

# Apartheid in the West Bank

In my previous essays, I have focused primarily on Gaza - a place now facing a catastrophe **unprecedented in modern human history**. The scale of destruction is staggering: an area just one-third the size of Hiroshima has been bombarded with an explosive force equivalent to **seven atomic bombs**. Every trace of human civilization has been shattered. At least **60,000 Palestinians** have been confirmed killed, but experts estimate the true death toll may be closer to **400,000** - nearly **one-fifth of Gaza's population**.

This level of devastation may lead some to assume that life is better in the West Bank, where there is no Hamas and no armed resistance - a model that France and several Arab governments have proposed as a condition for recognizing a Palestinian state.

But that assumption is dangerously wrong.

In this essay, I want to talk about **life under occupation in the West Bank** - not because it is more peaceful, but because it is **a slower, more calculated system of elimination**. One carried out not through bombs and blockades, but through bureaucracy, land theft, apartheid laws, and the relentless violence of settlers.

## Creeping Annexation

The West Bank, under the original 1947 UN Partition Plan, was designated as part of the Arab state - a contiguous Palestinian territory. That vision never materialized. What exists today is not a viable state or even a coherent territory, but a fragmented and shrinking archipelago of Palestinian enclaves under various levels of Israeli control. This is not accidental. It is the result of decades of deliberate Israeli policy aimed at permanent territorial expansion, displacement of Palestinians, and annexation of land.

The Israeli government has effectively divided the West Bank into three kinds of zones:

1. **De facto annexed zones** – These areas, primarily in and around major Israeli settlements, are under full Israeli civil and military control. They have been absorbed into Israel's infrastructure grid, receive Israeli municipal services, and are often patrolled by the Israeli police rather than the army. Settlers in these areas are Israeli citizens with full legal protections, voting rights, and freedom of movement. Their Palestinian neighbors, often just a few hundred meters away, live under military law and apartheid-style restrictions.
2. **Zones under active ethnic cleansing** – These are rural Palestinian areas targeted for demolition, displacement, and colonization. Entire villages - like Khan al-Ahmar, Masafer Yatta, and Ein Samia - have faced repeated demolition orders. Palestinian homes are routinely denied building permits, declared illegal, and bulldozed by the Israeli Civil Administration. Meanwhile, Israeli outposts - technically illegal even un-

der Israeli law - are retroactively legalized and connected to roads, water, and power. Water supplies are diverted to settlers while Palestinian communities rely on tankers. Access roads are closed to Palestinians and marked "Israelis only." Grazing land and olive groves are confiscated or made inaccessible. Violence by settlers, often with army support or indifference, is used as a strategic tool to drive Palestinians off their land.

3. **Areas under nominal Palestinian Authority control (Area A)** – These zones, supposedly under full Palestinian civil and security control per the Oslo Accords, are ghettoized enclaves surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory. Entry and exit are subject to Israeli checkpoints, closures, and curfews. Palestinians cannot move freely between cities like Ramallah, Nablus, and Hebron without passing through Israeli military barriers. Roads that Palestinians are prohibited from using crisscross the landscape, connecting settlements while encircling Palestinian towns. Even within Area A, Israeli raids are frequent. The PA has no authority to stop them. Its security forces are effectively subcontracted to suppress Palestinian resistance and maintain stability under occupation.

This matrix of control amounts to a form of slow-motion annexation. It's not marked by a single law or declaration but by a steady expansion of settlement blocs, military zones, bypass roads, and bureaucratic tools of domination. The Palestinian presence is rendered precarious and temporary, while the Israeli settler presence is made permanent and ever-expanding.

There is no "status quo" in the West Bank. The status quo is movement: a creeping, calculated movement toward total Israeli control and the elimination of any prospect for a sovereign Palestinian state. Every day the map changes a little - another hilltop seized, another village cut off, another olive grove destroyed. This is not a frozen conflict. It is an active process of colonization.

## Travel in the West Bank: A Daily Gamble

For Palestinians in the West Bank, even the most routine journey - to school, work, a hospital, or a neighboring village - can become a **life-threatening ordeal**. Israeli military checkpoints and settler bypass roads divide the territory into dozens of fragmented enclaves. What should be a **10-minute drive** may take hours, or may not be completed at all.

