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SLEEPLESS IN GAZA

**Israeli drone war on the
Gaza Strip**

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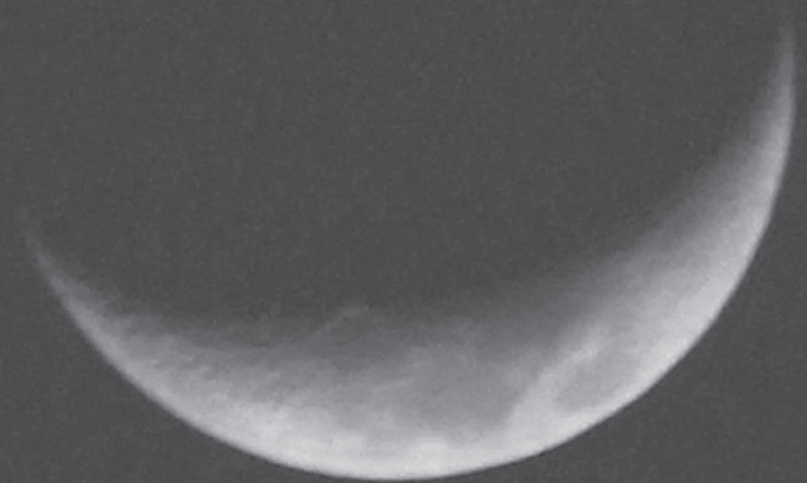
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General View

A group of young boys and girls gathered in Al-Kattiba Square, west of Gaza City, using large pieces of wood and formed the word "LEAVE," in hopes that the drone hovering over the skies of Gaza will read it. One of the participants said that they wish that they can live without the *zanana*, so at least they can sleep.¹ Palestinians in Gaza call the Israeli drones in the sky "*zanana*," meaning a noise maker or buzz. Sometimes they call it the airplane of death. Among the most distinctive elements of the Israel occupation of Gaza is the embrace of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones.

The growing use of drone strikes in Gaza makes it necessary to study the impact of these strikes on the lives of the people there. The drone has become a part of the everyday life of Gazans. They wake up in the morning to its noise, and it's the same noise they hear while trying to sleep. It is always there, to the extent that one might even momentarily forget it is there. Young activists make fun of the situation by inventing names of movies with the word drone,² such as "Drones In Black," "A Drone to Remember," "Drone and Prejudice," "Gone with the Drones," "Honey I Blew Up Gaza," "When Gaza Met Zanana," "Love in the Time of the Drones," "Sleepless in Gaza," "Harry Potter and the Deadly Drones," "Gazans of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Drone," "Israeli Mission Impossible IV: Erase Gaza," and "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the Drone."

Drones are part of a wider Israeli intelligence and remote operating system which includes direct attacking capacities. Drones lay at the heart of this system. They are the most precious and effective devise in the system. Drones have two actual and direct military benefits. First, they conduct reconnaissance and monitoring functions. Second, they engage in heavy missile strikes. In other words, they are the new face of the Israeli occupation.

Since their first use in 2000, drones have led to the death of hundreds of Palestinians and have injured thousands more. In addition, they have directly negatively impacted Palestinian psychological and social life, as well as causing a grossly negative impact on education. While in comparison, the Israeli use of drones to target individuals, public premises, academic institutions, and schools are more intensified than its use in any other place by any other army. Most studies do not include the Israeli use of drones against the Palestinians in their surveys. They only refer to the fact that Israel manufactures drones and uses them, while the consequences of using drones day and night in Gaza are understudied and nearly absent in the field of drones' studies. In numbers, civilians killed or injured

by drones during the frequent Israeli offensives against Gaza are very high. Moreover, drones in Gaza have a different impact on the lives of the people which have not been properly studied. However, the most striking aspect of the Israeli usage of drones in Gaza is how drones are used to intensify the occupation, to make it cheaper and more profitable as well.

This report seeks to shed light on the usage of drones in Gaza through looking into how Israel uses drones to dominate the Palestinian people in Gaza and to enhance its grip on their daily life. It elaborates on the capabilities of Israel drones in general. The report as well depicts the situation in Gaza in the context of Israeli occupation to the coastal strip. It views the impact of drones in Gaza through five main issues. First, it discusses the victims resulting from the strikes by drones and argues that the majority of those are civilians. Then it analyzes the psychological and mental, social, educational, and cultural impacts of drones on Gazan society. After that, the report moves to the external aspects of droning Gaza, namely, how Israel uses Gaza as a laboratory for developing these death machines to advance the marketing of its drones, and the obligations of the international community in light of the Israeli violations of human rights. A list of recommendations is provided in the conclusion.

1 Zanon, Adel "Zanana: the Israeli drone is a source of constant concern and worry," Middle EastOnline, 3/11/2011, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=119884>

2 <http://fromghazza.blogspot.com/2011/11/blog-post.html>

Methodology

Intensive review of the literature in the field of drone usage has been done through the report in which studies of different regions where drones are used is reviewed. These mainly include studies on drones used in Pakistan, Yemen, and Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the author uses reports published by the main two human rights centers in Gaza; the Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. The reports document Israeli attacks during the last 13 years and their devastation on Gaza. Reports by international human rights organization like Human Rights Watch were reviewed and used as well.

For the purpose of this report, the researcher conducted 19 interviews with human rights activists, diplomats, pupils, headmasters of schools, a psychologist, journalists, and analysts to discuss the different impacts of drones. In addition to that, intensive analysis of media reports, articles, and coverage were very useful in writing this report.

Drones: A Controversial War Weapon

One of the main features of contemporary war is the rapidly developing technology of killing by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), also known as drones. Drone technology has accelerated the militarization race and global arms trade. Changes in global war strategies and concepts have given drones an important role as an effective component in war. While fighting supposedly invisible enemies in faraway forefronts, the use of remote devices is assumed to lessen the possibility of face to face engagement of the soldiers in foreign lands.

Drones carry a wealth of sensors in their bulbous noses. They include color and black-and-white TV cameras, image intensifiers, radar, infra-red imaging for low-light conditions, and lasers for targeting.³ Some drones can stay aloft for more than 24 hours at a time. Although unmanned, drones are not unpowered, as trained crew at a land base steer the craft and analyze the photos that are received by them.

Likewise, drones can be used for peaceful purposes in many ways. For example, they are able to put down forest fires, track criminals such as drug smugglers on border areas or in vast expanse of lands, predict the weather, and conduct scientific research. In actual practice however, policing functions in some countries like the United States witness a growing use of drones in what is perceived as a militarization of the police.⁴

More and more countries are seeking to acquire and develop drones in what will provide them a real advantage in relations among states. Until recently, it was only Israel and the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, who were engaged in producing and exporting UAVs. Now, scores of countries are seeking to develop their own drone technology. These include China, Turkey, India, Russia, and Iran, among others. There are now some 76 countries using drones in their armies. It is also reported that there are 680 drone programs in the world, an increase of over 400 since 2005.⁵ It is estimated that by 2021, global spending on drones is likely to be more than US \$94 billion.⁶ Today's annual global expenditure is US \$6.6 billion.⁷

Advocates of drone usage argue that drone strikes are militarily effective and succeed in curbing deadly terrorist attacks⁸ and that they can deliver precise

3 "Drones: What are they and how do they work?" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-107138983>

4 Benjamin, Medea, "War on Demand. The Global Rise of Drones," Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New York office, June 2013

5 Zenko, Micah "10 things you didn't know about drones," Foreign Policy 192, March–April 2012 http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/27/10_things_you_didnt_know_about_drones, accessed 20 Dec. 2012.

6 Shane, Scott "Coming soon: the drones arms race," New York Times, 8 Oct. 2011

7 Silver, Charlotte "Normalizing death: The business of drones," 07 Dec 2012, Al Jazeera

8 Byman, Daniel "Why Drones Work," Foreign Affairs, July 1, 2013 and Johnston, Patrick and Sarbahi, Anoop "The Impact of US Drone Strikes on Terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan," July 14, 2013, <http://patrickjohnston.info/.../drones.pdf>

strikes without the need for more intrusive military action.⁹ Boyle divides the arguments for the effectiveness of drones into four separate claims: (1) they kill with minimal civilian casualties, (2) they are successful in killing the so called 'high value targets;' (3) its use puts pressure on organizations and limits their capacity and ability to strike; (4) in cost-benefit analysis, using drones is more effective than deploying ground troops.¹⁰ Based on shaky empirical evidence and false assumptions, Boyle provides extensive data and compelling arguments against the case in favor of the effectiveness of drones.

While data provided from all places where drones are used proves how mistaken such arguments are, international law undermines the legality of their use which will be documented in later sections. It is not true in any case that drones are precise enough not to leave some untargeted dead or injured.

Benjamin introduces many cases where American drones killed civilians instead of killing the targeted persons.¹¹ Available data provided by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ), shows that from June 2004 through November 2013, some 2,534-3,642 people were killed in American strikes in Pakistan, of which 416-951 were civilians, including 168-200 children. The data provides that 1,127-1,556 people were injured as a result of those strikes.¹² The sheer number of victims indicates the terror, destruction, and losses drones' strikes leave on its field of operation.

Moreover, the vast majority of the discussion in the literature on UAVs strikes supports the idea that drone strikes did not manage to curb violence but rather produced more.¹³ After more than a decade of their use in different parts in the globe, none of the major drones' users managed to reduce the threat they face. Contrary to this, the Americans for example, are facing more troubles in areas where their drones are in operation. Additionally, the United States is challenged with a growing hatred and anger in countries where its drones strike. Its credibility and human rights record is also questioned due to its use of drones. For example, a report finds that US drone strike polices foment anti-American sentiment and increased recruitment to armed groups targeting American interests.¹⁴

The current report reflects deeply on the losses, damages, and negative effects Israeli drones attacks have on the people in the Gaza Strip.

9 "Drones: What are they and how do they work?, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10713898

10 Boyle, Michael "The costs and consequence of drone warfare," *International Affairs* 89: 1 (2013) 1–29, p4

11 IBID

12 TBIJ provides data for casualties in Yemen and Somalia as well. <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2013/12/03/november-2013-update-us-covert-actions-in-pakistan-yemen-and-somalia/>.

13 Kurth Cronin, Audrey "Why Drones Fail," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1, 2013

14 International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic, "Living Under Drones. Death, Injury and Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan," *Stanford Law School and Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law*, 2012, p131 <http://livingunderdrones.org>

Israel: A Leading Arms and Drone Exporter

Drones are part and parcel of Israeli military capacities, as well as its military industry. Israel, a leading manufacturer of drones in the world, is also a leading user of drones in its army's operations and daily attacks. It is believed that the Israeli Air Force heavily used the Elbit Hermes 450 in its air strikes on Lebanon in the 2006 war. In addition, it is also believed Israel used these drones in attacking a factory in Sudan, in assassinating some suspects in Sinai in 2012,¹⁵ in surveillance activities in the Mediterranean and Red Sea, in activities in the West Bank, and of course also used in daily intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and target killings in the Gaza Strip.

In general, Israel is one of the main arm exporters in the world. Since the early 1970s, Israeli arm sales' destinations have ranged from Latin America to South Africa. Mainly dictator regimes, Israeli arm sales to those countries during the Cold War sought to guarantee political support and financial resources as well. There are now some 600 security-related businesses with a total of around 25,000 employees in Israel. Now, the clients of Israeli arms range from the United States to Europe, Russia, China, India, and some African, Asian, and Latin American countries as well.

By the end of 2012, Israel's arms exports have risen to US \$7.5 billion. According to data provided by IHS Jane's, Israeli arms exports have increased by 74% since 2008, largely thanks to deals with India, which has become Israel's biggest weapons recipient over the past five years.¹⁶ This makes Israel the sixth largest arm exporter in the world, followed by Italy and China.¹⁷ Notwithstanding this, if Israel's own figures are considered, which include additional covert trade, Israel would rank fourth, ahead of Britain and Germany, and surpassed only by the United States, Russia, and France, as documented by Jonathan Cook.¹⁸

Recently revealed information estimates that around 6,800 Israelis are actively engaged in exporting arms. According to former Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Ehud Barak, some 150,000 Israeli households, about one in ten people in the country, depend economically on its military industries.¹⁹

15 Israel officially does not admit conducting such attacks. However, most media reports refer to Israel as the one party suspect of being behind such attacks

16 "Israel ranks as world's 6th largest arms exporter in 2012," 26 June, 2013, http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=10243

17 "Overtaking China and Italy Israel ranks as the world's sixth largest arms exporter in 2012" <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/premium-1.531956>

18 Cook, Jonathan "Israel's booming secretive arms trade: New documentary argues success of country's weapons industry relies on exploiting Palestinians," *Al Jazeera*, 16 Aug 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/08/201381410565517125.html>

19 Reported in Cook, 2013

Drones are regarded very highly in the Israeli arms industry. Though Israel started to acquire drone technology late in the 1970s, it managed to be the country that most uses it. After the 1973 war when the Egyptian and the Syrian Soviet-supplied surface-to-air missiles, which intensively hit Israeli air force planes, Israel ordered the American produced Ryne Firebee drones. IAI (Israel Aircraft Industries, now Israel Aerospace Industries) and Tadiran have succeeded in producing Israel's own light gilder-style Scout and Pioneer drones which were seen as the first modern UAV. This same prototype was later used in the American Gulf War. After this, the USA started its new drone project to develop the Predator. It is also believed that Israel used its own produced drones in the 1982 Lebanon war.

