



SOS Alert - #2

Gaza, Palestine

17 October 2023

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is absolutely disgusted by the response of Western nations to the crisis in Israel/Palestine. Western nations have given Israel a greenlight to commit genocide, have offered [direct military support](#) to Israel in its war on Gaza, and have [clamped down on](#) freedom of expression in their own countries. That greenlight has led to the horrific scenes of genocide in Gaza since the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas. Just today Israel [struck](#) the al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City as well as a UN school. Both were buildings where internally displaced people had congregated to avoid the nightly carpet bombings in the hope that Israel would abide by international law. The Gaza health ministry estimates 500 casualties from the hospital strike alone.

The sudden tweets and statements in the past days by European and North American leaders regarding the catastrophic humanitarian crisis are far too little, far too late. There is still no effort to bring Israel back from the brink of utter catastrophe. We are therefore concerned that these leaders are making public statements about humanitarian aid to hide their complicity in genocide and avoid legal responsibility.

Gaza is quickly running out of water and food. It has no electricity. It has very few remaining medical supplies. And Israel is carpet bombing. Israel is bombing even Palestinians who fled to the south as instructed. The Health Ministry in Gaza [reported](#) on Monday October 16 that 2,808 people killed and 9,700 wounded. About one third of the dead are children. Israel has [ordered](#) the doctors and staff at the Kuwaiti hospital in

Gaza to abandon their patients or risk being bombed. In the face of this threatened war crime, doctors and hospital staff are refusing to leave.

We at the Lemkin Institute have pondered how the Western world can countenance this clear and obvious genocide while still hoping to maintain the moral high ground as a beacon for human rights, especially given that its blatant exposure of its “might makes right” reasoning will only further erode Western power globally. We understand the West’s concerns about its loss of relative power to Russia, China and other competing powers. However, exporting war and chaos is no solution to a loss of relative power on the global stage. True statesmanship, on the other hand, would make a big difference in laying the groundwork for greater global peace and security in the face of a rapidly changing world.

Recent events in the South Caucasus and the Middle East have shown that the Western world has clearly completely failed to come to terms with its genocidal past. As a consequence, it continues to promote genocide in the present. One might argue that some Western leaders may truly lack full awareness of the genocidal nature of certain policies, since these are so normative in Western society, where colonial policies of massacre and forced displacement have been commonplace. As a consequence, Western nations are now exporting genocide as a solution to social and political “problems” created by their allies – the “Palestinian Problem” for Israel in Palestine and the “Armenian Problem” for Azerbaijan in Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, for example. Meanwhile they selectively oppose genocide committed against their allies, such as Russia’s genocide in Ukraine, though that genocide shares many similarities with the patterns being expressed by Azerbaijan and Israel.

We urge human beings across the world to demand real attempts by their leaders to reign in the right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu before accepting sudden official professions of care for Gazans and Palestinians from people who just a few days ago were cheering on the Israeli government as it made clearly genocidal statements about its plans for Gaza. This Western complicity has had lethal effects for Gazans, for Palestinians in the West Bank, and for Muslims in the West (including a 6-year-old Palestinian boy who was brutally murdered by a neighbor in the US state of Illinois). It must stop.

The negative effects of blind Western support for Israel can also be felt in Western democratic institutions, which are embracing illiberalism in this war rather than tolerating a very healthy difference of opinion. People in the Western world who are concerned about Israel’s genocidal structures, policies, and language are now facing a host of

infringements on their free speech, making genocide prevention work *dangerous, costly* and *illegal*.

Having said that, we continue to urge Western leaders to de-escalate the situation by putting real pressure on Israel to stop its genocidal campaign against Palestinians and return to the peace table after such a long time away. This is the right thing to do. There is no other way forward. Israel has been granted impunity to commit gross violations of human rights since it was founded and that impunity must end before it draws the entire world into a catastrophic global war for land and resources.

The Lemkin Institute defends the right of Jews and Palestinians to live free from existential threats to their wellbeing and their identity. We ask the world to help Israelis and Palestinians find a path forward that is not one of annihilation. There are profoundly courageous voices for peace on both sides. Peace will mean that hard restorative justice work will need to be done. But certainly a species that can manufacture all sorts of new weapons of mass destruction can also find a way to live together without horrific injustice and genocide.