–300,000 Lebanese civilians seeking refuge in the poorest suburbs of war-torn Beirut, which then became targets of Israeli airstrikes.⁹⁵

In the early 1970s, Israeli forces regularly shelled South Lebanon and, thereafter, ground forces conducted search-and-destroy patrols “usually against civilian targets and always with results quite out of proportion to the original Palestinian attack.” This formed a “pattern that would be expanded, developed and perfected with ferocity over the coming fifteen years.”⁹⁶

With the subsequent outbreak of Lebanon's Civil War in 1975, Israel maintained military operations in South Lebanon and, in March 1978, invaded to “liquidate terrorist bases along the border” in “Operation Litani.” The operation killed 1,000–2,000 civilians, including 75 in a single airstrike on a mosque. Thousands were wounded, while 200,000–285,000 persons fled northward amid destruction “on a scale known well in Vietnam.” Israeli gunfire damaged or destroyed 7,700 homes,⁹⁷ and leveled six villages and damaged 82⁹⁸ “in a frenzy of violence”⁹⁹ IDF's targeting of homes from the air followed its urban-warfare tactic of sending troops into Palestinian-held neighborhoods only after first leveling them with heavy artillery.

Israeli commanders had long planned their 1982 “Operation Peace for Galilee” invasion of Lebanon to eliminate the PLO bases there.¹⁰⁰ IDF fielded 120,000 men, 1,600 tanks and 1,600

armored personnel carriers, advancing toward Beirut in three waves: One along the coast, one in the central region and one to the east. These forcibly evicted civilians from their homes, towns and villages corresponding to those three columns toward Beirut.

Along the coast, the Israelis concentrated their strikes along a 25-km band from Tyre to Na`mah, south of Beirut. IDF helicopter gunships effectively dominated the central region, and IDF land assaults fanned out to the east through the UNIFIL zone toward the Biqa' Valley, with another branch turning westward to converge on Tyre, at the coast.¹⁰¹

Israel's invasion caused 19,085 deaths and wounded 31,915, mostly civilians, and displaced 500,000 people under ferocious attacks on cities, villages, homes and civilian infrastructure. Shelter seekers found themselves in the line of attack, where Beirut's southern suburbs subsequently became the principal target of the IDF's indiscriminate bombings.¹⁰² Israel's land, sea and air 'blanket bombings' under implosion bombs, concussion bombs, napalm and other restricted agents made civilian populations 'incidental' victims as IDF targeted homes and entire apartment blocks.¹⁰³

After PLO forces already had withdrawn from the country, Palestinian refugee civilians were left without any structures to protect them. Under direct supervision of Gen. Sharon and Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan, Israeli forces ensured the wanton¹⁰⁴ murder of some 1,500–3,500 unarmed Palestinian and Shi`a Lebanese civilians at homes in Sabra and Shatila Refugee Camps on 16–18 September 1982.¹⁰⁵

Consolidating its South Lebanon occupation, Israel made sure no single confessional (sectarian) group comprised a majority. It accomplished that through demographic manipulation and forced segregation. One example was the corridor of towns and villages from largely Christian Jaz̄īn south toward Marj`ayūn, a mixed Muslim and Christian city. Midway in the corridor is Rihan, once a Shi`a Muslim town, which Israeli forces emptied of its residents, replacing them with Christians from al-Zahrāni and Iqlīm al-Tuffah.¹⁰⁶

When Israel's assassination of Hizbullah leader `Abbās Musāwi in a February 1992 helicopter attack failed to deter resistance, IDF mounted "Operation Accountability" on 25–31 July 1993. South Lebanon's Shi`a towns and villages in the heaviest attack since 1982. Ostensibly to flush out Hizbullah guerrillas, that operation's pursued four broader objectives:

1. Force the Lebanese government to enter into direct confrontation with the Lebanese resistance to guarantee security on Israel's northern border;
2. Pressure Lebanon to sign a separate peace deal with Israel, similar to the 17 May 1983 agreement between Israel and Lebanon, which the Lebanese government cancelled a year later under Syrian pressure;
3. Demonstrate to the Lebanese government that respecting the 1949 Armistice Agreement (between Lebanon and Israel) and strict implementation of UN Resolution 425 were superfluous;
4. Destabilize the civil peace in Lebanon by systematically destroying homes and property, thereby forcing mass population movements.¹⁰⁷

After assessing that a major ground incursion would lead to significant Israeli casualties, IDF commanders adopted artillery and aerial-bombardments. Pursuing the most-certain objective 4, IDF's weeklong operation forced the population to flee with the unfulfilled intention of turning civilians against Hizbullah. Israel bombarded thousands of houses and buildings, displacing 300–450,000 civilians toward Beirut and elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ IDF also destroyed infrastructure such as major electricity stations and bridges, maximizing civilian casualties and other losses, while contaminating the environment.¹⁰⁹

Fully 90% of Tyre's 80,000 inhabitants joined the northbound IDP columns of displacement, with Israeli artillery "pounding shells repeatedly and devastatingly into selected houses" in response to any movement inside or out.¹¹⁰ An Israeli army spokesperson boasted that "70% of the village of Jibshīt is totally destroyed; its inhabitants will not recognize it." Another senior Israeli officer clarified the goal was "to wipe the villages from the face of the earth."¹¹¹ IDF killed 125 civilians in that operation.

In 1996, Israeli PM Shimon Peres launched his signature "Operation Grapes of Wrath," in April 1996, replicating Operation Accountability's population transfer model. Some families already displaced during the 1993 operation refused to repeat the ordeal, while others fled, cursing the Israeli invaders' orders. Throughout Grapes of Wrath, Israeli political and military officials attributed responsibility to Lebanese civilians for their own deaths if they defied IDF and allied South Lebanon Army orders to vacate.¹¹²

The 1996 Operation Grapes of Wrath invasion explicitly targeted civilians, according to contemporaneous statements by Peres and IDF commanders. Major-General Amiram Levine declared, "The residents in south Lebanon who are under the responsibility of Hezbollah will be hit harder, and the Hezbollah will be hit harder, and we will find the way to act correctly and quickly."¹¹³ The Defense Ministry's Yitzhak Bailey wrote, "Unfortunately, the only way to stop Hezbollah actions...is to inflict heavy blows on the passive population.... Then Hezbollah would be loathed."¹¹⁴

IDF carried out "indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks" against civilians in what became effective free-fire zones across large parts of south Lebanon. The UN issued a "strong protest" when Israeli "planes had dropped bombs in front of a clearly marked two-vehicle UN convoy transporting essential items to refugees taking shelter in and around UN positions."¹¹⁵

On 15 April 1996, Israeli aircraft rained down over 700 shells and 30 air-to-surface missiles and bombs on South Lebanon in four hours.¹¹⁶ Journalists were unable to investigate the destruction in villages near Tyre "because of the intense bombing and shelling." Inhabitants fleeing nearby villages reported: "It's random shelling.... They are sparing nothing. They are hitting homes and fields and civilians." Up to one hundred shells, bombs and rockets were landing every hour in the village of Mansūri.¹¹⁷

On 18 April, an Israeli strike on a village near Nabatiyya destroyed a building, killing a woman, her seven children and a cousin. A few hours later, Israeli artillery shells hit the makeshift refugee compound at the UNIFIL post at Qana, some 10 km southeast of Tyre, killing over 106 displaced civilians and wounding at least 116 more, all of whom had fled their homes to seek shelter in the UN compound.