Travel is a **gamble** because:

- **Checkpoint unpredictability:** There are over **500 permanent and ad hoc checkpoints** throughout the West Bank. Any of them can be shut without notice, for minutes or for days. Soldiers can detain travelers arbitrarily, search vehicles, or deny passage without explanation.
- **Military closures:** Entire areas are frequently declared "closed military zones," often in response to protests or settler incidents. During closures, Palestinians are **confined to their homes**, with no way to leave for work, school, or medical treatment.

- **Settler roads and vehicle restrictions:** Many roads in the West Bank are reserved for **Israeli settlers only**. Palestinians are barred from using them, forced instead onto longer, less maintained, and heavily policed routes. Vehicle confiscations and fines are common.
- **Arbitrary arrest and detention:** At any checkpoint, a Palestinian can be **arrested without charges**, especially if their name appears in the army's database - which may include **minors, students, or activists**. Detention can mean days or months in military prison, often without trial.
- **Harassment and humiliation:** Soldiers routinely subject Palestinians to verbal abuse, invasive searches, and hours-long delays. There is no legal recourse or accountability for such treatment.
- **Ambushes and shootings:** There are documented cases where Israeli soldiers or settlers **open fire at vehicles** they deem suspicious, or where drivers allegedly failed to stop fast enough. These are often fatal, and investigations - if opened at all - rarely lead to consequences.
- **Settler violence on the roads:** Settlers routinely throw rocks at Palestinian cars, block roads with impunity, and even attack vehicles and passengers. Israeli forces often stand by or protect the settlers.

In this fragmented system, **freedom of movement does not exist**. The ability to travel from one village to another - to go to a hospital, to visit family, to transport goods - is subject to a constantly shifting matrix of **military orders, settler aggression, and bureaucratic control**.

This is not just inconvenience; it is a system of **calculated strangulation** - designed to make normal life impossible, to isolate communities, and to push Palestinians off their land.

## **Mechanisms of Displacement: Settler Violence**

In the occupied West Bank, forced displacement does not always come from official declarations or direct military orders. More often, it unfolds through a slow, calculated campaign of terror orchestrated by Israeli settlers - a campaign tolerated, protected, and ultimately backed by the full machinery of the Israeli state. This violence is not random. It is systematic, strategic, and aimed at driving Palestinians from their land.

The process typically unfolds in three escalating stages:

### **1. Intimidation and Invasion of Private Homes**

The first phase often begins with settlers entering Palestinian property uninvited. They come in broad daylight, sometimes in groups, often armed. They may walk into a Palestinian family's home and squat in the living room as if it were theirs. They eat food from the kitchen, insult the family, hurl racist abuse, vandalize furniture, break windows,

spray graffiti, or urinate on floors. These acts are deeply humiliating - not only violations of privacy but deliberate attempts to dominate and instill fear.

Such intrusions are not limited to isolated incidents. They are repeated and targeted, aimed at breaking the will of the inhabitants. The message is clear: "This is not your land anymore." And Palestinians understand that if they resist, they risk arrest, injury, or worse - not for repelling the intruders, but for "incitement" or "assaulting" settlers.

## 2. Destruction of Livelihood

If intimidation fails to force a family out, settlers often escalate by targeting their means of survival. They cut down decades-old olive trees, a symbol not only of income but of cultural heritage. They poison or uproot crops, scatter herds, steal or slaughter sheep. Water tanks and irrigation pipes - vital in rural areas without access to the Israeli-dominated water grid - are smashed or shot full of holes. Wells are filled with rocks or concrete.

The destruction is not random vandalism. It is a tactic to make agricultural life impossible. Without crops, without livestock, without water, Palestinian families are pushed to abandon the land in search of survival elsewhere. The goal is not just to hurt, but to clear the land of its people.

## 3. Demolition and Arson

Finally, when Palestinians still refuse to leave, settlers take aim at the homes themselves. Sometimes they bring bulldozers and excavators. Sometimes they set fire to homes at night, trapping families inside or forcing them to flee with nothing. Videos and eyewitness accounts document homes torched, belongings stolen, and entire villages turned to ash.

