

Haaretz | Opinion

Opinion | Israel Is on the UN Blacklist of Countries That Harm Children, and Justifiably So

Sunday 9 June 2024, by [LEVY Gideon](#) (Date first published: 9 June 2024).

Somalia, Syria, Myanmar, Boko Haram - and Israel. Together, and not by coincidence. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' decision to add Israel to the blacklist of countries that harm children insulted and shocked Israel. We and Syria?

A Palestinian child sits on rubble, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in southern Gaza City, in the Gaza Strip, June. Credit: Mohammed Salem/Reuters

Yes, we and Syria. In Israel, everyone went on the attack, but no one asked: What did we think as the army was killing thousands of children? That the world would remain silent? That the UN would show restraint? Its role is to cry out and [that is what it did over the weekend](#).

When it comes to mass killing of children, all excuses fly out the window, even ones made by Israel. Gilad Erdan can continue with his grotesque shticks at the United Nations - yesterday he published a video recording of his conversation with the secretary-general, an unprecedented act in terms of the diplomatic code of behavior, all of it intended for the ears of the Likud Central Committee, ahead of Erdan's next job.

Benjamin Netanyahu can continue arguing that "the UN has put itself on the blacklist of history." The UN? How many children has it killed? The [IDF has killed 15,517](#), according to the health ministry in Gaza. Some 8,000 of those deaths were verified by the UN. Many are still missing.

Some [17,000 children](#) have lost at least one of their parents; 3,000 have lost at least one limb. Nine out of 10 children in the Gaza Strip suffer from "acute nutritional deficiency," according to UNICEF. The World Health Organization has determined that four out of five children do not eat a thing on at least one day out of three. In January, the international organization Save the Children determined that 10 children lose at least one limb every single day. On Saturday, Al-Jazeera showed a video of a boy asking his mother if his arm would grow back.

FILE PHOTO: A Palestinian child pulls a water container, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in southern Gaza City, in the Gaza Strip, June. Credit: Mohammed Salem/Reuters

Everyone is on the blacklist of history, except Israel. Everyone is anti-Israel and an antisemite, only Israel is innocent. "The most moral army in the world," crowed Netanyahu again on Saturday, in what could only elicit an embarrassed smile among his listeners around the world.

The evidence is solid, piling up unequivocally, unforgivable. Eight months of a war against children. Eight months of children missing limbs, of orphans, hungry, sick and in shock, dying and dead. The

numbers are horrific, but no less than that is Israel's total denial of any responsibility. The blame for the deaths of at least 10,000 children lies with their parents, Hamas and UNICEF, just not with their killers, not with the soldiers and pilots of the Israel Defense Forces, the most moral in the world.

When reaching such levels of suffering inflicted on so many children, one might have expected some degree of shock in Israel as well. After all, we have children too. But here, [sorrow is prohibited by command](#), compassion is no longer acceptable, protests deal only with the fates of our children, since obviously there are no others, while hundreds of thousands of children on the other side are invisible, not worthy of consideration.

A displaced Palestinian child sits after the Israeli military began evacuating Palestinian civilians ahead of a threatened assault on Rafah, in May. Credit: Hatem Khaled/Reuters

The children of Gaza - those who survive - will never forget. They now rummage through the rubble of their homes, grieving for parents and siblings, trying to heal their wounds and stumps in a country without a single working hospital, driven crazy by nightmares. But they will grow up and won't forget. The humanitarian aid still limps along, [settlers sabotage aid trucks](#), violently blocking their entrance to Gaza, with Israel remaining silent about this as well. But the children will never forget what Israel inflicted on them. How could they? Not for generations.

The world is now joining them. Even the cynical, cold world is shocked with such killing of children. Erdan, Netanyahu and other Israelis can continue to plead innocent and wash their hands of this matter, but their hands are stained with the blood of children, which no excuse can hide.

We must start getting used to it: Somalia, Syria and Israel. That's the club. There's no need to be shocked by its membership, only by what caused Israel's addition to the club. Its justified addition, it must be admitted.

Gideon Levy

P.S.

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