The UN Secretary-General's military adviser investigated the apparently deliberate attack on the refuge and concluded: "It is unlikely that the shelling of the United Nations compound was the result of gross technical and/or procedural errors."¹¹⁸ Despite the indicting conclusion, PM Peres responded: "In my opinion, everything was done according to clear logic and in a responsible way. I am at peace."¹¹⁹ Following that massacre at Qana, one Israeli soldier recounted, "The battery commander gathered us all and told us that this was war and that we had to continue firing like the great fighters that we are. Hezbollah entered a village in which there were some Arabs, but that was their problem. One more Arab, one less Arab, you know."¹²⁰

After a Hizbullah raid on an Israeli border patrol, Israel's "Operation True Promise," began on 12 July 2006. The Israeli air and ground invasion left nearly one million displaced Lebanese by 14 August 2006. Of those, about 735,000 sought refuge within Lebanon (approximately 135,000 sheltering in schools, and over 600,000 residing with host families). Meanwhile, 230,000 took refuge in neighboring Syria, Cyprus, Jordan, the Persian Gulf states, and beyond. As many as one-half of the shelter seekers were children. Approximately 16,000 were Palestinian refugees displaced again within Lebanon.¹²¹

Punctuating the attacks on civilian homes and IDPs, an 11 August 2006 Israeli attack on a UNIFIL convoy of approximately 759 vehicles containing Lebanese noncombatant police, army and civilians moving under IDF coordination from the Marj `Ayūn army base after Israel took it over the day before. Israeli aircraft had attacked the convoy with eight to nine bombs, leaving six people dead and 32 wounded, including a Lebanese Red Cross volunteer as he was assisting a wounded person.¹²²

The single greatest cause of civilian deaths during True Promise was from attacks on civilian homes.¹²³ The air war had a greater impact on the civilian population than IDF's Hizbullah-stifled ground invasion. Israel used air, naval and army forces simultaneously, flying some 15,500 sorties that attacked more than 7,000 targets across Lebanon.¹²⁴ Israel's navy within range of the Lebanese coast conducted over 2,500 bombardments, and the army fired tens of thousands of artillery shells and multiple-launch rockets.¹²⁵

The Israeli Air Force committed a second Qana massacre, striking a three-story building in the small nearby community of al-Khuraybah on 30 July 2006, killing 28 civilians, of whom 16 were children. Israel's claim to have taken out a Hezbollah rocket launcher behind the building was proven false, and no military objective was in evidence.¹²⁶

Most of the 1,191 Lebanese whom the Israeli forces killed were civilians, and a third were children. Significantly, the alleged 56 Israeli-conducted massacres during the Summer War involved at least 42 cases of destroying homes and other shelters.¹²⁷ Of known casualties, at least 454 died in homes and other shelters that were not valid military targets. Over 280 were reported injured, but the true and likely much larger number remains unknown.¹²⁸

The *Jihād al-Bina'* organization, responsible for post-occupation and postwar reconstruction, estimated that Israeli forces had completely destroyed 5,000 housing units in al-Dhāhiya (south Beirut), and caused various levels of damage to 17,000. At the end of 2006, 14,000 al-Dhāhiya families (over 60,000 persons) were still without homes.¹²⁹ This IDF practice has been termed the Dhāhiya Doctrine, referring to Israel's use of massive, disproportionate force and the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure.¹³⁰

Gaza Wars

Targeted assassination at home became a common IOF devise in the Gaza Strip under siege since al-Aqsa Intifada. Israel had more commonly carried out extrajudicial killings by attacking vehicles; however, the official targeted killings of “wanted persons” at home in urban areas eventually become a common IDF tactic across the oPt and in Lebanon.

At approximately midnight on 22 July 2002, an Israeli fighter jet dropped a 1-ton bomb on the densely populated al-Darraaj neighborhood of Gaza City, admittedly targeting the family home of Salāh Shehāda, commander of the military wing of Palestine's growing Gaza Strip-based Islamic Resistance Movement (known by its Arabic acronym Hamas). The bomb killed Shehāda and an additional seventeen civilians, including his wife, daughter, eight other children (including a 2-month-old baby), two elderly men, and two women. The bombing injured an additional 77 persons, completely destroyed 11 houses and damaged another 32 in the neighborhood. Gol confirmed its full awareness that Shehāda's wife and daughter “[w]ere close to him during the implementation of the assassination...and there was no way out of conducting the operation despite their presence.”¹³¹

Later, in “Operation Rainbow” (10–14 May 2004), IDF totally or partially demolished about 100 Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip, leaving 1,160 Palestinians homeless. Troops also destroyed about 100 houses in the Rafah Refugee Camp, and IOF said hundreds more may be torn down, while some 2,197 people lost their homes to Israeli demolitions in the first 15 days of May.¹³²

On 16 May 2004, Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon announced IDF would widen the Pink Zone (Philadelphia Corridor) by demolishing more houses in Rafah. The statement of intent followed a High Court of Justice ruling that day, authorizing the army to demolish Palestinian homes without granting residents a right of appeal, if dictated by “immediate operational necessity,” or the need to protect soldiers' lives.¹³³ On 14 May 2004, 13 Palestinians whose homes were destroyed already had appealed to the Court to stop the demolitions in the refugee camps in

the south of Rafah and, so, the Court dismissed 45 others petitioning on 18 May against the destruction of their homes.

Former head of Israel's Southern Command, Colonel Yom Tov Samya, admitted that Israel's house-demolition policy was an end in itself, not an outcome of searching for tunnels or resistance fighters. In October 2003, he said, "The IDF has to knock down all the houses along a strip of 300 to 400 metres [wide]. It doesn't matter what the future settlement will be. This will be the border with Egypt."¹³⁴

Israel's "Operation Days of Penitence" ostensibly sought to prevent homemade Hamas rockets being fired into Israel's Sderot settler colony, which recently had killed four Israeli citizens. On 28 September 2004, columns of Israeli tanks, bulldozers and armored personnel carriers moved into northern Gaza from nearby Nissanit settler colony bases. They tore up roads and flattened homes and crops along their way, while IOF units established strategic positions on high ground overlooking north Gaza towns on the north and east of Jabāliya Refugee Camp.