The Israeli army ranks high among the armies in the world which are dependent on unmanned weapons. They use these unmanned weapons for a plethora of purposes including as football cameras (detailed later in this section), camera balloons, jamming electronics, border based Sentry Tech monitoring and early warning systems, and as unmanned bulldozers and tanks. Giora Katz, vice president of Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, a leading Israeli military manufacturing company, expected that by 2025 a full one-third of all Israeli military hardware is going to be unmanned.²⁰

In early 2006, Israel moved some of its UAVs industry to the United States to encourage the USA and American companies to buy its products. According to some reports, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) has a subsidiary named Stark Aerospace based in Columbus, Mississippi. Stark Aerospace is "perhaps the only foreign-owned company with permission to fly a drone in U.S. airspace."²¹ Gradually, the drone producing sector in Israeli industry boomed. Israel is seeking to develop newer, miniature, nano-UAVs for use by special forces in hostile urban terrain and confined spaces.²² The most recent industry survey found that 20 different Israeli firms were working on over 50 different types of UAVs, producing them both domestically and via overseas subsidiaries.²³ The main Israeli drone producers are Israel Aerospace Industries, Elbit systems, EMIT Aviation Consult, and the Technion.

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) is the leader in this regard. It produces three of Israel's main combat drones, including the Heron TP, Harop, and Harpy. Harop, which is also known as Harpy2, is 2.5 meters and carries a single high-explosive warhead of 23 kg. Upgraded versions of the Harpy are equipped with a dual sensor and datalink to allow it "to get updates on potential targets and be directed against a specific emitter."²⁴ The Heron TP (Eitan), a high-altitude, long-endurance

drone weighs more than 4½ tonnes, can also carry a 1,000-kilogram payload, is one of the leading drones used in Israel's war against the Palestinians in Gaza. It can stay aloft in the air for up to 36 hours.²⁵

Elbit Systems is the second largest Israeli UAV producer. It makes the Hermes 450 model. The sophisticated drone has precise sensors so that its operator in the military base can read a license plate number and determine whether a person on the ground is armed or not. Hermes is called the "workhorse of the Israeli Defense Force." Azerbaijan alone has recently purchased \$1.6 billion worth of Israeli military hardware, including Searchers, Herons, and Hermes.²⁶

EMIT Aviation Consult designs, develops, and manufactures unique, cost-effective, and full solution UAV systems. It produces the Sparrow-N, a combat tactical mini drone of only 45 kg. It carries a mission specific payload of 12 kg and cruises at 60-70 kts. for over four hours. It can be fitted with a larger fuel tank to facilitate extended flight duration.²⁷ It is reported that the British Army acquired one Sparrow-N system in early 2008 for evaluation in the Loitering Munitions Concept Demonstration (LMCD) phase of its Fire Precision Attack (IFPA).²⁸

The Technion Institute of Haifa is responsible for the Dragonfly UAV and the Stealth UAV. The Stealth UAV drone is designed to fly up to 2,977 kilometers without refueling. It can carry two 499 kg 'smart bombs' and be equipped with various sensors (electro-optic, infrared, and radar) to enable operation in the dark and under all weather conditions.²⁹ The Dragonfly UAV is a tiny, remote controlled drone capable of flying through windows and into homes and buildings for delicate spying operations. It has a nine inch (23cm) wingspan and a 7.9-inch (20cm) body modeled after the dragonfly insect.³⁰

Other Israeli UAVs include BlueBird's Spylite, Elbit Systems' Skylark, the Israel Aerospace Industries' Bird-Eye 650, and Aeronautics Defense Systems' Orbiter. Some drones are used by Israel for pure ISTAR purposes (intelligence, surveillance, target, acquisition, and reconnaissance). These include the Herms 450, the Heron, and the Searcher 2. Some drones are used to execute actual missile attacks. Of these, the MQ-1 Predator, the modified Herms 450, the Heron TP or the Etan are the most prominent. However, all those UAVs are used for ISTAR functions as well.

20 Levinson, Charles "Israeli Robots Remake Battlefield," The Wall Street Journal, 13 Jan. 2010

21 Benjamin, "The American manufacturer Northrop Grumman sells the Stark Aerospace drones," p15

22 O'Gorman, Rob & Abbott, Chris 2013

23 IBID

24 IBID

25 <http://www.israeli-weapons.com/weapons/aircraft/uav/heron/heron.html>

26 O'Gorman, Rob & Abbott, Chris "Remote control war: Unmanned combat air vehicles in China, India, Israel, Iran, Russia and Turkey," London, Open Briefing, 20 September 2013, p10

27 Information is taken from the EMIT Aviation Consult site: <http://www.epicos.com/epicos/extended/israel/EmitAviation/page01.html>

28 O'Gorman, Rob & Abbott, Chris 2013

29 <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/2798>

30 IBID

Israel ranks first in the drone export market, followed by the United States. Over the past eight years, Israel's drone sales have reached \$4.6 billion dollars.³¹ It accounts for almost 10% of its military exports.³² This is projected to grow 5-10% per year until at least 2020.³³

Israel's drone export is accounting for 41 percent of the global exports of drones between 2001 and 2011, followed by the United States.³⁴ Its export of drones reach 24 countries.³⁵ Half of its drone exports go to Europe, while four percent of its exports of drones go to the USA. Other destinations of Israeli drones are markets in Latin America and Asia. The report by IHS Jane's predicts that Israel will sell twice as many drones as the U.S. in 2014.

While using drones might be more risky in areas where the enemy might have similar unmanned aerial technology or a sophisticated radar system, it is less costly and risky in Gaza as the Palestinians have no sophisticated or developed weapons to detect Israeli advanced drones. It is an unbalanced game where the most developed and modernized military weapons are deployed to frighten and terrify some 1.8 million citizens for the self-centered concept of security.

31 Rogers, Paul "Drone warfare: a global danger," Open Democracy, 26 September 2013 <http://www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers/drone-warfare-global-danger>

32 "Israel is world's largest drone exporter," The Guardian, 20 May 2013 www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/20/israel-worlds-largest-drone-exporter

33 O'Gorman, Rob & Abbott, Chris 2013

34 Silver, 2012

35 Morley, Jefferson "Israel's drone dominance," Salon.com, 15 May 2012

The Gaza Strip: Nearly a Half Century of Israeli Occupation

One point eight million Palestinians live in the tiny 365kms of coastal strip on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean sea. The strip is located in the south-west of Israel and is surrounded by Israeli borders from the east and the north. It also borders Egypt from the southwest. After the 1948 war, the Gaza Strip was left under Egyptian administration until Israel occupied the densely populated area during the 1967 war and administrated it with military orders. During the Israeli military administration, infrastructure was very poor and resulted in a weak economy, poor health conditions, and a substandard educational system. Israel conducted what Sara Roy called a process of de-development, where the Palestinians living in the Strip were deprived of any basic rights.³⁶ Israel applied a policy of collective punishment where ordinary people were subject to harsh measures. Thousands were killed and many more thousands were imprisoned or injured in peaceful demonstrations launched by the armless citizens to end the occupation. The peak of these demonstrations was in the first Intifada, which broke out in December 1987. Since 1967, Israel confiscated Gazan lands and farms, and built settlements on them.

With the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the State of Israel in 1993, Israel redeployed its army in the Gaza Strip in 1994 to allow for the newly established Palestinian Authority to deploy its policing forces. Israel however, kept control of the main roads and the areas surrounding the settlements. Most importantly, it stayed at the Rafah crossing with Egypt, the only international crossing for Gaza with the outside world, as Israel prevented Palestinians the use of Erez checkpoint for only special cases.

With the outbreak of the second Intifada (also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada) in September 2000, Israel tightened its policies and restrictions on the Gaza Strip. In 2005, Israel withdrew its army and settlers to the borders of Gaza in what is known as the disengagement plan. Though Israel went out of the Strip, it did not actually leave it. Its soldiers are present at the borderline of Gaza and penetrate the Gaza territories when they feel like under the pretext of security considerations. In addition to that, Israel until now controls the main crossing of the Gaza Strip. Until recently, Israel used to close the Rafah Crossing with Egypt. Though the withdrawal from the strip led to considerable improvement in the freedom of movement, movement to and from the strip became harder.

36 Sara Roy, "The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development," Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington September 1995

In practice, Israel retained control of the crossings and of Gaza's air space and territorial waters.³⁷ Palestinian Lawyer Ahlam Aqra of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights affirms that the occupation is still there even if Israel redeployed its forces. It controls Gaza's air, sea, and entrances completely.³⁸

As a result of the general election in 2006, Hamas, the main Islamist political movement of Palestine, won the majority of the Palestinian legislative seats. Hamas formed its own government hitherto and engaged in local tensions with its rival, Fatah. In July 2007, Hamas took over the Gaza Strip and became its sole ruler. The already tense relations between Israel and the Gaza Strip witnessed a new phase of tension as the Israeli army continued its incursions inside the Gaza and sometimes it managed to penetrate the highly populated areas of northern Gaza and Rafah.

As of 2007, Israel hardened its collective punishment measures against the people of Gaza. In other terms, Israel imposed a blockade on the strip, thereby restricting to the minimum the movement of persons and goods. Figures provided by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territory (OCHA) are very telling in this regard.³⁹ For example, in terms of food supply, less than one truckload of goods per day exited Gaza in the first half of 2013, compared to 38 during the first half of 2007. The only functioning official crossing for goods to and from Gaza, Karim Abu Salim, was closed for almost half of the time in the first four months of 2013. Farmers are not allowed to access their farms within 300 meters from the fence surrounding Gaza while it is still very risky to access lands several hundred meters beyond. Fishermen are allowed to access less than one-third of the fishing areas allocated to them under the Oslo Accords, only six out of 20 nautical miles. Most of the time, Israeli military sea boats shoot the Palestinian finishing boats and arrest the fishermen. In some cases, some of the fishermen have been killed or injured. The unemployment rate reaches 34.5%, one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. Some 57% of Gazan households are food insecure and about 80% are aid recipients. Over 90% of the water extracted from the Gaza aquifer is unsafe for human consumption.

In health terms, according to OCHA reports, the import restrictions have impeded the expansion and upgrading of Gaza's sewage infrastructure. Nearly 90 million liters of untreated or partially treated sewage are discharged into the sea every day. The contamination of Gaza's seawater poses a serious health hazard.⁴⁰

37 Amnesty International, "Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories: The conflict in Gaza: A briefing on applicable law, investigations and accountability," 2009-01-19. Retrieved 2009-06-05

38 Interview with Ahlam Aqra, 18/11/2013, at 13pm

39 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory (OCHA), "The Gaza Strip: The Humanitarian Impact of Movement Restrictions on People and Food," July 2013

40 IBID

Gaza suffers from a poor economic performance, low level of daily services, undeveloped infrastructure, and an unstable political future. Israel, as the Occupying Power, is responsible for most of Gaza's problems, especially those related to food and fuel supply. Consequently, it is essential to view Israeli restriction policies as part of, and complementary for, its military policies. Given this, Israeli drone attacks, as well as its continuous infantry incursions inside the Gaza Strip, its harsh measures against the civilians, fishermen, farmers, and its construction of buffer zones, are all but a reinvention of its occupation.

Israel and Gaza: Reinventing the Occupation

Gaza was the theatre of Israel's continuous military operations and never stopped to be so even when Israel withdrew its forces from inside the coastal strip in 2005. Ironically, Israeli operations have been intensified since 2005, leading to thousands of victims and massive destruction in Gaza. Regrettably, much of what the international community built and constructed through money from their tax payers has been destroyed by Israel's bulldozers, air forces, and tanks.

This new form of occupation includes manipulating different ways of controlling and affecting the lives of the Palestinians in Gaza through controlling their land, borders, air space, and even their sea. While not physically present, the Israeli army is watching and following many details in Gaza through their soldiers stationed within the borderlines or inside their military ships, which are situated only a few kilometers away. Most importantly, the Israeli army is watching over Gaza through receiving and analyzing every minute image captured by the remotely controlled vehicles (drones) hovering in the skies of Gaza or by different other remotely controlled machines including balloons and robots, among others. This process also includes daily military operations, mainly in the border area, carried out by tanks, airplanes, and ships, which target deep into Gazan territory.

