

revenge is not a solution

by Amos Gwartz

The hour of revenge has struck. After years of Qassam rocket attacks and retaliatory measures against Gazans, both combatants and civilians, the Israeli army has launched a full-blown war against the Hamas and other resistance organizations in Gaza. The army, armed with the most state-of-the-art weapons is going for organizations equipped with primitive arms. And the results reflect this. Hundreds have been killed, and thousands wounded by the bombings of Gaza from the air, in a matter of just a few days, and horrific destruction sown – versus a small number of dead and wounded in Israel. The ground offensive has only added to the carnage among helpless civilians in Gaza. When one tries to talk with one's Israeli friends about the horror of this war and the urgent need to stop it, one feels the palpable hatred, anger and revenge in people's response. These blind one's moral judgment and rational thinking. After all, even if Israel does achieve its objectives in this war, Gaza with its hundreds of thousands of refugees, with its dire poverty, will go on demanding a solution to its unbearable situation. If we do not address this, sooner or later, Gaza will lash out at us again.

But the problem is not just Gaza. The Gazans are an integral part of the Palestinian people. Most of them are 1948 refugees who lost their homes, their lands and their country. Since 1967, dispossessing the Palestinian people of the remains of its territory continues in full force. During its 41 years of Occupation, Israel has robbed about 52% of the land in the West Bank, and demolished close to 19,000 houses in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, Israel has continued exiling Palestinians from their communities. The Oslo Accords only hastened the process of dispossession instead of putting a halt to it. For the seven 'Oslo years', Israel robbed about 160,000 dunams of land, demolished about 1000 houses, and conducted two expulsions. The number of Israeli colonists in the West Bank rose from 110,000 in 1993 to 204,000 in 2000. The Intifada broke out because Palestinians could no longer bear Israel's exploitation of the so-called peace process for hastening the process of dispossessing them of their land. In Israel, the dispossessions, the demolitions and colonization are presented as legal bureaucratic measures, while the Palestinians see them as a unilateral war conducted against them by Israel. These are the means to dispossess them of all that remains of their land. They cannot possibly compromise over this. As long as Israel continues to dispossess Palestinians of their land, the war against us will not cease. Even if military 'victories' create lulls in the warfare.

No doubt the Israeli army will 'win' this war. But if we pursue the way we have chosen so far, war will be back. The Israeli army is now busy creating the next generation of people who hate us and will one day come out to avenge themselves for what the Israeli army has done to them...