For 17 days, IOF launched regular raids into civilian areas, firing from the air and ground, sealing off Palestinian neighborhoods, leveling large swaths of agricultural land and restricting movement of civilians and humanitarian/emergency relief workers. Israeli bulldozers dug deep trenches across main roads, severing sewage, water and electricity lines. The IDF incursion prevented many thousands of civilians from leaving their homes as fighting raged around them, while some 4,000 persons managed to flee.

Upon their 15 October redeployment, Israeli forces killed 107 Palestinians, over one-third of whom were civilians,¹³⁵ including 27 children, and wounded at least 431.¹³⁶ Even after Gol announced the operation was ending, Israeli troops moved into Bayt Hanūn and ordered people from their homes to carry out fresh demolitions.

The operation made 675 Palestinians homeless by destroying 91 homes to 143 families, over 90% of whom already were refugees. Estimated cost of rebuilding those homes was around US\$2.5 million. A further 101 homes (housing 833 persons) sustained damage. Most destroyed homes were on the eastern edge of Jabāliya Refugee Camp, close to Block 4, in the most-intense house demolition operation in northern Gaza since al-Aqsa Intifada (2000).¹³⁷

[Operation Cast Lead, 2008–09](#)

From the outset of "Operation Cast Lead," Israeli airstrikes targeted private homes and civilian public and private structures. Some were UN facilities well known and monitored in cooperation between UN and Israeli officials through the 'joint coordination map.'

During three weeks of late-December 2008–mid January 2009, IDF assaults on Gaza demolished about 8,000 homes, using high-precision weapons, including bombs and missiles launched from Israeli F–16s, tank shells, and weapons whose use is prohibited in residential, urban and civilian-

inhabited areas. Much of the destruction was wanton and resulted from direct attacks on civilian objects, including indiscriminate attacks that failed to distinguish between military and civilian objects.¹³⁸

The 2009 United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (Goldstone Commission) noted “the extent of the destruction of residential housing caused by air strikes, mortar and artillery shelling, missile strikes, the operation of bulldozers and demolition charges...in the absence of any link to combat engagements with Palestinian armed groups or any other effective contribution to military action.”¹³⁹

Operation Pillar of Defense, 2012

In November 2012, the IDF launched “Operation Pillar of Defense,” an eight-day campaign in the Gaza Strip that began with Israel’s 14 November 2012 assassination of Ahmad Jabari, chief of the Gaza military wing of Hamas, by an Israeli airstrike on the car he was riding in¹⁴⁰ after a period of reciprocal attacks between IOF and Hamas fighters.¹⁴¹ Hamas fired some rockets into Rishon LeZion colony and into Beersheba, Ashdod, Ashkelon, which Palestinian towns Israeli forces had ethnically cleansed and colonized after proclamation of the State of Israel. Hamas also fired rockets toward Jerusalem and hit Tel Aviv for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War.¹⁴²

During the operation, IOF claimed to have targeted more than 1,500 sites in the Gaza Strip, including apartment blocks.¹⁴³ In a famous airstrike on the al-Dalu family home, an Israeli bomb killed ten family members and two neighbors.¹⁴⁴ Other Israeli strikes killed 174 Palestinians and wounded hundreds,¹⁴⁵ and displaced 350–700 families.¹⁴⁶

Operation Protective Edge, 2014

In its 2014 war on Gaza, code named “Operation Protective Edge,” Israel killed 2,251 Palestine, 65% of whom were civilians.¹⁴⁷ Israeli forces destroyed 203 mosques and two churches,¹⁴⁸ 22,000 homes¹⁴⁹ (including 25% of the homes in Gaza City),¹⁵⁰ and displaced 520,000, representing 30% of Gaza's population,¹⁵¹ and left the homes of 108,000 Gazans uninhabitable.¹⁵² On 22 July 2014, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) spokesperson concluded “There is literally no safe place for civilians in Gaza.”¹⁵³

Operation Guardian of the Walls, 2021

A new crisis was triggered on 6 May 2021, when Israel’s Supreme Court deliberated authorizing the eviction of six Palestinian families in East Jerusalem’s Shaikh Jarrāh neighborhood. However, that case was not isolated, but followed a year in which Israeli authorities ordered 119 Palestinian homes to be demolished in East Jerusalem, 79 of them by their owners.¹⁵⁴ That was also the year that IOF dispossessed the entire hamlet of Khirbat Humsa al-Fawqa, demolishing the houses of 73 newly homeless inhabitants.¹⁵⁵

Israeli forces, enabled by Israel's judiciary, also had carried out the demolition of 383 Palestinian homes and livelihood-related structures in the oPt since January 2021.¹⁵⁶ That pattern met or exceeded the rate of 854 demolitions in the pandemic year 2020, mostly in Jerusalem and Area C, affecting 869 Palestinians.¹⁵⁷ Those were the largest numbers since 2016.¹⁵⁸

Ahead of a planned Jerusalem Day parade, known by far-right Jewish nationalists as the Dance of Flags, Israeli police forces stormed al-Aqsa Mosque compound on 7 May, using tear gas, rubber bullets, and stun grenades. The crisis prompted protests around the world, including official reactions from world leaders. Israel's Supreme Court delayed its ruling on the Shaikh Jarrāh evictions for 30 days.

On 13 May, Hamas' al-Qassām Brigades spokesperson Abu `Ubaida warned Israel to expect an armed response to "attacks on Palestinian civilians and houses in Jerusalem."¹⁵⁹ Already on 5 May, voices in Gaza asserted the struggle of national unity, vowing they would not stand by idly in the face of Israel's military/settler and judiciary attacks on Palestinians homes and inhabitants in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Al-Qassam Brigades Commander Mohammed Deif even issued a written warning on the night of 4 May: "They will pay a heavy price if the aggression against our people in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood does not stop immediately," he said,¹⁶⁰ speaking on behalf of the Palestinian people, comprised of Christians and Muslims, in its land, from Galilee to the Naqab.¹⁶¹

On the afternoon of 10 May, Hamas gave Israel an ultimatum to withdraw its security forces from both the al-Aqsa/Noble Sanctuary complex and Sheikh Jarrah by 18:00 PM. When the ultimatum expired without a response, both Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad launched rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel. Some of those rockets hit Israeli residences and a school, killing nine civilians (six Israelis and three foreign workers).¹⁶²

By the time the Israeli military famously announced its intended bombing of the Hanadi residential tower block, Israeli forces already had unleashed much destruction across the oPt, including Jerusalem. Israel had already announced that it had attacked another residential building that may have housed "some kind of Hamas office."¹⁶³ After that Israeli strike on 11 May, the military wing of Hamas promised an unprecedented barrage of rockets at Tel Aviv if Israel continued to strike residential buildings.¹⁶⁴

Israel did just that. By 16 May, Israeli bombed some 950 targets, demolishing completely or partially 18 buildings, including four high-rise towers, 40 schools and four hospitals, while also striking al-Shati Refugee Camp¹⁶⁵ and destroying or damaging at least 19 medical facilities.¹⁶⁶ By 17 May, Israeli airstrikes had destroyed 94 buildings in Gaza, comprising 461 housing and commercial units, including al-Jalā' Tower, which housed 60 condominiums, the offices of Associated Press, Aljazeera and other news outlets.¹⁶⁷

The heavy bombardment of Gaza City tower-block homes stirred memories of Israel's previous wars on Gaza.¹⁶⁸ However, this round of violence was unprecedented. Israel's targeting of homes continued with the destruction of 2,000 units and partial destruction of another 15,000 homes,¹⁶⁹ leaving more than 72,000 Palestinian IDPs sheltering mostly at 48 UNRWA schools in Gaza.¹⁷⁰

West Bank Raids

Israel has pursued its military doctrine in its most ambitious form since the 1947–48 Nakba with its military/settler attacks throughout the West Bank and genocide in Gaza through 2023 and 2024.