According to statistics provided by the Gaza based Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, some 5,059 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces since 2000 until the end of 2012. Of these, 1,120 were children and 240 women. In addition to that, seven foreigners were killed, including four Egyptians, two British citizens, and one American citizen. The Israeli activities in this same period led to the destruction of 21,369 houses, in which 5,821 were totally damaged and 15,548 were partially damaged. The damage done to those houses left some 206,337 persons homeless for certain periods of time. Furthermore, the result of Israeli activities include the destruction of 1,045 public facilities, including 41 health institutions, 293 educational institutions (schools and universities), and 188 places of worships. Also, 542 factories were damaged.⁴¹ A report by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights laments that discussion on Gaza has recently shifted to issues relating to basic needs and means of subsistence such as food supply, construction materials, electricity, fuel, and water supply, where the essential issues related to the Israeli occupation and the political rights of the Palestinians, including their right to live in peace and practice self-determination, are absent.⁴²

41 See data on Al-Mezan's site at: <http://www.mezan.org>

42 Palestinian Center for Human Rights, "Summary Report on the Human Rights Situation in the oPt in 2013," Gaza, 2013

Recently, Israel has launched two main assaults against the Gaza Strip in which thousands were killed and injured. While saying that the main aim of its assaults is to topple the regime of Hamas in Gaza and to limit the Palestinian groups of launching local missile attacks against Israeli villages and towns, Israel has put 1.8 million people under military fire, bombings, and missile attacks, committing what an international investigation report called crimes against humanity.

From 22 December 2008 until 18 January 2009, Israel targeted the Gaza Strip from land, air, and sea. The Gaza based Palestinian Center for Human Rights reported that the offensive left 1,419 Palestinians dead, including 1,167 civilians, including at least 308 minors under the age of 18. The Center also reported more than 5,000 Palestinians wounded. Some 3,540 housing units were completely destroyed, with another 2,870 sustaining severe damage. More than 20,000 people were made homeless. Also, 268 private businesses were destroyed and another 432 damaged. In the same offensive, almost 20,000 meters (approx. 12 miles) of water pipes, four water reservoirs, 11 wells, sewage networks, and pumping stations, and 107 UNRWA installations were damaged. Israeli shelling also damaged 18 schools, including eight kindergartens.

In April 2009, the UN Human Rights Council established a fact finding mission to investigate possible violations of international law committed during the Israeli assault. Led by Justice Richard Goldstone, a former judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and war crimes prosecutor for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. The Goldstone Report is a 575-page document detailing alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli military.⁴³ According to the international report, "such attacks violated fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law, notably the prohibition on direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects (the principle of distinction), the prohibition on indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, and the prohibition on collective punishment."⁴⁴

During the Israeli assault in November 2012 which lasted 8 days, according to human rights reports, 178 were killed and 1,039 people were injured, including 315 children and 191 women, 963 houses were damaged or destroyed totally and 179 houses were partially damaged or destroyed. Additionally, 10 health centers, 35 schools, two universities, 15 NGO offices, 30 mosques, 14 media offices, 92 industrial and commercial facilities, one UNRWA food distribution center, eight government ministry buildings, 14 police/security stations, five banks, 34 vehicles, three youth clubs, three cemeteries, and two bridges were either totally or partially damaged.⁴⁵

43 <http://www.ungoldstonereport.com/>

44 Amnesty International "Operation „Cast Lead: 22 Days of Death and Destruction," MDE, July, 2009

45 Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, "Field report on Israel's attacks on Gaza, violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law committed by Israeli occupation forces in the reporting period: 14-21 November 2012," November 2012, Gaza

During the offensives, Israel used indiscriminate munitions, including shells packed with white phosphorus. According to Salah Abdelatti, a legal expert in the Independent Commission for Human Rights, Israel behaves as a state above the law. It commits crimes, uses weapons internationally prohibited, kills civilians, and destroys their properties. He is even quoted as saying, "these are crimes against humanity."⁴⁶

In both assaults, drones were heavily used and caused much of the death and destruction. Drones were of double use in the war. First, they provided support to other units of the army on the ground and they were frequently used to hit targets in the field. In sum, drones played a major role in these two assaults, as in all Israeli activities since 2000, whereby they provide both a tactical component, as well as a destructive component.

Droning Gaza: A Videogame

The Israeli Air Force is the main component of Israel's strategy of dealing with the Gaza Strip. As Israel redeployed its soldiers and infantry units and positioned them on the borders of the strip, in what is known the "disengagement plan" in 2005, Israel never gave up the idea of controlling the Palestinians or leaving them to decide their future. In fact, Israel simply replaced ground troops and settlements with another presence, albeit more severe and destructive. The Israeli Air Force, and in particular the UAVs, were the new tools of Israeli domination of Gaza. What the Israeli infantry troops and tanks can do on the ground, the UAV can do more effectively. They watch, report, and act without risking the lives of the soldiers or the safety of the troops and machines. Israel, which wanted to leave the Gaza Strip physically, but without ending its control there, found the solution in controlling it from the air. In this vein, it intensified the use of drone technology so that Gaza came under total surveillance and reconnaissance day and night. It is exactly what the head of the Israeli Air Force put clearly in 2004 when he stated that, "our vision of air control zeroes in on the notion of control. We're looking at how you control a city or a territory from the air when it's no longer legitimate to hold or occupy that territory on the ground."⁴⁷ In lieu thereof, Israel is offering the political dictionary with a new definition of occupation wherein the Occupying Power keeps the occupants hostage to its UAVs screening, control and extrajudicial execution without claiming presence there.

The Israeli Air Force has three drone squadrons. The 200 Squadron, which was established in 1971, operates the Scout (Zahavan) drone Searcher (Hugla), the Searcher (II) drone. In 2005-2006, the Heron and Heron TP (Shoval and Eitan) drones were added to the squadron. The squadron also operates the Ryan Firebee I and II and the BQM-74 Chukar drones.⁴⁸

In 2003 during the second Intifada, the 166 Squadron was established and operates the Elbit/Silver Arrow Hermes 450 drones. Both the 166 and 200 drone squadrons are flown from the Palmachin air force base located on the Mediterranean Sea near the cities of Rishon LeZion and Yavne, near the Soreq nuclear research center. It is about 20 miles northeast of Gaza. A third drone squadron, the 210 Squadron was formed in 2010 to fly Hermes/Eitan drones from the Tel Nof Air Force Base near Rehovot, and is one of three principal airbases of the Israeli Air Force. The Tel Nof Air Base is about 17 miles north of Gaza.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Interview with Salah Abdelatti, 5 November 2013, at 11:00

⁴⁷ Opall-Rome, Barbara "Israel AF Wants Wider Role in Anti-Terror War," Defense News, 5 January 2004

⁴⁸ <http://warisacrime.org/content/israeli-drone-strikes-gaza-november-2012-attack-two-thirds-killed-were-civilians>

⁴⁹ <http://warisacrime.org/content/israeli-drone-strikes-gaza-november-2012-attack-two-thirds-killed-were-civilians>

In previous years, Israel used helicopters to assassinate Palestinians, with the start of the second Intifada, it introduced drones to execute these assassinations. Helicopters make a loud sound which targets take as a warning to hide. Drones can hide and hit targets without making a warning sound. In addition, as drones are hovering all day and night, targeted persons will not be able to distinguish if the drone is doing a normal reconnaissance job or preparing for an attack. As a result, they lose their ability to make a choice as whether to hide or not.

Israel uses many unmanned tools to gather intelligence information, jam, and target Palestinians from the sky. These include, besides the UAVs mini robots and footballs cameras, electronic jamming and sentry tech remote-operated weapons stations. All these comprise day and night zoom cameras, mapping systems for reconnaissance, electronic jammers, and targeting weapons.⁵⁰

Israel has fixed Sentry Tech monitoring and early warning system along the Gaza border. Camera operators at bases inside Israel, miles away from the border, monitor the border area from the Palestinian side and give orders to the infantry units on the ground after analyzing the information received from the cameras. However, in normal days, the operator in the base engages in targeting as each Sentry Tech unit comprises a machine gun and sometimes long-range anti-tank guided missiles.

Likewise, people living close to the border areas usually see balloons stationed on the sky on the Palestinian side of the border. These balloons help monitor the life of the Palestinians by constantly taking photographs of Palestinians. Other forms of camera deployed include 'football cameras,' which are dropped by hand or rolled inside a building and then remotely operated.

The Israeli army uses telephone and mobile systems to contact citizens in order to threaten them if they hide, assist, or cooperate with the militants. This is done through recorded voice calls or text messages. In addition to that, the Israeli army interrupts local radio and television channels to broadcast information warning the Palestinians of the brutality of the Israeli response in case of their military engagement with the Israeli army. However, while attacking, Israel disables all communication systems in Gaza. By and large, "the various devices have created a surveillance and early warning umbrella able to monitor and target the entire (Gaza) Strip from every possible angle."⁵¹

Drones loitering over Gaza range in size from small intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance models, which might be launched by hand and are medium to large sized, which are typically armed and capable of conducting missile and bomb attacks. While seated in his military base inside Israel, a soldier is viewing

50 Eposito, p182

51 IBID

Gaza street by street, house by house, moving from one area to another and when he feels like it he might send a fake rocket to terrify a group of people, and when he suspects that a person might carry a gun, even if this is an object similar to a gun like a long stick, he might fire heavy weaponry from the sky. Being mistaken or not, the missile explosion is going to kill, injure, and damage many others around the suspected target.

He or she is watching a video game, one in which the bad guys are potential targets. However, in this game all what appears in the screen is potentially bad. It is up to the player in the military base to decide. It is his own sensation and judgment. He or she is being the judge and the executer, even without knowing the name of his victims.

Statistics provided to the researcher by Al-Mezan tell that 1,101 have been killed by drones strikes since 2000, of which, 200 alone were killed in 2012.⁵² The Palestinian Center for Human Rights says that between 2006 and 2011, some 825 people have been killed by drones in Gaza, most of whom were civilians.⁵³ However, recent revised statistics provided to the researcher by the Center say that out of 2,100 persons killed by air strikes since September 2000 until December 2013, over 644 were killed by drones strike. This is equivalent to one-third of the original total. Out of these, the Center classified 399 as civilians, some 62 percent of the overall. Of those civilians, some 183 were children and 16 were women.⁵⁴

Reviewing drone strikes in Gaza, five kind of strikes can be identified:

Designated Strike, in which the drone hits a specific individual or a group of individuals whom Israeli sources identify as being potential targets. This includes high-profile assassinated leaders like killing the leader of Al-Qassam Brigades, Ahmad Al-Jabri, in November 2012 and his bodyguard. However, in many cases the effect of the strike is not limited to the targeted person. In fact, in most cases the target would be either in a car driving in a crowded street (such as Jabri's case) or in a house in a highly populated area. The blast radius from a Hellfire missile is not limited to the few meters around the designated target as its shrapnel kills and injures people who may be in the streets or even in nearby buildings.

Signature Strike, in which the drone missile does not target a specific person or character, rather it is directed towards a specific pattern of behavior or activity. This includes large gatherings for example, which might be mistaken for a demonstration or farmers picking olives early in the dawn and might be mistaken for militants sneaking to penetrate the border. Many citizens were hit by

52 Interview with Mohamad Matter, 26 November 2013, at 11:00

53 Wilson, Scott "In Gaza, lives shaped by drones," 3 December 2011
http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-12-03/world/35287909_1_drone-strike-drone-aircraft-gaza-strip

54 Information provided during interview with Mr. Basam Aqra from the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 18 November 2013, at 14:00

a drone missile because their pattern of behavior was similar to that of a militant. Signature strikes are very common in Israel's drone war against the Palestinian citizens of Gaza. Some were hit while carrying pipelines on their motorcycles, while unloading a truck of gas, or working in a blacksmith workshop.

Striking Property and Facilities, in which the drone strikes a fixed target, such as a public or private building, partially or totally destroying it. These buildings might be governmental facilities like police stations and ministries, or academic buildings such as schools, universities, cultural centers, or military compounds which Israel claims to be used by the militant groups, or private houses owned by individuals whom Israel accuses of participating in actions against its forces. In most cases, suspected individuals were not in the house and targeting their houses is an act of punishing their family as they become homeless and unprotected during the assault.⁵⁵

The "Double Tap" is a situation where the drone strikes a place with a missile then it strikes back with another missile after a short period. What happens in most cases is that people gather after the first strike to save and rescue the injured. So in a few minutes, scores and sometimes hundreds of people are gathered in the place. When the second missile is fired, they will not have much time to escape. In many cases, scores are injured or killed as a result of this.⁵⁶

Participatory Strike, in which drones perform different strikes as part of general and larger strikes performed by other military organs. In many cases, drones shoot missiles in the vicinity of a potential theatre of operations, mainly when tanks and infantry are preparing to penetrate a border area. This includes hitting an open field, orchards, farms, and even random buildings. Drones will attack these targets to divert attention away from areas which artillery or warplanes may be attacking shortly.⁵⁷

55 See cases in Al-Mezan Center reports, "Field Report on Israel's attacks on Gaza, violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law committed by Israeli occupation forces in the reporting period: 14-21 November 2012" November 2012, Gaza The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, "Gaza Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (14 -21 Nov. 2012)

56 See cases in Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 2012.

57 Esposito, p176.

Civilian Loss of Life Due to Drone Attacks

"For Israel, all civilians in Gaza are potential combatants, so that they are suspects," comments Ramzi Okasha, a youth activist.⁵⁸ Israel, since the late 1980s, has invented what the then Israeli military recommendation called 'the ticking bomb threat,' referring to potential individuals classified as an imminent danger. The main idea of the ticking bomb theory is to get rid of the suspect without capturing him, as Esam Younis of the Al-Mezan Center explains.⁵⁹ In other words, ticking bombs for Israel might include all male Palestinians. Therefore, most of the victims in Gaza are civilians who are not engaged in military actions.