Before and during Israel's 2023–24 "Operation Hot Winter" war on Gaza, Israel had intensified its persecution of Palestinians in the West Bank by increasing expropriations, lethal settler attacks, house demolitions and demolition orders, granting more permits for settler colony housing units and intensifying the exploitation of the natural resources for their benefit in the West Bank.

Well before al-Qassam Brigade and other resistance formations carried out their 7 October 2024 attack on nearby Israeli military and settler bases in Israel bordering the Gaza Strip, IOF and settlers had been carrying out rampages through Palestinian homes, villages and towns across the West Bank. These major incidents have taken place against a backdrop of escalating violence, seizing land, destroying homes and denying livelihoods to hundreds of rural Palestinians¹⁷¹ well before 2023.¹⁷²

Emblematic was a series of Israel's 'pogroms' against Huwwāra village,¹⁷³ raids on Jenin Refugee Camp and demographic manipulation by evictions of Indigenous Jerusalemites in the Old City, Silwān and Shaikh Jarrāh.¹⁷⁴ In the case of Huwwāra, the February 2023 assault was ostensibly a reprisal for the killing of Israeli settlers, one day after a deadly IOF raid on Jenin.¹⁷⁵

Jewish Israeli settlers under IOF protection torched some 30 homes and cars, and killed sheep.¹⁷⁶ On 21 June 2023, hundreds of armed and masked settlers attacked the West Bank village of Turmus Ayya, setting at least 50 vehicles and 15 houses ablaze, killing one Palestinian and wounding 12,¹⁷⁷ while the Israeli army stood by.¹⁷⁸ The following day, settlers also attacked the village of al-Lubban al-Sharqiyya destroying vehicles, damaging 10 homes, vandalizing two shops, a gas station, a wheat warehouse and electricity infrastructure.¹⁷⁹

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a settler leader in charge of the administration of the West Bank, called for Huwwāra to be "wiped out" by the Israeli army.¹⁸⁰ Zvika Fogel, a radical Jewish Power Party member of Knesset, also publicly welcomed the settler violence in Huwwara.¹⁸¹

In its attacks on Jenin Refugee Camp, the IOF attacked homes and infrastructure throughout the densely constructed neighborhoods in multiple campaigns in 2023–24. In July, the IOF forced the eviction of another 4,000 refugees, which Israeli forces already had dispossessed and displaced since 1948.¹⁸² These attacks evoked the precedent of Israel’s patterns of previous attacks on Palestinian refugee camps, not least the attacks on homes throughout Jenin Refugee Camp 20 years before.¹⁸³ Other serial IOF attacks targeted especially Tulkaram and Tubās, also in the northern West Bank.¹⁸⁴

Amid escalating violence, including the militarization of settlers across the West Bank, Israeli occupation forces have razed well over 12,000 Palestinian homes there since 2009.¹⁸⁵ The total Palestinian homes IOF has demolished in the oPt is estimated at about 122,672 to date.¹⁸⁶

Genocide

In October 2023, Israel retaliated for the attack by al-Qassam Brigade, the Hamas armed wing, and other opportunistic groups when they breached the Israeli barrier around the Gaza Strip on 7 October. The militants attacked Israeli soldiers and settlers, killing many of the 1,139 Israelis who died in the course of the attacks and IDF response, and took 240 hostages. The first 385–400 fatalities on 7 October were Israeli soldiers, but the remainder was in settler colonies located in the traditional territory of Gaza Governorate and formerly Palestinian towns depopulated by proto-Israeli Zionist forces in the period before the proclamation of the State of Israel, including the colony of Be’eri (cited above).¹⁸⁷

However, Israel’s “Hot Winter” war on the occupied Gaza Strip has destroyed more than 87% of homes, at least 141,000 completely and 270,000 partially, 150–155 UN shelters, 68% of farmland, 87% of schools 493 of 564,¹⁸⁸ as well as at least three churches and 227 mosques, many of which were serving as shelters for the displaced.¹⁸⁹

Exemplary of this tactic has been the Israeli bombing of al-Taba`in School, where displaced persons were sheltering. The attack, killing 100, was found to be timed and calculated to cause the greatest possible number of victims.¹⁹⁰ In August and September 2024, Israel bombed 21 such shelter/schools, killing 267 Palestinians, while wounding and maiming hundreds more.¹⁹¹

At this writing, Israel’s bombings of Gazan homes and shelters have killed over 42,000 Palestinians, displaced 90% of the 2.3 million population in repeated mass exodus, destroying most of the agricultural lands and built environment.¹⁹² With more than 88.5% of Gaza Strip under IDF forced-eviction orders or designated as no-go zones, the civilian population is pushed into small, overcrowded, unilaterally IOF-declared ‘humanitarian zones,’ where population density has burgeoned to 30–34,000 persons per km², compared to just 1,200 before 7 October 2023.¹⁹³

Beyond any legal claim to self-defense,¹⁹⁴ IOF’s retaliatory assault on the Gaza Strip has forcibly displaced 90% of Gaza’s 2.3 million people in repeated mass exodus.¹⁹⁵ Since 12 October 2023,

Israeli forces have ordered approximately 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza to evacuate incrementally southward to seek or improvise shelter in supposed 'safe zones' under abominable conditions,¹⁹⁶ while systematically subjecting them to daily bombings.¹⁹⁷ This culminates Israel's unbroken military doctrine of targeting Indigenous homes, shelters and shelter seekers, replicated in multiple sites overtime into which Israeli forces have either forcibly evicted and dispersed refugees, or concentrated them into camps, also herding IDPs in so-called "humanitarian zones."

The UN's Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator has described how "More and more people are being crammed into an ever-smaller sliver of land, only to find yet more violence and deprivation, inadequate shelter and a near absence of the most basic services" He added, "There is no safe place in Gaza" and dignified human life is "a near impossibility. Even if people were able to return home, many no longer have homes to go to."¹⁹⁸

By May 2024, Israel's army had designated 77% (281 km²) of the Gaza Strip as "evacuation zones," which Israel also called "green zones," cynically applying the term used to refer to the internationally protected zone of Baghdad under US-led Coalition occupying Iraq. However, for the displaced Gazans, these also became designated death zones, directly, because of Israel's continuous bombardment there, or indirectly, due the unlivable conditions there.¹⁹⁹

This culminates Israel's unbroken military doctrine of targeting Indigenous homes, shelters and shelter seekers, replicated in multiple sites overtime into which Israeli forces have either forcibly evicted and dispersed refugees, or concentrated them into camps, also herding IDPs in so-called "humanitarian zones."

Findings

Given this fact pattern, Israel's military breaches the laws of war prohibiting attacks on homes, shelters and shelter seekers in modern warfare.²⁰⁰ While this pattern of military practice remains unbroken, it has evolved over time not to grow in scale and progressively integrate new technologies, including digital tool such as artificial intelligence (AI). Characteristic of this innovation in applying the military doctrine is the infamous 'Where's Daddy' application, which tracks and directs massive strikes on 'Lavender' AI program-listed individuals when they are home at night with their family.²⁰¹

The dehumanizing statements by senior Israeli officials about Palestinians along with the staggering violence in Gaza,²⁰² often graphically celebrated by Israeli soldiers and shared on social media, have confirmed the intent to bring about the total or partial destruction of Palestinian life there.²⁰³ These acts have led the International Court of Justice's ruling on the plausibility of Israel's commission of genocide in Gaza.²⁰⁴

The continuum of Israeli military and militarized settlers targeting civilian homes, shelters and shelter seekers constitutes Israel's urban warfare doctrine. It traces back to the state's

establishment and its colonial *raison d'état*²⁰⁵ of removing and replacing the Indigenous People by all means, particularly military. However, it operates with the willing collaboration of Israel's as well.

When reporters typically observe that IDF/IOF have attacked civilians *even* in humanitarian safe zones,²⁰⁶ the interjection 'even' suggests an aberration. The military practice of evicting the Indigenous population and then attacking them while huddling in their refuge is no exception. Moreover, it is part of a seamless and unitary standard of operation aligning Israel's political, legislative, judicial and development institutions to fulfill this, its *raison d'état*. It is the deeply rooted, coordinated, deliberate and premeditated targeting of Indigenous homes, shelters and shelter seekers that reflects the nature of the state as essentially embodying and perpetrating the serious crime of population transfer.

That pattern remains unbroken at least in its current iteration of Plan Dalet. As across Palestine, the pattern emerged vividly also in Israel's invasions of Lebanon, as well as the Syrian Golan, since 1967. Israel's ongoing genocide via domicide in Gaza represents only the most-recent iterations of rigidly consistent military doctrine, most often applied outside the context of interstate warfare.

Apparently, the civilian consequences of Israel's military policy are planned and discussed frankly among its high officials. Nearly half a century ago, Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur awakened to the fact that, since 1948, "we have been fighting against a population that lives in villages and cities."²⁰⁷ Israeli military analysts Ze'ev Schiff placed Gur's remarks in context, saying: "the Israeli Army has always struck civilian populations, purposely and consciously...the Army has never distinguished civilian [from military] targets...[but] purposely attacked civilian targets."²⁰⁸

Moreover, Israel's urban warfare doctrine admittedly targets civilians as the primary target, destroying them in their homes, shelters and flight in search of shelter. This is sometimes explained as part of an unproven strategy to turn the local population against the resistance to its alien and colonial presence.²⁰⁹ In October 2023, Israel's Ministry of Intelligence bluntly announced the strategy to "expel all Palestinians from Gaza."²¹⁰

These tactics primarily form a pattern of targeting the most defenseless, form elements of the serious crime of population transfer,²¹¹ along with multiple violations of human rights, international humanitarian and criminal law.²¹² This composite crime already was prosecuted at the post-World War II International Military Tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo.²¹³ However, the combined and coordinated efforts of Zionist civic institutions, including parastatals, legislature, judiciary and executive branches of government and settler movements align to affirm these very practices as Israel's military doctrine, upholding Israel's *raison d'état*; that is, turning Indigenous civilian homes and shelters into death traps as "the chief purpose and function of the State itself."

Endnotes

- ¹ Lori Allen, *A History of False Hope: Investigative Commissions in Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020).
- ² Rob Wells, "Media amnesia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 36 (1) (2018), pp. 99–101.
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-021-01020-4>; Ewa Połońska-Kimunguyi, "Echoes of Empire: racism and historical amnesia in the British media coverage of migration," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9 (3) (2022), <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-021-01020-4#citeas>; Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, "Historical Amnesia, Genocide, and the Rejection of Universal Human Rights," in Mark Goodale, ed., *Human Rights at the Crossroads* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 172–82, <https://academic.oup.com/book/1542/chapter-abstract/141007741?redirectedFrom=fulltext>; Sioban Nelson, "Historical Amnesia and Its Consequences – The Need to Build Histories of Practice," *Texto & Contexto Enfermagem*, 18 (4) (October–December 2009), 781–87, <https://www.scielo.br/j/tce/a/Y7ZXShvFfBvycYj3rJmqS4r/?format=pdf&lang=en>.
- ³ 'Population transfer' has been determined to be a war crime and crime against humanity since 1942. (Allied Resolution on German War Crimes signed by representatives of nine occupied countries, London, 12 January 1942, *Inter-Allied Review*, Vol. II, No. 1 (15 February 1942), p. 2, <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/bb0570/pdf/>.) The World War II Allies designated deportation "of civilian population of, or in occupied territory" as a war crime, and deportation "before or during the war" as a crime against humanity. (Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis Powers and Statute of the International Military Tribunal, London, 8 August 1945, Article 6 (b) and (c). https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.2_Charter%20of%20IMT%201945.pdf.) The Fourth Geneva Convention's Article 49 guarantees that "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive," and that "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." Article 147 includes "unlawful deportation or transfer" among grave breaches of the Convention. (Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, *United Nations Treaty Series (UNTS)* No. 973, vol. 75, p. 287, 12 August 1949, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949>.) Under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, "wilful killing," "extensive destruction and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity, or carried out unlawfully and wantonly," and "unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a civilian" was listed among the grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. (Security Council, S/RES/2570/43 May 1993, Article 2 (a), (d) and (g), respectively, https://www.icty.org/x/file/Legal%20Library/Statute/statute_re808_1993_en.pdf.) In its broad treatment, the UN Commission on Human Rights' Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities found that population transfer, with its push and/or pull factors, "involves the movement of people as a consequence of political and/or economic processes in which the State Government or State-authorized agencies participate. These processes have a number of intended or unintended results that affect the human rights of the transferred population, as well as the inhabitants of an area into which settlers are transferred." (The human rights dimensions of population transfer, including the implantation of settlers, preliminary report prepared by Mr. A.S. Al-Khasawneh and Mr. R. Hatano, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/17, 6 July 1993, <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/17&Lang=E>.) The Rome Statute defines Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, "Deportation or forcible transfer of population," and "Attack directed against any civilian population" as a crime against humanity, while defining "Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly" and "Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement" as war crimes. (Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, U.N. Doc. 2187, UNTS 90, Articles 7.1 (d), 7.2 (a), 8.2 (iv) and 8.2 (vii), respectively, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/Rome-Statute-eng.pdf>.) The European Parliament has defined population transfer as "a practice or policy having the purpose or effect of moving persons into or out of an area, either within or across an international border, or within, into or out of an occupied territory, without the free and informed consent of the transferred population and any receiving population." (European Parliament Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, "Enforced population transfer as a human rights violation," AS/Jur (2011) 49, adopted 13 December 2011, https://assembly.coe.int/committeedocs/2011/ajdoc49_2011.pdf.)
- ⁴ WZO/JA (Status) Law, *op. cit.*, defines the "mission of gathering the exiles" as the "central task of the State of Israel and the Zionist Movement."
- ⁵ Israel Office of Immigration, "Four Years of Israel's Statehood: The Story of Immigration" (April 1952).
- ⁶ Shabtai Tevet, *Ben Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 180, citing Military and Defence Establishment Archives (*Giva'tayim*),
- ⁷ Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS), 1992), p. 159, <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Famous-Zionist->