During the 23day attack against Gaza, between December 2008 and January 2009, it is estimated that a total of 42 drone attacks were launched which killed 87 civilians. Of these, 29 were children. Some 73 others were wounded directly from such attacks.

Also, the use of drones in the war Israel waged against the Gaza Strip in November 2012 was decisive. The offensive started with a drone strike to kill the Hamas military leader Ahamd Jabari on 14 November. During the eight days assault, drone strikes killed 36 persons, including four children under the age of 16, and wounded 100 people. Around two-thirds of those killed by drones strikes (24 of the 36), were civilians. The number of those killed by drones accounts for 23% of the total killing during the operation, while drone strikes account for five percent of total military strikes, 72 strikes out of 1,350 reported by human rights organizations during the war.⁶⁰

Drones are the first signs of war for the people of Gaza. Though they never stop circling the sky of the strip, the potential of war is heard loudly and war is anticipated when the drones intensify their circling and their noisy whirr. All of a sudden, the continuous whirr becomes loud enough that you may not be able to sleep or even, if it happens that more than one drone is over your head, to make a conversation with the person in the same room. These are the actual signs of war for the people of Gaza. Drones scrutinize everything in Gaza, but mainly areas where the infantry units are going to operate in the future. In many cases, drones fire anti-tank and anti-personnel rockets. It prepares the ground for

58 Interview with Ramzi Okasha, 13 November 2013, at 16:00

59 Interview with Esam Younis, 1 November 2013, at 10:00

60 Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, "Field Report on Israel's attacks on Gaza, violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law committed by Israeli occupation forces in the reporting period: 14-21 November 2012" November 2012, Gaza The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, "Gaza Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (14 -21 Nov. 2012)

the other units to pursue their destructive operations. This includes providing the units with information about the ground (routes, buildings, possible danger, etc.) directly captured from the sky.

During the 2008 attacks against Gaza, it was the first time that UAVs, helicopters, and warplanes were directed by infantry commanders on the ground "without having to run operational orders through air force command." Each drone squadron circling overhead through an air-support controller team sent direct information to a certain bridge commander in the field. Receiving real-time surveillance data directly from the drone in the sky, commanders on the ground assessing the situation the battlefield were able to call in air strikes from the air force or tanks.⁶¹

In six drones attacks reported by Human Rights Watch, 29 were killed among them, including eight children. Five of the six attacks took place in broad daylight and in civilian areas that did not witness any fighting. For example, on December 27, an Israeli drone fired a lethal missile in the neighborhood of the UNRWA Gaza Technical College, where 12 people waiting for a bus were killed. In another accident, a drone launched a missile towards a flat-bed truck parked outside a metal shop. Nine people were killed, including two children.⁶²

An investigation done by the Guardian reveals evidence of civilians being hit by fire from unmanned drone aircraft.⁶³ The newspaper gathered testimony on many incidents where a drone missile was fired against clearly distinguishable civilian targets. In one case, a family of six was killed when a drone missile hit the courtyard of their house. As the report concludes, while the drone is said to be so accurate that its operators can tell the color of the clothes worn by a target, civilians can easily be executed.

Human rights and journalist field investigations have amassed credible evidence indicating that most victims of the drone strikes were civilians. Of these, the story of Mamoun Aldam (12 years old), who was killed by a drone missile while playing with his football in the family's farmland. On 20 June 2012 at around 2:30pm, his mother, blind father, and the child were all in the garden when a missile fell on the garden. Mamoun was found dead and his blind father (67 years old) was severely injured. The mother, Amna, tells the story:

"We were not armed. we are civilians. The trees in the farm were recently planted, so they are still small. Anyone could see from above that we were just civilians, so we did not expect to be attacked... (Mamoun) was playing about 20 meters from where we were resting and I asked him to come

61 IBID

62 Human Rights Watch, "Precisely Wrong: Gaza Civilians Killed by Israeli Drone-Launched Missiles," June 30, 2009

63 Chassay, Clancey "Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles – the dreaded drones – caused at least 48 deaths in Gaza during the 23-day offensive," 23/3/2009 www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/23/gaza-war-crimes-drones

*back. Suddenly, I heard an explosion. I saw dust, smoke, and fire where Mamoun had been standing. I heard him scream once, and then he went quiet. I kept calling out for him, but he did not answer back. There was dust everywhere and I could not see anything. When I finally saw Mamoun, he was lying on the ground and there was a lot of blood around him. His legs had been torn off. There was shrapnel all over his body. His clothes were burned and he was almost naked. He was dead. (Also) I found my husband bleeding heavily from his head. His left hand and right leg were also bleeding. He was touching his forehead and asking me if it was sweat. He is diabetic and has high blood pressure, so I thought he was going to die from all the bleeding. I was screaming for people to come and help us. There were pieces of my child's body everywhere."*⁶⁴

Reality on the ground and testimonies heard from the victims show how Israel's claims about targeting militants rings hollow. Mounir al-Jarah tells the Guardian the story of his sister's family, who were all killed by a missile fired by a drone on 16 January 2009.⁶⁵ Sitting around drinking tea with the family in their small courtyard, he heard the loud buzzing of an Israeli drone, which was clearly visible in the sky above. Suddenly, he saw a ball of light hurtling down towards him. The loud explosion threw him backwards. He gathered his strength and stumbled out into the courtyard where he saw the scene he says will never leave him. The six members of the family had been blown to pieces, with their flesh pieces and blood coat each wall of the narrow enclosure.

Mounir reports: "We found Mohammed lying there, cut in half. Ahmed was in three pieces, Wahid was totally burnt, his eyes were gone. Wahid's father was dead. Nour had been decapitated. We couldn't see her head anywhere ... You cannot imagine the scene, a family all sitting around together and then, in a matter of seconds, they were cut to pieces. Even the next day we found limbs and body parts on the roof, including feet and hands."⁶⁶

Robert Hewson of Jane's Defense Weekly, who has been monitoring armed drones and their role in assassinations in Palestine since 2004, informed the Guardian that most of Israel's armed drones use a modified anti-tank weapon called a mikholit (paintbrush in Hebrew) that delivers a small but intense explosion."⁶⁷

In Israel's 2012 offensive, many civilians were killed by drones. On 16 November 2012, an Israeli drone fired a missile at a number of Palestinian civilians who were in the garden of a house belonging to Ghazi Abed Salaman. As a result,

64 "Drones Over Gaza," 12 July 2012, <http://desertpeace.wordpress.com/2012/07/12/drones-over-gaza/>

65 Chassay, 2009

66 IBID

67 IBID

five civilians, including a child and a woman, were wounded. Later, Tahreer Ziad Mohammed al-Bahri, 22 years old and Mohammed Talal Saeed Salman, 27 years old, died of their wounds.⁶⁸ On 18 November 2012, an Israeli drone fired a missile at a small lorry used to sell desalinated water as it was travelling in the Jumezat Abu Ghaneema area of Beit Lahiya. As a result, the driver, Suhail 'Ashour Hamada, 42 years old, and his son 'Ashour, 10, were killed. According to medical sources at Kamal Odwan hospital, the bodies were torn to pieces in the attack. According to Al-Mezan's reports, the lorry was totally destroyed.⁶⁹

On 18 November 2012, an Israeli drone fired a missile at Jalal Mohammed Saleh Nasser, 42, and his child, 8 year old Hussein, while they were fixing the water network on the roof of their house at the Abu Sharekh intersection in the town of Jabalya. The father and his child were injured.⁷⁰

On 19 November 2012, an Israeli drone fired a missile targeting farmer Abdel Rahman Mohammed Al-Attar, 51, as he was in front of his house near the As-Salateen water well in Beit Lahiya, in the north Gaza Strip. As a result, Abdel Rahaman Al-Attar was killed. According to Al-Mezan's field investigations, Al-Attar used to go to the market to sell potatoes using his donkey-driven cart.⁷¹

On 20 November 2012, an Israeli drone fired a missile at bird hunter Mohammed 'Awad, 40, and his son Yahiya, 17, as they were in the Hamada family farm east of Al-Waha resort in the northwest area of Beit Lahiya. As a result, Yahiya was immediately killed and his father sustained critical injuries. According to Al-Mezan's field investigations, the father and his son used to hunt birds in that area.⁷²

On 21 November 2012, an Israeli drone fired a missile targeting a family that was sitting in their farm near their home on Ahmed Yasen street in the Ibad Ar-Rahman neighborhood, west of Jablaiya. As a result, Talal Sa'adi Al-Asali, 48 years old, his son Ayman, 19, and his granddaughter, Abeer, 12, were killed.⁷³ On 20 November 2012, Israeli drones launched an airstrike at the Jordanian Hospital located on Tunis Street in Tal Al-Hawa neighborhood, west of Gaza City. As a result, the missile left a hole in the top roof of the hospital.

Crucially, the increasing numbers of civilian casualties undermines the argument on the efficiency of drones and applause its advocates hail it with. "Israel's

argument that the technical advancement and precision of its weaponry allows it to be more careful and human in the execution of war is a valid one."⁷⁴ Human Right Watch states that "the technological capabilities of drones and drone-launched missiles make the violations even more egregious."⁷⁵ The more horrific incidents where children, women, and the elderly were slaughtered in cold blood were results of drones attacks.

68 The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, "Gaza Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (14-21 Nov. 2012)

69 Al Mezan 2012

70 The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, "Gaza Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (14-21 Nov. 2012)

71 IBID

72 IBID

73 IBID

74 Esposito, p175

75 Human Rights Watch, 2009

The Differentiation between Civilian and Combatant

Even the whole argument of hitting combatants needs to be verified as in many incidents citizens were killed by drone strikes because they were taken as militants while this was not the case. Most of the people killed by drones are labeled “suspects” by Israel. Consequently, a “suspect” might be killed while having tea with his kids or engaging in a family discussion with his parents. The “suspect” might be someone who is believed to have participated in attacks against Israel according to information available to the Israeli army. This might have been years ago or a few minutes ago. Of course, this remains classified intelligence information gathered by informants or other sketchy outlets.

Accordingly, many of those designated as combatants by the Israeli army are citizens suspected to be militant. This raises the question of how one is classified as a “combatant” while not in a combat area. Definitely, a combatant is someone who is engaged in an exchange of fire or military actions at the moment of war, not someone who is suspected to take part in previous actions or someone who intends to participate. Even if an individual has participated in past military actions and he decided to return to normal life and abandon violence, a death decision cannot be made retroactively. As much as he is not in actual engagement, killing him is an extrajudicial and is a violation of his basic rights.

The criteria stipulated in the final section of Article 51(3) of the First Protocol Addition to the Geneva Conventions regarding who is to be protected puts conditions on targeting civilians and labeling them militants. “Civilians shall enjoy the protection afforded by this Section, unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities.” What this means is that targeted persons must be participating in direct hostilities at the moment of their killing and that their direct involvement in hostilities has not ceased before their killing. In other words, customary international law allows attacks against civilians only if it is proven that they directly participated in hostilities and if they are attacked during the period of this direct participation.

The report by the prosecutor’s office of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which reviewed NATO’s bombings in [the former] Yugoslavia ruled in the matter of **Prosecutor v. Halilovic** that:

“The Trial Chamber finds that it is the specific situation of the victim at the moment the crime was committed that must be taken into account in determining his or her protection under Common Article 3. The Trial

Chamber considers that relevant factors in this respect include the activity, whether or not the victim was carrying weapons, clothing, age and gender of the victims at the time of the crime. While membership of the armed forces can be a strong indication that the victim is directly participating in the hostilities, it is not an indicator which in and of itself is sufficient to establish this. Whether a person did or did not enjoy protection of Common Article 3 has to be determined on a case-by-case basis.”⁷⁶

“Ethically, the idea of putting an end to a human life is a matter which needs very strict guarantees according to international law which includes a fair trial, legal procedure, and granting him the right to defend himself or herself” as Esam Younis puts it. In Younis’ words, international law nearly makes putting an end to human life something which hardly can happen lawfully. This kind of willful killing is a war crime which international law prohibits and condemns and asks for punishing its executer.⁷⁷ It is the same opinion that human rights advocate Salah Abdelatti from the Independent Commission for Human Rights tells. “The targeting of persons is not done in moment of fighting, he is not preparing for a military action, he is not in a military basement, or he is not in a room planning for actions. As much as he stops fighting it is not legal to target him to death.”⁷⁸ Even if the targeted person is wearing a military dress, he is not a militant as much as he is not in actual engagement in a military action as both Younis and Abdelatti agree.

In the moment of engagement, Younis explains “it is possible to kill the combatant because he has all means to defend himself, here there is kind of imparity between the fighting militants. Imagine when a militant is a captured prisoner, it is by no means lawful to kill him, though it was possible to do so one minutes before his capture. Why? Because one second after his capture the idea of parity is no longer is there. Therefore, he must be protected and not killed.”⁷⁹ Abdelatti elaborates that “as Palestinians do not have drones, an air force, or anti-craft weapons, then using drones is a violation of imparity required by international law. The killer and the killed are not having equal opportunities.”⁸⁰

The ability to kill individuals remotely without being directly engaged in a battle or just executing a death penalty (assassination) without even notifying the concerned person or giving him the right to defend his position or takes his precarious measures is ethically wrong. Therefore, the ethics behind using drones needs to be reviewed, as is it illegal to kill someone, even if he is such

⁷⁶ ICTY Judgment, Case No. IT-01-48-T, 16 November 2005, Paragraph 34

⁷⁷ Interview with Esam Younis, , 1 November 2013, at 10am

⁷⁸ Interview with Salah Abdelatti, 5 November 2013, at 11am

⁷⁹ Interview with Esam Younis, , 1 November 2013, at 10am

⁸⁰ Interview with Salah Abdelatti, 5 November 2013, at 11am

a danger to the security, without giving him the right to defend himself or to hear his argument and point of view. What happens is that someone sitting in an air conditioned office, inside a military base far away from the operations theatre, studies information and analyzes photos gathered and decides that the life of someone else has to reach its end. Had the target been engaged in direct military action, using a drone strike in getting rid of him is less controversial as the drone and at that time, would be like any other military machine taking part in the battlefield. Nonetheless, in a case where the suspect is not himself taking part directly in the actions, targeting him through an unseen weapon is completely unethical and is illegal. In addition to that, the basis of this ethical argument is enhanced by the huge numbers of mistakes that happen during operations. If the individual is not acting militarily then it is likely that he is going to be hit while engaging in normal social life, which increases the likelihood of endangering civilian lives. Furthermore, if not in operation, then he might be mistaken for other people. Ten years of Israeli military strike easily proves this.

Consequently, as civilians can be easily assumed as militant, they are likely to be killed by drone strikes. In many cases, there is no sign whatsoever which indicates that they are combatants. In the public conscious, drones have been associated by the senseless slaughter of civilians, including children. Given their characteristics and their footage capabilities, their infrared sensor and high-resolution cameras, drones are supposed to distinguish between a combatant carrying a gun and a shepherd carrying a stick. Many examples from Gaza reveal either the drones' inability to do so, or the Israeli army's indifference to make such a distinction.

If a member of a military group is not directly participating in military action at the time of his death, then his assassination is an extrajudicial killing. The ICTY ruled that:

*"While membership of the armed forces can be a strong indication that the victim is directly participating in the hostilities, it is not an indicator which in and of itself is sufficient to establish this. Whether a person did or did not enjoy protection of Common Article 3 has to be determined on a case-by-case basis."*⁸¹

Some 95 percent of those assassinated by drones Israel claims are combatants, were not in the moment of their assassination in military engagement. They were either driving cars, walking in the streets, or with their families as Younis says.⁸²

81 ICTY Judgment, Case No. IT-01-48-T, 16 November 2005, Paragraph 34

82 Interview with Esam Younis, 1 November 2013, at 10:00

Drones are claimed to be fitted with pinpoint accurate missiles that are provided with a camera which enables the operator to follow it from the moment of its firing to its impact with the target. So if he has any doubts about the target, he can redirect the missile towards any other place to avoid killing civilians, but this does not happen. In many cases, it was very clear that the targets were civilians and were even kids playing on the roof of their house when they were killed. As a publication on the Israeli war against Gaza remarks, it is not surprising that "these drone attacks failed to verify that the targets were combatants."⁸³

In an expression of malicious indifference to human life, the former head of the International Law Department of the Israeli army, Colonel Daniel Reisner, defends Israeli assassination crimes claiming that the continuity of the actions is what makes it acceptable in war. "What we are seeing now is a revision of international law (...). If you do something for long enough, the world will accept it. The whole of international law is now based on the notion that an act that is forbidden today becomes permissible if executed by enough countries... International law progresses through violations. We invented the targeted assassination thesis and we had to push it."⁸⁴

83 Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East "Factsheet: Illegal Use of Weapons by Israeli during Gaza Assault," Factsheet Series No. 67, created: January 2010

84 Chassay, Clancey "Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles – the dreaded drones – caused at least 48 deaths in Gaza during the 23-day offensive," 23 March 2009 www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/23/gaza-war-crimes-drones

The Psychological Impact of Drones: Killing the Appetite to Live

The continuous flying of drones for days on end leaves many mental and psychological impacts on the people of Gaza, specifically on children, relatives of victims, injured persons, old men, and women. By and large, Israeli collective punishment measures against the people of Gaza have left them with many psychological problems. According to Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawaheen from the Gaza Mental Health Center, some 33% of treated cases in the Gaza Mental Center suffer from stress related disorders associated, among other things, with drones strikes and sounds.⁸⁵

Children are traumatized by the strikes. The continuous loud hovering and fear of unexpected strike, all lead to psychological trauma, and is a kind of public torture. Mohammad Barakat, a Palestinian from Gaza, explains that "Palestinian children can recognize the difference between an F-15 and an F-16 warplane, and the difference between drones armed with missiles and surveillance drones just by their sound."⁸⁶ The Gaza Community Mental Health Program's research found that in 2009, some 91 percent of children in Gaza suffer from moderate to severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Samir Zaqout, a psychologist, says that according to some statistics, 70 percent of Gazan children suffer from a "negative effect," resulting from the constant hovering of the drones.⁸⁷

Psychologist Zaia Al-Fara, from the Gaza Program for Mental Health, explains that as drones are sources of previous killings and damage in attacks against Gaza, and are associated with bloody memories in the children's mind, their hovering leaves them with psychological shock.⁸⁸ Om Omar, a mother of three children told a reporter that the noise produced by the zanana leaves her children filled with fear and terror, and they keep asking her about the reason behind their continuous presence in the sky. The children cannot concentrate on their preparation for the final exams.⁸⁹

85 Interview with Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawaheen, 15 November 2013, at 11am

86 Quoted in Bartlett, Eva "Gangnam Style" parody puts spotlight on Gaza siege," *The Electronic Intifada*, 18 February 2013, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/gangnam-style-parody-puts-spotlight-gaza-siege/12203>

87 Zanon, Adel 2011
<http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=119884>

88 Shaban, Maysara "Zanana ... the sound which distract the mind of the pupils," 14 May 2013
<http://alray.ps/ar/index.php?act=post&id=105538>

89 IBID

Nour Balosha, a mother of one, says to the researcher that "it (the drone) astonishes my little daughter. When she hears the sound of the drone, she cries loudly and sometimes she explodes in waves of laughter."⁹⁰ Jasmine, a girl in the fourth grade, lives in trauma. She awakes every morning asking her mother when the zanana is going to stop. She imagines that at any moment, the drone will send a rocket close to her school or even hit the school. She is too busy thinking of its noise and the probability of its strikes that she will not have much energy to do her homework. The family is doing all they can to help Jasmine overcome the situation.⁹¹

Deena Waled, a mother of two says that: "My kids think of war and destruction when they hear drones. They cry and lose their ability to concentrate. I find it hard to make them sleep. It takes me a long time. The drones cause many psychological problems for the children, which results in bedwetting, nail biting, and sudden screaming. The moment my child hears the sound of the drone, he runs and sits in my lap, I find no words to calm him other than hugging him."⁹²

Al-Fara advises that the child cannot help himself in these situations. He or she needs the intervention of his parents who should understand his or her fear. The main mission parents must do is to quiet the children, hug them, and support them morally. They have to explain to them that the sound of the drones does not mean the war is coming. She recommends that families do not press their children and force them to study intensively because due to the semi-war situation of the area, their brains cannot properly absorb information.⁹³

Dr. Abu Tawheen explains that in the literature on trauma, if the cause is uncontrolled, unavoidable, and unpredictable, then the impact is destructive and very severe. With these three conditions, the people of Gaza live under fear and expectation associated with strikes, torn bodies, and death. This causes the people's mental energy to be devoted to negative thoughts instead of positive or neutral thoughts. This has a destructive impact, especially on children who are expected to perform in school. The drone sounds recall old memories of loss and destruction. In addition to that, it makes one feel like they are losing their ability to control their life.⁹⁴ It is advised that proper mental and psychological intervention is applied in order to lessen the impact of drones on the ability of the citizens of Gaza to live a normal and peaceful life. While it might not directly kill in time of truce, drones kill the people ability to life normally and their appetite to live.

90 Interview with Nour Balosha, 15 October 2013, at 10am

91 IBID

92 Interview with Deena Waleed, 15 October 2013, at 13:00

93 IBID

94 Interview with Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawaheen, 15 November 2013, at 11:00

The Social Impact: Not Only Torn Bodies, but Torn Society

The effects of drone strikes are not limited to their killing, injuring, or damaging, but include social effects as well. They spread fear, terror, and suspicion among citizens in the whole region where they whirl overhead. Drones affect social life and the daily pattern of behaviors. When hearing the sound of the drone, people abandon their cars, cancel their social plans, and stay indoors. They're afraid to be anywhere young men gather, or to go out in clothes that might be mistaken, in the eyes of a drone pilot, for a militant.⁹⁵ Nour Balosha says, "we live in a military camp. The drone transforms Gaza into a field of war."⁹⁶

Asam Al-Ghoul, Al-Monitor's Gaza correspondent explains her internal fear, saying that "when I return home from work I feel that it is over me and it is going to kill me any minute. This thinking of death paralyzes my ability to think of anything. I feel that I might die suddenly. Sometimes I look to the sky so that the drone sees that I am a journalist and not a gunman. This feeling haunts my calm until now. It makes me feel that the drone is the dictator of the sky."⁹⁷

Doctor Ihab Dially says that the appearance of the zanana, or hearing its sound, is annoying. It is a sign of horror and its whirl roams inside our heads and gives us headache. Our eyes cannot sleep, our kids want to sleep but they cannot.⁹⁸

"The Israelis went out from the doors (when they withdrew in 2005) and returned from the windows. Through their usage of drones, they have become present in the bedrooms of the people in Gaza," according to Esam Younis.⁹⁹ Asma Al-Ghoul says in the same vein that, "I feel like I am naked. All what I do is seen by the drone. The drone comes to disrupt my daily routine."¹⁰⁰

Rawan Yaghi writes that "living under drones is not only life threatening, but unbearably annoying. At times, drones don't leave the sky of Gaza for a long period of time, a week or more. It's like having this huge fly in your room that can't understand how the glass of the window is blocking its way out. At times,

95 Saletan, William "Occupy in the Sky," December 2011 http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/iran-says-it-downed-us-stealth-drone-pentagon-acknowledges-aircraft-downing/2011/12/04/gIQAyxa8TO_story.html.

96 Interview with Nour Balosha, 15 October 2013, at 10:00

97 Interview with Asam Al Ghoul, 26 October 2013, 15:00

98 <http://www.mjdagaza.eb2a.com/vb/archive/index.php/t-827.html>

99 Interview with Esam Younis, 1 November 2013, at 10:00

100 Interview with Asam Al-Ghoul, 26 October 2013, 15:00

you start swearing at the drone like it's one of those irritating people that nag you all the time."¹⁰¹

Furthermore, the results of the drone's presence affects the social fabric of the Palestinian family. Dr. Abu Tawheen explains that "the child expects that his father and mother are capable of protecting him, when he discovers that they are not capable of doing so, this leads to what psychologists call detachment, as the family is no more a trustworthy source of protection. Signs of this case are the inability to speak, stammering, problems thinking, and behavioral problems."¹⁰²

The continuous flying of the drone for days day and night does not give the citizens the chance to live in calm and peace. It puts them under constant stress and fear of a coming strike. If you live in a situation where the minimum level of feeling secure is not there and if the normal situation is the absence of such feeling, then you are not sure about your future or the future of your family, and you are always under threat. This leads to a state of cognitive impairment as Dr. Abu Tawheen elaborates.

Israel deploys all kinds of weapons in its attacks against Gaza in order to dominate the whole strip and control the operation in the ground. This destroys the ability of citizens to live a normal life. "It has left the Palestinian population subject to constant unnerving surveillance."¹⁰³ The aim of Israel is controlling Gazan society, making it lose its sense of security and weakening its ability to predict the future, according to Dr. Abu Tawheen.¹⁰⁴

101 Yaghi, Rawan "Living under drones in Gaza," 20 December 2012 <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/12/living-under-drones.html>

102 Interview with Dr. Ahamd Abu Tawaaheen, 15 November 2013, at 11:00

103 Boyle, 2013, p26

104 Interview with Dr. Ahamd Abu Tawaaheen, 15 November 2013, at 11:00

The Impact on Education: The Drone is in the Textbook

Many schools and academic institutions have been destroyed by drone strikes during the last ten years in the Gaza Strip. However, the major impact drones have had on the educational process in the strip is the fear and mental issues it leaves the pupils with. While they should be preparing for their classes and exams, they spend their time thinking of the next drone strike as its sound keeps hovering over their head.