- [Quotes/Story638.html](#); “A History of the Concept of ‘Transfer’ in Zionism,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1989), pp. 22–37.
- ⁸ As legislated in World Zionist Organisation - Jewish Agency (Status) Law, 5713-1952, <https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/Public/files/Discriminatory-Laws-Database/English/18-World-Zionist-Organization-Jewish-Agency-Status-Law-1952.pdf>; Keren Kayemeth Leisrael (JNF) Law of 1953; Covenant between the Government of Israel and the Zionist Executive, also known as the Executive of the Jewish Agency for the Land of Israel, of 1954; Basic Law: Israel Lands, Israel Lands Law and Israel Lands Administration Law of 1960; Covenant between the GoI and the JNF of 1961.
- ⁹ For discussion of the legal relationship of the JNF to GoI, see Roselle Tekiner, “On the Inequality of Israeli Citizens,” *Without Prejudice* Vol. I, No. 1 (1987), 48–57; Kenneth Lewan and Uri Davis, *The Jewish National Fund* (London: Kegan Paul, 1989); Joseph Schechla, “Deconstructing Israel’s Housing and Land Apartheid,” *HIC-HLRN* (2021), https://www.hlrn.org/img/documents/BP_Deconstructing.pdf.
- ¹⁰ JNF Memorandum of Association, dated 1901, Article 3(a), and dated 1952, Article 3(i); emphasis added.
- ¹¹ Arabic for ‘catastrophe’.
- ¹² These included Haganah, Palmach and Irgun carrying out 24 massacres in the north (Galilee), five massacres in the central area of Palestine, and another five in the south. Salman Abu Sitta, *The Palestinian Nakba 1948* (London: Palestinian Return Centre, 1998); “Killings and massacres during the 1948 Palestine war,” *Wikipedia* (undated), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killings_and_massacres_during_the_1948_Palestine_war.
- ¹³ Estimated 770–780,000 expelled. Janet L. Abu Lughod, “The demographic transformation of Palestine,” in Ibrahim Abu Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine, 1948–1967* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 161.
- ¹⁴ The preceding Plan C added the gathering of data necessary for the successful performance of these actions, which would be collected in the village files, which contained lists of leaders, activists, “potential human targets,” and the precise layout of villages. Yehuda Sluzki, *The Haganah Book*, Vol. 3, Part 3 [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: IDF Publications, 1964), p. 1942, cited in Ilan Pappé, “The 1948 Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Issue 141 (fall 2006), https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/jps/vol36-141/vol36-141_b.pdf.
- ¹⁵ Khalidi, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁶ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 2004),
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ See Elias Khoury, transl. Humphrey Davies, *Gate of the Sun* (Brooklyn NY: Archipelago Books, January 2006) “Gate of the Sun/La Porte du Soleil/باب الشمس,” film, directed by Yousry Nasrallah (2004).
- ¹⁹ Jewish Virtual Library, “Israeli Defense Forces: 17 Miraculous Israeli Military Victories,” May 2015, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/17-miraculous-israeli-military-victories>.
- ²⁰ ‘Doctrine’ consists of fundamental principles by which military forces guide coordinated actions in support of national objectives. It may include terms, tactics, techniques, and procedures. Military doctrine constitutes official advice, but requires judgment in application. While doctrine is relatively enduring, policy is more mutable, if also directive. Policies may change due to changes in national leadership, political considerations, or for fiscal reasons. At the national level, policy may be expressed in such broad vehicles as presidential executive orders. Within military operations, policy may be expressed not only as a means of pursuing objectives, but also in rules of engagement (ROE). See United States Air Force, Curtis E. Lemay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, “A Primer on Doctrine,” 20 October 2020, https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Doctrine_Primer/A%20Primer%20on%20Doctrine%208%20Oct%2020%20v2.pdf.
- ²¹ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London and New York: One World, 2007).
- ²² ‘Domicide’ is defined as the massive and deliberate destruction of homes, in order to cause human suffering. The UN Special Rapporteur Balakrishnan Rajagopal offers a more expansive view, referring not only to the deliberate destruction of the physical structures of homes, but also to the systematic violation of housing rights in violation of international law. See “The Crime of ‘Domicide,’” *Land Times/أحوال الأرض* Issue 27 (December 2022), <https://landtimes.landpedia.org/newsdes.php?id=qXBk&catid=pQ==&edition=pG8=>.
- ²³ Salman Abu Sitta, *From Refugees to Citizens at Home* (London: Palestine Land Society, 2001), “Location of Palestinian Villages,” <https://www.plands.org/en/books-reports/books/from-refugees-to-citizens-at-home/location-of-palestinian-villages>. Zochrot cites: “678 Palestinian localities destroyed by Israel during the Nakba: 220 of them had fewer than 100 inhabitants; 428 had between 100 and 3,000; 30 towns and cities had more than 3,000 Palestinian inhabitants. 22 Jewish localities that were destroyed in 1948; some were rebuilt that same year.” Eitan Bronstein Aparicio, “Mapping the Destruction,” *Zochrot* (March 2013), <https://www.zochrot.org/en/article/54783>.
- ²⁴ UNGA, Palestine plan of partition with economic union, resolution 181, 29 November 1947, <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/038/88/pdf/nr003888.pdf?token=I9cAsRFlvbFwuMsxRi&fe=true>.

- ²⁵ UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) publish “Palestine: Plan of Partition with Economic Union” among majority and minority proposals. 3 September 1947. The UN General Assembly adopted the partition plan in resolution 181 (II), 29 November 1947, Annex A, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-204145/>.
- ²⁶ For housing units destroyed in the Nakba, we based the estimate on the number of expelled refugees divided by 5. Using Janet Abu Lughod’s reliable figures (770–780K expelled), the resulting estimate would be 154–156K housing units, among other buildings. An absolute minimum round number would be 150,000. The Israeli Committee against Home Demolitions (ICAHN) cites 52,000 units destroyed, “Categories of Home Demolitions,” 14 March 2020, <https://icahd.org/2020/03/14/categories-of-home-demolitions/>. However, this estimate is approximately one-third of the total. Note it took the Israelis 15 years to demolish them all between the 1948 to 1967 wars.
- ²⁷ In Israeli parlance, “public” and “national” are adjectives effectively meaning Jewish only.
- ²⁸ Irus Braverman, “Planting the Promised Landscape: Zionism, Nature, and Resistance in Israel/Palestine,” *Natural Resources Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (spring 2009), pp. 317–65, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24889569?seq=1>; Bill Skidmore, “Canadian charity hides history, destruction of Palestinian villages,” *ricochet*, 6 March 2019, <https://ricochet.media/en/2531/canadian-charity-hides-history-destruction-of-palestinian-villages?fbclid=IwAR1mj9dxN7uqRtlvqX5kRXqTELD9IX7A6me6GHU1QKb7U1CEgW2eqKNk7eU>; “Greenwashing by the Jewish National Fund, Israel,” *Environmental Justice Atlas* (29 September 2022), <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/greenwashing-by-the-jewish-national-fund-and-trees-as-a-weapon-of-dispossession-israel>; Jesse Benjamin, M.B. Levy, S. Kershner and M. Sahibzada, eds., *Jewish National Fund – Colonizing Palestine Since 1901*, International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, “Greenwashing Apartheid: The Jewish National Fund’s Environmental Cover Up,” *JNF eBook*, Vol. 4 (15 May 2011), <http://www.ijan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FINAL-JNFBookVol4.pdf>.
- ²⁹ Bahjat Abu Gharbiyya, “The Fall of Qastel and the Death of ‘Abd al-Qadir,” extracted from *The Memoirs of a Freedom Fighter, 1916-49* (Beirut, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993) (in Arabic) in Walid Khalidi, ed. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (spring, 1998), special issue Selected Documents on the 1948 Palestine War, pp. 72–85, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/attachments/jps-articles/2537835.pdf>.
- ³⁰ Salim Tamari, “The City and Its Rural Hinterland,” in Salim Tamari, ed., *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War* (Jerusalem and Bethlehem: Institute for Palestine Studies and Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, 2002), p. 79.
- ³¹ Ghada Karmi, “The 1948 Exodus: A Family Story,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (winter 1994), p. 35.
- ³² Jacques De Reynier, “Deir Yasin, April 10, 1948,” in Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), pp. 761–66.
- ³³ Ofer Aderet, “Jewish Soldiers and Civilians Looted Arab Neighbors’ Property en Masse in ‘48. The Authorities Turned a Blind Eye,” *Haaretz* (3 October 2020), <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2020-10-03/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/jews-looted-arab-property-en-masse-in-48-the-authorities-let-them/0000017f-e7d4-d62c-a1ff-ffff83bd0000>.
- ³⁴ Henry Cattin, *Jerusalem* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 61.
- ³⁵ JNF, “Report to the 23rd Congress” (1951), pp. 32–33 (emphasis in original), cited in Lehn with Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
- ³⁶ Ghazi Falah, “Israeli State Policy toward Bedouin Sedentarization in the Negev,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1989), pp. 78–79.
- ³⁷ “50th anniversary of the 11 Negev settlements,” *Boeliem* (1996), <http://www.boeliem.com/content/1996/537.html>.
- ³⁸ Sarah Helm, “‘We are living by the sword’: The regrets of an Israel founder’s son,” *Middle East Eye* (13 January 2020), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/yaakov-sharett-zionism-israel-palestinians-nakba-negev>.
- ³⁹ Havatzelet Yahel and Ruth Kark, “Israel Negev Bedouin during the 1948 War: Departure and Return,” *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 21, Issue 1 (December 2014), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269167814_Israel_Negev_Bedouin_during_the_1948_War_Departure_and_Return.
- ⁴⁰ Since many of these villages were demolished after the 1948 War of Conquest/Nakba, they do not always appear on maps of war-induced demolitions. Salman Abu Sitta, *Village Points Inside & Outside Siyag* [map] (London: Palestine Land Society, 2010). The figure of 108 total localities depopulated and demolished is derived from the number of depopulated localities after 1948 in Bi’r Sabi` (Beer Sheva) District outside the border of *al-siyāj*.
- ⁴¹ Unit 101 was the main Israeli military formation responsible for retaliation (*tagmul*) attacks. The unit’s doctrine followed the teachings of the British army, and specifically those of Orde Wingate, a British officer with Zionist sympathies. Unit 101 relied on small experienced forces and conducted guerilla attacks on the enemy’s territory. The unit was dismantled and integrated into the Paratroopers after the Qibya massacre. See Gil-li Vardi, “‘Pounding Their Feet’: Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 3, Issue 2 (2008), pp. 295–324, at p. 298.
- ⁴² Salman Abu Sitta, “Beer Sheba: The Forgotten Half of Palestine,” *al majdal*, Issue no. 18 (June 2003), 32–37, https://www.badil.org/phocadownload/Badil_docs/publications/al-Majdal-18.pdf.