Basma Louh, 17 years old and in her final year in the high school, told an Al-Raya reporter that she is afraid that she is not going to complete her exam as the zanana is making her life hard. Basma, who needs to pass the high school exams to be able to enter university, tried to create her own solution to get rid of the whir of the drones, which makes her unable to study. She put cotton buds in both her ears so that she can concentrate.¹⁰⁵

Aqel Hussain complains that his grades last year were bad because of the drones. "I always felt that it is there, inside my text books. I could not escape its sound."¹⁰⁶ His father Hussain tells how he worked hard with his wife to ease the life of their son so that he is able to study harder. "However, we could not because we ourselves were not able to concentrate sometimes because of the drone's noise."¹⁰⁷

Wasim Elian explains that during his exams last year, he faced problems concentrating most of the time. "The zanana sound was always around me, there was no space in my head for anything else."¹⁰⁸ Samah Abu Saif, 14 years old, tells how difficult it was for her to study while the zanana is in the sky. "I cannot, no way, it makes me afraid every minute. When I am afraid, I cannot study."¹⁰⁹

This also leaves more duties on the teacher who has to act as a psychologist, as well as a social worker. Hassan Nofal, a teacher in an elementary school in Jabalya, states that many times, especially when there were bombing in the night and drones are still flying, he has to spend half of the class trying to calm

105 Shaban, Maysara "Zanana ... the sound which distract the mind of the pupils," 14 May 2013 <http://alray.ps/ar/index.php?act=post&id=105538>

106 Interview with Aqel Hussain, 20 October 2013, at 17:00

107 Interview with Hussain Abu Elaish, 20 October 2013, at 17:30

108 Interview with Wasim Elian, 21 October 2013, at 14:00

109 Interview with Samah Abu Saif, 25 October 2013, at 10:00

down his students and to answer their questions about life and death.¹¹⁰ The tasks of the headmaster are even harder. Sami Etta, who served as headmaster before recently retiring, narrates how it was difficult for him and his staff to "return the school to its normal life while drones are flying above. We have to make sure that students are not afraid to the extent that they do not concentrate. Actually, they were terrified...you have to make solutions so they will attend their classes."¹¹¹

Dr. Abu Tawheen recommends that when reviewing the low passing levels of the high school exam, Tawjehi, no one paid attention to the psychological effect of drones in making the lives of the students hard and thus affecting their exam results. Most of the discussion on the low levels revolves around the curriculum, teaching methods, and the exams themselves.

Wasim, who is now in his last year of high school, hopes that during the Tawjehi exams things will be better. Faraj Elian, the father of Wasim recommends that more attention should be paid to the psychology of their sons and daughters in school. He is afraid that their performance will be affected and that this will leave a negative impact on the future development of Palestinian educational and scientific achievements.¹¹²

110 Interview with Hassan Nofal (fake name), 21 October 2013, at 11:00

111 Interview with Sami Eitta, 15 October 2013, at 17:00

112 Interview with Faraj Elian, 21 October 2013, at 14:30

Impact on Culture and Communications

Drones affect the cultural life of the Palestinians in many ways. The main effect by the drone is its impact on the quality of satellite-television reception, radio reception, telephone connectivity, and internet. In other words, when there are drones in the sky, the people of Gaza became unable to receive television and radio signals and their telephone and mobile devices become dysfunctional.

The result of this situation is that the Palestinians in Gaza are disconnected from the outside world. It is not only the fear of not being able to communicate with the people next door or asking about their relatives, friends, and people next door. In addition, this paralyzes the citizens' ability to know about the overall situation, when it will end, or even how encompassing and destructive it is. Asma Al-Ghoul expresses this by saying that "I feel that it (referring to the drone) insists on disconnecting me from anything and to concentrate on one thing only, its presence. It does not want me to see or hear anything around me but its sounds and to think of its next strike."¹¹³

The other goal for this disconnect is that Israel blocks any possibility to transfer accurate information about the brutality of its operation directly transmitted from the field. As Palestinians from Gaza cannot use telephones, mobiles, access their emails, personal blogs, and social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, and Skype, they will not be able to transfer photos, information, interviews, and eyewitness testimonies in order to tell the truth about the Israeli attacks. By doing so, Israel is launching two types of media wars. It publicizes its narrative about what it calls a "legitimate war against terrorism," and at the same time prevents the world from receiving any true information from Palestinians. While Israel spreads as much information as it can selectively, Palestinians are turned into objects in the Israeli narrative, specifically in the West.

Om Ahamd stated that "when the zanana hovers over the skies, the television is not functioning and it becomes a box of no value. The zanana has the ability to jam satellite channels." Her husband bought a simple Ariel receiver for local channels.¹¹⁴ Yara Salim (6 years old), complains that she cannot watch her favorite programs on Toor Al-Janna and Karamish because of drones.¹¹⁵

One of the main effects of the drones is the disruption of the TV satellite receivers so people in time of tension are not able to watch satellite channels and they

resort back to the basic channels through rewiring simple Ariel earth receivers. Local channels, which are received through the grand receivers, are not affected by the drones. Three facts result from this. First, the people's choice of receiving news and analysis about their situation is limited as they can only view local sources. Second, local channels dedicate their coverage to war news, so the people will not have any chance to see movies or entertainment programs to entertain themselves during moments of tension. Third, and most important, such a situation forces people to look towards less developed coping mechanisms for the situation. Instead of looking for more developed methods to communicate with the world, drones leave the people but with one choice, to use simple and less developed tools and to lessen their circles of communication and limit it to its locality.

However, even those channels might stop functioning as some of them might be hit by Israeli military airplanes and drones. In many cases during the attacks, Israel has attacked radio and television stations. This includes destroying the Palestine TV station, the Al-Aqsa TV station, and many local radio stations.

¹¹³ Interview with Asam Al Ghoul, 26 October 2013, 15:00

¹¹⁴ <http://www.mjdagaza.eb2a.com/vb/archive/index.php/t-827.html>

¹¹⁵ Palestine Today, 6 January 2010, <http://paltoday.ps>

Gaza: A Laboratory for Developing Death Machines

One of the prime reasons for the fast development of Israeli drone technology is the continuous attacks conducted in the Palestinian territories, which aids Israeli military manufactures to test and advance new models with real life human beings.¹¹⁶ By and large, the more Israel uses its drones, the more it develops their manufacturing capabilities, which is a very unethical and manipulative practice and should be prohibited under international law Using the Palestinian people as rats in its military laboratories, Israel offers many examples of how innovations in surveillance technology are facilitating human rights abuses and how the occupation is used as a source to maximize profit through testing new weaponry at the expense of another people. The three Israeli main military companies, Elbit, IAI, and Rafael are on the list of the world's top arms dealers. Israel is not only using its military inventions to dominate another people, it uses these people as a field test to improve the efficiency of its newly developed weapons. As Darry Li puts it blankly, "Israel is using the Gaza Strip as a laboratory for its policies."¹¹⁷

Last August, the Israeli film director Yotam Feldman presented his documentary, "The Lab," which showed how Israeli defense companies have turned the occupied Palestinian territories into a laboratory for developing and testing new weapons, transforming them from a burden to a marketable and highly profitable industry.

According to Esam Younis, Israel uses their assaults against Gaza as proof of the efficiency of its drones. They experiment with all new inventions in the field.¹¹⁸ They use the killing in Gaza to convince their potential customers of the accuracy and affectivity of their drones so that they buy them. The more the drone has killed, the more likely it will sell. One just has to look at the increase of sales of Israeli drones after the 2008-2009 war against Gaza to prove this point.

"You only have to read the brochures published by the arms industry in Israel. It's all in there. What they are selling is Israel's "experience and expertise" gained from the occupation and its conflicts with its neighbors" as Neve Gordon, a political science professor at Ben Gurion University states.¹¹⁹ In marketing the

116 Benjamin, Madea "War on Demand. The Global Rise of Drones," Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New York office, June 2013, p15

117 Li, Daryl "The Gaza Strip as Laboratory: notes in the Wake of Disengagement," Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (Winter 2006), pp. 38-55

118 Interview with Asam Al Ghoul, 26 October 2013, 15:00

119 Quoted in Cook, 2013

Skylark produced by Elbit Systems, the Israeli army refers to its functions in Gaza. It states it as "a star [which] was born in the Gaza skies," after its "hundreds of operation flights" during Operation Cast Lead.¹²⁰ In the same vein, BlueBird industries issues a brochure advertising its Spylite in which it implicitly refers to its usage by Israeli attacks against the Palestinians in Gaza. The brochure describes the Spylite as a "field-proven, mature operational system, and "combat-proven." It "has been operated successfully in combat conditions for the [the army] and has been chosen for use by the Israeli Air Force."¹²¹

Salah Abdelatti notes, "Israel is experimenting for its military industries in the Gaza Strip. It makes excuses to move its forces to engage in attacks in Gaza. This is a severe violation to international law, specifically to the articles of the Hague Convention."¹²²

120 Jäntti, Bruno and Johnson, Jimmy "Finland shopping for "battle-tested" Israeli weaponry," The Electronic Intifada, 18 January 2011 <http://electronicintifada.net/content/finland-shopping-battle-tested-israeli-weaponry/98>

121 BlueBird Aero Systems, 2009 Spylite brochure, www.Bluebird-UAV.com

122 Interview with Salah Abdelatti, 5 November 2013, at 11:00

Marketing Death

The world is participating in droning Gaza, as put clearly by Ramzi Okasha.¹²³ “Israel is using its wars in Gaza to market its drones.”¹²⁴ Benjamin Ben Eliezer, a former defense minister, happily praised the sale of Israeli used weapons in the occupied territories, saying that “people like to buy things that have been tested. If Israel sells weapons, they have been tested, tried out. We can say we’ve used this 10 years, 15 years.”¹²⁵ Also, Shlomo Bron, a former air force general who now works at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University indifferently claims that “it may be true that in practice the military uses the occupied territories as a laboratory, but that is just an unfortunate effect of our conflict with the Palestinians...and we sell to other countries only because Israel itself is too small a market.”¹²⁶

While many countries in the world are buying the Gazan killing drones, such as China, Singapore, Georgia, and Latin American countries, Europe is not only a customer, but also a developer and funder of Israeli drone technology. A quick look at Israeli drone sales to Europe shows to what extent Israel is selling the death in Gaza as a trade mark of its military preciseness.

In addition to Sparrow-N systems, British forces also use a variety of remotely piloted Israeli aircraft. The British Air Forces uses Hermes 450 UAVs, among other smaller ones, in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Hermes 450 is being upgraded to the Watchkeeper which, like the Reaper, can be armed. It was due to enter service in 2012.¹²⁷ It was reported in 2011 that UK plans to buy 30 Elbit produced Hermes WK 450 UAVs from Israel for a total cost of one billion pounds.¹²⁸

In late 2011, the French boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigners have called on their government to abandon a €318 million deal to buy Heron TP drones from IAI.¹²⁹ A Norwegian Pension fund has investment in the Israeli Elbit Systems which produces Hermes and Sky lark. The Finnish army already employs a UAV produced by Israel Aerospace Industries.¹³⁰

¹²³ Interview with Ramzi Okasha, 13 November 2013, at 16:00

¹²⁴ IBID

¹²⁵ Quoted in Cook, 2013

¹²⁶ Quoted in Cook, 2013

¹²⁷ “Drones: What are they and how do they work?” www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10713898

¹²⁸ Paterson, Naill “UK Troops Use ‘War Crime Drones’ In Israel,” Sky News, 14 January 2011 <http://news.sky.com/story/830492/uk-troops-use-war-crime-drones-in-israel>

¹²⁹ Abunimah, Ali “Campaign launched against French purchase of Israeli drones as senators demand deal be abandoned,” The Electronic Intifada, 30 December 2011, <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/campaign-launched-against-french-purchase-israeli-drones-senators-demand-deal-be>

¹³⁰ Deas, Michael “Norway’s pension fund divests from Israel’s largest real estate firm,” The Electronic Intifada, 19 June 2012 www.electronicintifada.net/blogs/michael-deas/norways-pension-fund-divests-israels-largest-real-estate-firm

Israel’s main military allies are part of the Israeli drone industry as well. “Not only did America’s initial drone capabilities come from Israel, but the policy of targeted assassinations, under which 300 American drone strikes have been deployed by the Obama administration, was instigated by Israel.”¹³¹ As mentioned earlier, some Israeli drone factories moved to the USA in order to easily tap into the American market. Australia borrowed drones from Israel in its operations in Afghanistan. NATO uses the Elbit Hermes in Afghanistan. Abdelatti calls the states which fund, buy, or use these drones, which were tried in Gaza’s crime against civilians, as encouragers of those crimes and responsible for them as well.¹³²

Frontex, the EU’s border management agency, bought Israel Aerospace Industries manufactured Heron drones that can help it identify boats carrying migrants en route to Europe. Frontex spokeswoman, Ewa Moncure, defended the EU position, stating the “[EU] member states are interested in surveillance technology...so we are looking at what is out there. The fact that it has been used for other purposes cannot prevent us from looking at this technology.”¹³³

Not only buying them, Europe is participating and funding developing Israeli drones working in Gaza. Many Israeli military companies participating in the Israeli crimes against the civilians in Gaza are granted projects under EU F7. Motorola is Israel’s leading company in the design and manufacture of electronic fuses for aircraft bombs and guided munitions used in Gaza attacks. Motorola Israel participates in two FP7 projects. Likewise, the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, with its participation in technological invention for military purposes participates in 106 FP7 projects.¹³⁴ Elbit Systems, supplying the Israeli army with Hermes Unmanned Ariel Vehicles, participates in four FP7 projects that appear to be furthering the development of technology that they deploy in occupied Palestinian territory. Such technology has been “field tested” against Palestinians and the research outputs are highly likely to be in turn used in further violations of international law.¹³⁵ Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) provides Heron drones used in attacks against civilians and participates in fourteen FP7 projects. One of these projects, valued at €11.88million, is about developing an open architecture for UAV-based Surveillance Systems (OPARUS).¹³⁶

In the EU-funded “Maximus” project, a project to design aircrafts that are lighter and can be more quickly assembled than those now in use, ten German research establishments and businesses and many other European institutions

¹³¹ Silver, 2012

¹³² Interview with Salah Abdelatti, 5 November 2013, at 11:00

¹³³ Cronin, David “EU border agency shops around for Israeli warplanes,” Electronic Intifada, 13 February 2012 <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/david/eu-border-agency-shops-around-israeli-warplanes>

¹³⁴ Stop the Wall: the Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign “European funding for Israeli actors that are complicit with violations of international law must not be allowed to continue,” May 2011, Horizon 2020 position papers

¹³⁵ IBID

¹³⁶ IBID

are cooperating with the Israeli drone manufacturer, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). The total sum of the project is 70 million euros.¹³⁷ The UK has an 850 million pound contract for modified Hermes 450 drones under the Watchkeeper program. Doubts were raised on the possibility of British produced engines being used in manufacturing Israeli Hermes 450 drones which were used in bombarding Gaza. Since 1997, Israel started using British UEL engines.¹³⁸ Conference organizers accused the Welsh government of allowing Israel and the USA to test their drones at Parc-Aberporth.¹³⁹

As a result of the one billion pound contract for the Hermes WK450, British troops have been training in Israel in the use of its drones. According to an Amnesty International statement, British soldiers were trained in using the Israeli UAV Watchkeeper, which was 'field tested on Palestinians' in Gaza in 2009. "It would seem wholly inappropriate for UK forces to be trained in the use of drones by a country with a track record of applying this technology in grave abuses of people's human rights."¹⁴⁰ There are doubts that soldiers, while trained on the drones, might be trained on drones while in actual operation. In this sense, then the trainees are participating in droning Gaza and transforming innocent civilians there into the rats in a laboratory.

Consequently, the international community, and mainly Europe, is participating in many different ways in Israeli drone war against Palestinians in Gaza. As War on Want puts it, "by trading in arms with Israel, the British government is giving direct support for Israel's aggression and sending a clear message of approval for its actions."¹⁴¹

First, Israel trains its customers on the use of the drones in military bases inside Israeli territory. These bases might be just a few kilometers away from the Gaza Strip, while the drone which they are trained on it technology and advantages is prowling above the Gaza Strip.

Second, the Israeli trainers who train Europe militaries on the use of these drones are the exact persons who have used it to kill scores of Palestinians civilian in Gaza. The trainers are using their actual experience in conducting operation inside Palestinian cities and towns to prove the affectivity of the information they provide the trainee with.

Third, much of the information that European militaries receive about the drones that their countries are going to buy is based on the experience of those drones

137 For more information on the project see its internet page:
<http://www.maaximus.eu/pages/project.php>

138 "Israeli drones in Gaza may have had British engines, ministers admit," 3 February 2009
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/feb/03/drones-israel-british-arms>

139 "Drone Warfare: from Wales to Gaza"
<http://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/drone-warfare-from-wales-to-gaza>

140 "Amnesty: Israel training UK to use Cast Lead UAVs," The Jerusalem Post, 14 January 2011
<http://www.jpost.com/International/Amnesty-Israel-training-UK-to-use-Cast-Lead-UAVs>

141 Global Research "Gaza under drones," 29 Nov. 2012, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/gaza-under-drones/5313437>

in the skies of Gaza. In this regard, examples of exact killing, unlimited access to narrow areas to take photos, hunting targets, and other functions are all happening in Gaza.

Fourth, Gaza is the laboratory of these trainings in many ways.

Fifth, Israeli drone developers are beneficiaries of EU research projects and some of the money received through those projects goes directly to funding new killing tools in drone technology.

Sixth, some of the parts used in the drones, which kill Palestinians, are made by some EU member states.

Seventh, some member states of the EU are seeking joint drone development projects with Israel. What seems like a business oriented approach has severe implications for violating the rights of a state under occupation.

Yoav Galant, the head of the Israeli army's southern command during Cast Lead operation, criticizes that "while certain countries in Europe or Asia condemned us for attacking civilians, they sent their officers here, and I briefed generals from 10 countries...There's a lot of hypocrisy: they condemn you politically, while they ask you what your trick is, you Israelis, for turning blood into money."¹⁴²

According to Mamoun Swidan, a diplomat residing in Gaza, "the EU was facilitating Israel's crimes against humanity."¹⁴³ The international community, including the EU, has to work towards making sure that such violations do not exist and to prohibit them. Jeff Halper, an Israeli analyst, notes "the occupied territories are crucial as a laboratory, not just in terms of Israel's internal security, but because they have allowed Israel to become pivotal to the global homeland security industry."¹⁴⁴ Halper, writing a book on Israel's role in the international homeland security industry, argues that "Israel's success at selling its know-how to powerful states means it has grown ever more averse to returning the occupied territories to the Palestinians in a peace agreement."¹⁴⁵ In Halper's words, "the occupied territories are crucial as a laboratory, not just in terms of Israel's internal security, but because they have allowed Israel to become pivotal to the global homeland security industry."¹⁴⁶ Therefore, this encourages Israeli drone and arms dealers to support and prolong the occupation as it seems to be extremely profitable for them and makes the chances of achieving a peace treaty that much more remote.

142 Quoted in Cook, 2013

143 Interview with Maoun Swidan, 1 November 2013, at 9am

144 www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2013/09/18/Israels-booming-arms-exports-under-scrutiny/UPI-86021379533827/#ixzz2nNRAU3Ru

145 Cook, 2013

146 Quoted in Cook, 2013

Assassinating Human Rights

Drones hovering over Gaza and striking it are violations of the rights of the people in Gaza. The massive killings of civilians, destruction of properties, and attacks against public premises are all signs of these violations. The mental, psychological, educational, and social impacts are evidence of Israel's indifference for international conventions in place to protect civilians. The ratio of civilians to combatants reveals the brutality of the drone strikes. The short but intensive history of drone attacks in Gaza reflects how Israel does not care about the identity of the victims of its strikes by the drone.

Protocol I, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, made clear that the civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against dangers arising from military operations and shall not be the object of attack. Combatant must "do everything feasible to verify that the objectives to be attacked are neither civilians nor civilian objects and are not subject to special protection ... (and) refrain from deciding to launch any attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof."¹⁴⁷

Human Rights Watch clearly states that "in the incidents investigated by Human Rights Watch, Israeli forces either failed to take all feasible precautions to verify that the targets were combatants, apparently setting an unacceptably low threshold for conducting attacks, or they failed to distinguish between combatants and civilians and to target only the former. As a result, these attacks violated international humanitarian law (the laws of war)."¹⁴⁸

Human Rights Watch emphasizes that its researchers found "hundreds of perfectly cubic pieces of metal shrapnel, circuit boards, and other parts (including some marked with Motorola serial numbers), and four small impact craters - all consistent with drone-fired missiles."¹⁴⁹

The UN special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism, Ben Emmerson, states that "in any case in which civilians have been, or appear to have been, killed, the State responsible is under an obligation to conduct a prompt, independent, and impartial fact-finding inquiry and to provide a detailed public explanation. This obligation is triggered whenever there is a plausible indication from any source that civilian casualties may have been sustained, including where the facts are

147 Protocol 1 Additional to the Geneva Convention, Articles 51 – 54 and 57

148 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/06/30/israel-misuse-drones-killed-civilians-gaza>

149 IBID

unclear or the information is partial or circumstantial."¹⁵⁰In addition, where such impartial investigation does not take place, the UN is recommended to conduct investigation into individual drone strikes. Ben Emmerson, in his report, notices that the drones "used represent a challenge to the framework of established international law and the international community is obliged to develop standards applicable to the development of drones' technology and the legality of their use, and the standards and the safeguards which should apply to it in manners compatible with international law."¹⁵¹

Israel detaches itself from any international commitments to limit risks of its weapons. It is not a signatory to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), established in 1987, for example and is not likely to adhere to any international convention on regulating the usage of drones. Such regulations must be at the agenda of international organizations to avoid more crimes and massacres. States using armed drones cannot escape a legal responsibility to expose the human consequences of their attacks. They are legally obliged to respond to certain major consequences of their actions.¹⁵²

Marc Garlasco, senior military analyst at Human Rights Watch, says that "drone operators can clearly see their targets on the ground and also divert their missiles after launch. Given these capabilities, Israel needs to explain why these civilian deaths took place."¹⁵³ As Salah Abdeatti puts it, Israel acts as if it has no obligation to international law and that it can do what it feels is in its interest, even if this includes violating human rights and confiscating the rights of another nation.¹⁵⁴

Therefore, the consequences of drone usage on human rights have to be viewed seriously. Those violations must be incentives for international bodies to develop international norms and principles to limit, if not to stop totally, the crimes committed by drones. Part of this is to restrict buying drones which participate in the killing of civilians, or which are colored by their blood. Urgent measures have to be taken to save what remains of human rights in the Gaza Strip.

150 Emmerson, Ben "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism," submitted to the UN General Assembly, A/68/389, 18 September 2013, p23

151 IBID

152 Breau, Susan/Aronsson, Marie/ Joyce, Rachel "Drone Attacks, International Law, and the Recording of Civilian Casualties in Armed Conflict," Discussion Paper 2, Oxford Research Group, June 2011

153 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/06/30/israel-misuse-drones-killed-civilians-gaza>

154 Interview with Salah Abdelatti, 5 November 2013, at 11:00

Recommendations

The lethal use of drones in Gaza by Israel has led to the killing of hundreds of civilians and injuring many others. Though claimed to be precise and capable of sending back real-time imagery of activities on the ground, civilians are taken for combatants, as well as civil institutions including schools, hospitals, and cultural centers.

The loud buzzing of the Israeli drones impacts the lives of the people in Gaza and leads to psychological and mental problems, specifically on children. It disrupts social and normal life, in addition to educational and academic achievements of students. Also, it disconnects people, especially in days of attacks, from the world and thus contributes to their powerlessness. Hovering over the skies of Gaza day and night for long periods, drones are a sign of hegemony and a reminder of the danger with which Israel threatens the Palestinian citizens. According to international and human rights reports, the use of drones in the last Israeli offensives against Gaza resulted in a ceaseless repetition of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

First, the main debate concerning the legality of using drones under international law and their ethical use as a weapon of war has to be more in-depth. "Using technology so far in advance of that available to opposing forces makes the engagement fundamentally unfair; a discrepancy called 'asymmetric warfare' by the military."¹⁵⁵ International legal bodies have to devote more time and draft proposals to be adopted by the UN and the different bodies on the ethics of using drones.

Second, the proliferation of drone production and usage has to be tackled more carefully in international law as it does not go without risk in the conduct of international relations. Paul Roger warns that remote warfare may turn out to have elements of particular interest to sub-state and paramilitary movements, enhancing asymmetric warfare capabilities in unexpected and potentially dangerous directions.¹⁵⁶ Boyle warns that the spread of drones is likely going to destabilize international security.¹⁵⁷ Similar to the first recommendation, a kind of common code of conduct has to be regulated which restricts the usage of drones to peaceful purposes like guarding the borders, international access, and water etc.

Third, Israel has to abide by international law applicable to protecting civilians during times of hostilities. The report provided evidences of violations of the principle of non-combatant immunity that lies at the heart of international humanitarian law. Killing civilians with no clue of actual engagement in the combat zone should not be tolerated by the international community as this leads to more escalation in the region and thus threatens its stability.

Fourth, Israel ranks first in producing, exporting, and using drones in the world. Unfortunately, democratic countries in Europe are the main consumers of Israel's drones which are tested in Gaza by killing Palestinian civilians. Some partners of EU research projects are the major drone producers in Israel. The EU and its member states must behave according to the interests of the EU in ending the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and build a Palestinian state as the only possible way to achieve peace in the war-torn area.

Fifth, the construction of a Palestinian website devoted to following drone activities and their victims in detail and integrating this information within the larger world discussion on the effect of drones on world stability. The victims of drones in Gaza should be given more media attention as well.

Sixth, more specified studies need to be conducted to analyze the impact of drones on the different aspects of life in Gaza. This might include separate studies on the impact of academic achievement for example.

Seventh, more attention must be given to the psychological and mental effects of drones on the people of Gaza. A culture sensitive approach has to be developed to help as many people as possible to cope with the negative impact of drones circling overhead all the time.