- ⁴³ David Ben-Gurion, for the Provisional Government, published the Defence Army of Israel Ordinance Number 4, 26 May 1948, *Official Gazette*, No. 3 (31 May 1948), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-founding-of-the-israel-defense-forces>. Consisting of land forces, a navy and an air force, the habitual usage later became 'Israel Defense Forces.'
- ⁴⁴ Ilan 2006, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 258.
- ⁴⁵ Plan Gimmel (Plan C), May 1946, translated from Yehuda Slutsky, *Sefer Toldot Hahaganah*, Vol. 3 (Tel Aviv: Zionist Library, 1972), Appendix 39, section on Countermeasures, pp. 1939–43, reprinted in Khalidi, *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁶ Eli Zeira, Dayan's Chief of Staff, cited in Vardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 300–01, f. 18.
- ⁴⁷ Shay Hazkani, "Arab Mothers Also Cry': Conformity and Dissent in Israeli Soldiers' Letters from the Suez Crisis, 1953–1957," Master of Arts in Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 28 April 2010," pp. 67, 74, 105 and 111, https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/557922/Hazkani_georgetown_0076M_10811.pdf;sequence=1.
- ⁴⁸ Vardi, *op. cit.*, p. 299.
- ⁴⁹ The UN Mixed Armistice Commission found no evidence that the crime originated from the Jordanian-controlled territory and called for an Israeli investigation. Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949–1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 215–18; E. H. Hutchison, *Violent Truce - A Military Observer Looks at the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1951–1955*. (New York: Devin Adair, 1956), pp. 12–16, <https://archive.org/details/violenttrucearab006617mbp>.
- ⁵⁰ Ilan 2006, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 258.
- ⁵¹ UNSC, "Attacks on West Bank village Qibya, Gaza Bureij camp – UNTSO report (Bennike), SecCo debate, SecGen statement – Verbatim record, 27 October 1953, S/PV.630, para. 46, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-176158/>.
- ⁵² Morris, *Border Wars*, *op. cit.*, pp. 258–59.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 257–76. esp. p. 249, 262.
- ⁵⁴ Attacks on West Bank village Qibya, Gaza Bureij camp – UNTSO report (Bennike), SecCo debate, SecGen statement – Verbatim record, S/PV.630, 27 October 1953, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-176158/>; Hussein F. Khalidi, Cablegram Dated 30 March 1954 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of The Jordan Addressed to the Secretary-General, S/3192, 30 March 1954, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-183007/>.
- ⁵⁵ Report of the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization to the Secretary-General concerning the Nahilin Incident, S/3251, 25 June 1954, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/603129/files/S_3251-EN.pdf; "Jordan Village Reported Attacked by Israelis; Ten Arabs Killed," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (30 March 1954), <https://www.jta.org/archive/jordan-village-reported-attacked-by-israelis-ten-arabs-killed>.
- ⁵⁶ Letter dated 27 May 1966 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/7225, annex, finding 3.C, p. 3, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/527138/files/S_7325-EN.pdf?ln=en.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, finding 3.A–B, p. 3.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 23.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 30.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 12.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, para. 31.
- ⁶² Hemdā Ben-Yehūdā and Shmuel Sandler, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict Transformed: Fifty Years of Interstate and Ethnic Crises* (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2002), p. 34.
- ⁶³ Stephen J. Greene, *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations With a Militant Israel* (New York: William Morrow, 1984), pp. XX.
- ⁶⁴ Arthur C. Forrest, *The Unholy Land* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1971–72), pp. 15–17, <https://www.justpeaceadvocates.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/The-Unholy-Land-by-AC-Forrest.pdf>.
- ⁶⁵ Amos Kenan, a reservist Israeli soldier, took part in the 1967 fighting in the area of the three demolished Palestinian villages of Beit Nuba, Yalu and Imwas. He stated in a report to members of Knesset: "The commander of my platoon said that it had been decided to blow up the three villages in the sector—Yalu, Beit Nuba and Amwas—for reasons of strategy, tactics, security. In the first place, to straighten out the Latrun 'finger.' Secondly, in order to punish these murderers' dens. And thirdly, to deprive infiltrators of a base in future. One may argue with this idiotic approach, which advocates collective punishment and is based on the belief that if the infiltrator loses one house, he will not find another from which to wait in ambush. One may argue with the effectiveness of increasing the number of our enemies but why argue? We were told it was our job to search the village houses; that if we found any armed men there, they were to be taken prisoner. Any unarmed persons should be given time to pack their belongings and then told to get moving—get moving to Beit Sira, a village not far away. We were also told to take up positions around the approaches to the villages, in order to prevent those villagers who had heard the Israeli assurances over the radio that they could return to their homes in peace from returning to their homes. The order was shoot over their heads and tell them there is no access to the village." Amos Kenan, *Israel, a Wasted Victory* (Tel Aviv: Amikam Publishers Ltd, 1970), pp. 18–21.
- ⁶⁶ Forrest, *op. cit.*

- ⁶⁷ UNGA, Report of the Secretary-General under General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V) and Security Council resolution 237 (1967), A/6797, 15 September 1967, para. 54, https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/6797*&Lang=E, also issued as S/8158, 2 October 1967, https://digitalibrary.un.org/record/520097/files/S_8158-EN.pdf?ln=en.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, paras. 58, 62, 65–66.
- ⁶⁹ Peter Dodd and Halim Barakat, *River without Bridges: A Study of the Exodus of the 1967 Palestinian Refugees* (Beirut: IPS, 1968).
- ⁷⁰ Report of the UN Secretary-General under GA res. 2252 (ES-V) and SC res. 237 (1967), A/6797, 15 September 1967, p. 14, <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adb322aff38525617b006d88d7/cc2cfcfe1a52bdec852568d20051b645!OpenDocument&Highlight=0,2252>.
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- ⁷² Uri Davis, *Golan under Israeli Occupation 1967–1981*, Working Paper (Durham: Durham University, Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1983), pp. 3–10, <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/138/1/18CMEIS.pdf>.
- ⁷³ Assuming six people per family unit.
- ⁷⁴ Who Profits, “House Demolition in the Syrian Golan Hyundai Heavy Industries,” November 2016, <https://whoprofits.org/updates/house-demolition-in-the-syrian-golan-hyundai-heavy-industries/>.
- ⁷⁵ European Parliament, Parliamentary questions: Question for written answer E-003899-17 to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative) under Rule 130, Hilde Vautmans (ALDE), 12 June 2017, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-003899_EN.html.
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- ⁷⁷ Order regarding the Towns, Villages and Buildings Planning Law (Judea and Samaria) (No. 418), 5731-1971 (QMZM 5732 1000; 5736 1422, 1494; 5741 246; 5742 718, 872; 5743, No. 57, at 50; 5744, No. 66, at 30), para. 8.
- ⁷⁸ World Bank, “West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the future of Palestinian economy,” Report No. AUS2922, 2 October 2014, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/16686/AUS29220REPLAC0EVISSION0January02014.pdf?sequence=1>.
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- ⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Razing Rafah: Mass Home Demolitions in the Gaza Strip*, 17 October 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/10/17/razing-rafa/mass-home-demolitions-gaza-strip>.
- ⁸¹ In particular, Article 119. “Forfeiture and demolition of property, etc.,” The Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945, 22 September 1945, <https://www.palquest.org/en/historictext/34131/defence-emergency-regulations-1945>, revoked by The Palestine (Revocations) Order in Council, 1948, No. 1004 (1948), Article 2 (2), [https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Palestine_\(Revocations\)_Order_in_Council](https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Palestine_(Revocations)_Order_in_Council).
- ⁸² “Note verbale dated 28 January 1985 from the Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights,” E/CN.4/1985/35, 28 January 1985, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/80f8b609a833bde78525735a0060bf00?OpenDocument>.
- ⁸³ Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 243; Jeff Halper, “House Demolitions and Israel's Policy of Hafrada,” al majdal : *Israel and the Crime of Apartheid: Towards a Comprehensive Analysis*, Issue No. 47 (autumn 2011, <https://www.badil.org/publications/al-majdal/issues/items/1421.html>).
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