¹⁵⁵ "Locked and loaded - the ethics of armed drones," 21/9/2011, <http://www.airforce-technology.com/features/feature130337>

¹⁵⁶ Rogers, 2013, http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/articles_multimedia/remote_control_%E2%80%93_new_way_war

¹⁵⁷ Boyle, p24

"التأثير الاجتماعي"، حيث أن الزنانة خلفت الكثير من المشاكل الاجتماعية في القطاع من أبرزها المساس بالأمن الاجتماعي لدى الأطفال، وغياب المقدرة على التفكير في المستقبل وفي الحياة طالما أن المواطن تحت التهديد دائماً. ليس بعيداً هذا التأثير الكبير الذي تتركه هذه الزنانات وحضورها المستمر على العملية التعليمية في القطاع. فيجانب قصفها للعديد من المدارس والمعاهد والجامعات، فإن حضورها يترك أثراً كبيراً على مقدرة التلاميذ على التركيز خلال عملية الدراسة سواء داخل الفصل أو خلال تحضير واجباتهم المدرسية في البيت. إلى جانب ذلك يستعرض التقرير التأثيرات التي يتركها حضور الزنانة اليومي على مقدرة المواطنين على التواصل مع العالم الخارجي من خلال استقبال إشارات البث التلفزيوني خاصة خلال الحرب، واستخدام الانترنت لنقل صورة ما يجري لهم. بعبارة مختصرة إن هذه التأثيرات ليست جانبية بهذا المعنى، بل هي جزء أساس من سياسات شاملة من الهيمنة والسيطرة على كل جوانب حياة المواطنين في غزة، تحولهم كما يقول التقرير في موضع آخر إلى "لعبة فيديو" يقوم خلالها موجّه الطائرة بلعبها من مكانه البعيد داخل إسرائيل حيث يبدو الغزيون مجرد شخوص ورسومات في هذه اللعبة.

منهجياً يستند التقرير على مراجعة شاملة للكثير من الكتابات والتقارير الدولية والمحلية التي عالجت قضية استخدام الزنانات في سياقات مختلفة، بجانب تلك التقرير التي تحدثت عن العدوان الإسرائيلي المختلف على قطاع غزة وأشارت إلى استخدام الزنانات فيه. كما يستخدم التقرير العشرات من التقارير والمقابلات الصحفية مع الضحايا ومع الجهات المختلفة إلى جانب تلك المقابلات الحصرية التي يقوم بها الباحث مع تربويين (معلمين ومدراء مدارس) وأخصائيين نفسانيين وقانونيين ونشطاء حقوق إنسان وصحفيين وتلاميذ مدارس وآباء ونشطاء مجتمعيين ودبلوماسيين.

وفي الختام وكما يقول التقرير فإن تلك الطائرات لا تقتل فقط المواطنين العزل وتروّع الأطفال، بل إنها تفتال حقوق الإنسان وتمزق المجتمع وتزيد حالة اللااستقرار في المنطقة. كل ذلك يدعو إلى جملة من التدخلات التي يقترحها التقرير في خاتمته، والتي تشمل ضمن أشياء أخرى: إقامة مرصد فلسطيني لمراقبة استخدام الزنانات بشكل يومي وتوثيق جرائمها؛ إجراء المزيد من الدراسات التحقيقية لفحص آثار الزنانات المختلفة على الحياة في غزة سيما الجانب النفسي والتعليمي؛ تطوير التشريعات الدولية التي تعالج استخدام وتطوير الزنانات في الحروب؛ وقف الدول المختلفة لمشاريعها البحثية المشتركة مع إسرائيل سيما تلك المشاريع التي تستخدم مخرجاتها في تطوير الزنانة؛ والعمل لدى الدول المستوردة لزنانة إسرائيلية التوقف عن ذلك لما تشكله هذه الزنانة من انتهاك للحقوق الوطنية الفلسطينية ولحقوق الإنسان بشكل عام.

وصلت صادرت إسرائيل من الزنانات خلال السنوات الثمانية الماضية قرابة ٦, ٤ مليار دولار، مشكلة ما نسبته ١٠٪ من صادراتها العسكرية، فيما تصل مساهمة الصادرات الإسرائيلية من هذه الطائرات قرابة ٤١٪ من مجمل التصدير العالمي. تصدر إسرائيل هذه الطائرات لأربعة وعشرين دولة، كما تصل لدول أوروبا أكثر من نصف صادرات إسرائيل منها. تستخدم إسرائيل حروبها وعدوانها المتكرر على قطاع غزة ونتائج الاغتيال والقصف التي تنفذ باستخدام الطائرات الزنانة في الترويج لطائراتها الزنانة وبيعها بشكل أكبر في الخارج فيما يسميه التقرير "تسويق الموت".

إلا أن الجانب الأكبر من التقرير يركز على الاستخدام الفعلي للطائرات الزنانة في القطاع. يجوز القول إن وجود الزنانة هو تفصيل أساس من تفاصيل الحياة في قطاع غزة، فهي قد توجد في سماء القطاع لأسابيع دون أن تغادر مخلفة أثراً نفسية ومعنوية جسيمة على السكان. فرغم الانسحاب الإسرائيلي من قطاع غزة عام ٢٠٠٥ إلا أن إسرائيل واصلت احتلالها للقطاع بواسطة مجموعة من وسائل الهيمنة التي شكلت الزنانة الجزء الأبرز فيها. فبينما لا يوجد حضور فيزيائي لإسرائيل في القطاع، فإن الزنانات تعوض الجيش الإسرائيلي عن هذا الحضور فيما يسميه التقرير بـ"إعادة اختراع الاحتلال". فالزنانة هناك في غزة طوال الوقت تقوم بالمراقبة ونقل الصور الحية وتنفيذ العمليات العسكرية عن بعد. وعند مراجعة العدوانين الإسرائيليين الكبيرين الأخيرين على غزة في الأعوام ٢٠٠٨-٢٩٩٨ و ٢٠١٢ يكشف التقرير عن أن البطولة المطلقة في هذين العدوانين كانت للطائرات الزنانة.

يقوم التقرير بتقديم مجموعة طويلة من الحالات التي قتل فيها مواطنين مدنيين من قبل الطائرات الزنانة، ويقدم شهادات حية حول بشاعة عمليات القتل والأثار المدمرة لها. وغاية هذا، إلى جانب الكشف عن هذه الجرائم التي وصفها التقارير الدولية بشكل مفصل بوصفها جرائم حرب، هو تنفيذ المزايم الإسرائيلية حول فعالية استخدام هذه الطائرات في الحروب ضد المسلحين، إذ أن، وفق ما يرد في التقرير، الأغلبية الكبرى من ضحايا هذه الطائرات هم من المدنيين في غزة. بيد أن النقاش حول استهداف المسلحين بحاجة للكثير من المراجعة، إذ أن عمليات القتل تطال المواطنين بالشبهة في الكثير من الحالات. كما أن فكرة استهداف مسلح بعد انتهاء عمليات القتال وفق الشهادات القانونية التي يقدمها التقرير ليست إلا عمليات قتل خارج القانون. ثمة مقاربات قانونية قوية يقدمها التقرير في هذا السياق تعزز مقولته من أن ثمة جرائم كبرى تنتهك باستخدام الزنانات.

كما يستعرض التقرير التأثيرات النفسية لاستخدام الزنانات على المواطنين خاصة على الأطفال منهم من خلال تقديم آراء الخبراء النفسيين والأهالي والأطفال أنفسهم. من المؤكد بأن الوجود المتواصل للزنانة وصوتها المزعج يخلق حالات توتر واضطراب وتشتت ذهني وحالات من الخوف والذعر الشديدين بسبب ارتباط صوتها بعمليات قتل وفقدان للأهل وللأصدقاء والجيران. يرتبط بهذا تأثير آخر هو

أن مثل هذا الاستخدام يشكل اعتداءً صارخاً على الشعب الفلسطيني وعلى حقوقه، كما يساهم في انتشار حالة عدم الاستقرار في الإقليم المضطرب، ويشكل دافعاً لتصدير أسلحة مشكوك في جدوى استخدامها أخلاقياً.

يبدأ التقرير بمراجعة سريعة للجدل الأخلاقي والعسكري حول استخدام الطائرات بدون طيار في الحرب، حيث يستعرض مواقف المؤيدين والمعارضين ليدل على أن ثمة مبالغة لا تتم عن عمق في تسويق فعالية الطائرات الزنانة، حيث إن استخدام هذه الطائرات من قبل جيوش مختلفة دلل بشكل قاطع على عدم فعاليتها في إصابة الأهداف وفي التمييز بين المقاتلين المسلحين والمواطنين العزل، هذا إضافة إلى الجدل الأخلاقي المرتبط باستخدامها في تنفيذ عمليات قتل بناء على تقديرات يقوم بها مشغل الطائرة من مكان بعيد عن مسرح العمليات.

إن الغاية من مثل هذا التقديم هو الكشف عن ارتباط ما يدور في غزة من إخضاع للمواطنين العزل وترهيب للأطفال وقتل للأبرياء، بحالة النقاش العام الذي يدور في سياقات أخرى. إن المفارقة التي يشير لها التقرير هو غياب "الحالة الفلسطينية" في الكثير من الدراسات حول استخدام الزنانات في العالم، حيث ثمة تركيز على الاستخدام الأمريكي في أفغانستان وباكستان واليمن، فيما يتم الإشارة في حالات نادرة إلى حقيقة كون إسرائيل دولة مستخدمة لهذا النوع من الطائرات في الحروب. إن مقارنة مسنودة بالبيانات والشواهد والنتائج تكشف عن هول استخدام إسرائيل لهذه الطائرات في غزة. إن واحدة من القضايا التي يعرض لها التقرير، والتي تشد الانتباه لخطورتها الأخلاقية، هو كيف تستخدم إسرائيل قطاع غزة كمختبر لتجريب ما تتوصل إليها صناعاتها العسكرية خاصة في تطوير الطائرات الزنانة. إن غزة وفق هذا التحليل تصبح مختبراً، ومواطنوها يصبحون أدوات يجري عليهم اختبار فعالية هذه الطائرات. وعليه فإن استخدام هذه الطائرات يشكل انتهاكاً مزدوجاً للقانون الدولي حيث أنما يترتب على استخدام هذه الطائرات القاتلة يرقى في الكثير من الحالات إلى جرائم حرب وجرائم ضد الإنسانية، كما أن استخدامها في تحويل مواطنين يقعون تحت الاحتلال إلى فئران لتجارب مدمرة من أجل تسويق هذه الطائرات في أسواق السلاح العالمية يعد جريمة أخرى. وعليه فإن التقرير يقوم بعرض سريع ولكن مكثف لأهم زبائن طائرات إسرائيل الزنانة خاصة في أوروبا كاشفاً اللثام عن شكوك في مساهمة بعض الدولة الأوروبية وبعض المشاريع البحثية الممولة من قبل الاتحاد الأوروبي في تمويل تطوير هذه الطائرات، وفي تدريب المشغلين الإسرائيليين لهذه الطائرات لنظرائهم الأوروبيين على كيفية استخدامها مرتكزين على تجربتهم في استخدامها في غزة، وهو ما يشكل انتهاكاً جسيماً للحقوق الفلسطينية. إن مثل هذه الحقائق تقتضي وقوف تلك الدول أمام مسؤوليتها من أجل عدم تشجيعها لاحتلال إسرائيل لقطاع غزة ولا لجرائمه هناك.

لا نوم في غزة

غزة: الطائرة الزنانة

الدكتور عاطف أبو سيف

ملخص تنفيذي باللغة العربية

استخدمت إسرائيل الطائرات بدون طيار، التي يطلق عليها الغزيون اسم "الزنانة"، بشكل كبير منذ بداية انتفاضة الأقصى، خلال عدوانها المتكرر على قطاع غزة خاصة في عمليات المراقبة والتحكم والقصف والاعتقال. لأيام متواصلة كانت أسراب الزنانات تحوم في سماء قطاع غزة ترافق كل شيء، محولة القطاع إلى ساحة معركة متواصلة، مثيرة الذعر والرعب في نفوس المواطنين الذين ارتبطت الزنانة في عقولهم بعمليات القتل والتدمير والخراب.

تعتبر إسرائيل واحدة من أهم الدول المصنعة والمصدرة للطائرات الزنانة في العالم، وهي وفق آخر الإحصائيات تستحوذ على نصيب الأسد في سوق التصدير سابقة بذلك الولايات المتحدة. لعقود طويلة استخدمت إسرائيل تفوقها العسكري والتكنولوجي في فرض هيمنتها على الشعب الفلسطيني وفي مصادرة حقوقه، وليس استخدام الزنانة في مراقبة قطاع غزة وتنفيذ عمليات عسكرية فيه إلا جزءاً من عمليات الهيمنة والاستحواذ الممنهجة التي تقوم بها إسرائيل. ورغم ما لمثل هذه العمليات من آثار جانبية قاسية على حياة المواطنين العزل وعلى أمنهم الجسدي والمعنوي والنفسي والاقتصادي، إلا أنها إلى جانب ذلك تشكل انتهاكاً جسيماً للقانون الدولي وللقانون الدولي الإنساني.

يحاول هذا التقرير أن يقدم صورة متكاملة للآثار المختلفة الجوانب التي تنتج عن استخدام إسرائيل للطائرات الزنانة في عمليات الجيش الإسرائيلي في قطاع غزة. وينطلق التقرير من التحذير الكبير من