This destruction often follows a clear pattern: a fire or demolition one day, an outpost expansion the next. Once the land is cleared, settlers move in - erecting trailers, fences, and synagogues. These illegal outposts are then connected to roads, electricity, and water. They are rapidly "normalized," protected by the Israeli army, and eventually legalized retroactively by the Israeli government.

## Impunity and Repression

In each of these stages - home invasion, destruction of livelihood, and demolition - the message to Palestinians is the same: leave, or be destroyed.

And in every case, **impunity is guaranteed**. The **Palestinian Authority** has no jurisdiction in these areas and does not dare confront settlers, knowing it would provoke Israeli retaliation. The **Israeli police and army** routinely look away - unless Palestinians resist. Then the response is swift: arrests, beatings, live fire, military raids. Resistance is criminalized, while settler violence is excused or denied. Victims have no avenue for justice.

What emerges is a regime of lawlessness for settlers and lawfare against Palestinians - a dual system of impunity and repression. Settlers serve as the vanguard of annexation, do-

ing what the Israeli government cannot yet do openly: forcibly remove Palestinians from their land.

This is not spontaneous or organic. It is a policy. A method. A strategy of displacement executed by civilians, sanctioned by the state, and enforced by an army.

## Water as a Weapon

Water, the most basic necessity for life, has become a tool of domination in the West Bank. While the tactics have evolved over time, the strategy remains the same: to render Palestinian existence unsustainable. The use of water as a weapon of war - once overt and biological, now structural and infrastructural - is a cornerstone of Israel's occupation regime.

### Historical Parallels: From Poison to Control

In the early days of the Nakba, Israeli militias and scientists plotted and sometimes executed biological warfare against Palestinian civilians. One of the most infamous cases involved poisoning wells in Palestinian villages with **typhoid bacteria** to prevent the return of refugees. This is not a myth or an antisemitic "blood libel" - it is a well-documented historical fact. Israeli archives confirm these operations, including an incident in **1948 in Acre and the village of 'Ayn Karim**, where water sources were deliberately contaminated.

The horror of this act is amplified by its echo in Jewish history: **Anne Frank**, like so many others, died not in a gas chamber but of **typhus**, a waterborne disease, in Bergen-Belsen. That a state claiming to represent the victims of the Holocaust would later use similar tactics against another people is a grotesque irony of history.

### Modern Tactics: Vandalism and Theft

Today, the strategy has shifted from biological warfare to infrastructural sabotage and theft. Settlers - often with impunity and sometimes under military protection - **vandalize Palestinian water systems** across the West Bank:

- They **bathe in communal water cisterns**, contaminating the supply.
- They **destroy irrigation pipes** and block access roads to springs.
- They **shoot holes into rooftop water tanks**, causing thousands of liters to be lost in the arid summer heat.
- They **fill wells with rocks, concrete, or trash**, rendering them useless.

In **July 2025**, settlers **redirected the water supply of over 30 Palestinian villages near Ein Samia** - not to meet critical needs, but to **fill a private swimming pool** in a nearby settlement. Entire communities lost their only source of fresh water while settlers floated in luxury. This is not neglect; it is a declaration of supremacy.

### Institutional Control: Mekorot and Military Orders

The settler vandalism occurs within - and is empowered by - a broader system of Israeli state control over water resources. This regime is rooted in **Military Order 158**, issued just weeks after the 1967 occupation began. It requires Palestinians to obtain permits for any new water installation or repair. These permits are almost never granted.

**Israel controls an estimated 80–85% of West Bank water resources**, including major aquifers, springs, and wells. The national water company, **Mekorot**, oversees distribution. The result is gross inequality:

- **52%** of extracted water goes to Israel proper.
- **32%** goes to settlements - illegal under international law.
- Only **16%** is left for the **millions of Palestinians** in the West Bank.

Settlements enjoy lush lawns, irrigated farms, and swimming pools. Meanwhile, Palestinian villages must ration water, sometimes receiving only **20–50 liters per capita per day**, far below the **100-liter minimum recommended by the World Health Organization**.

## **Aquifer Plunder and Ecocide**

One of the most critical sources of water is the **Mountain Aquifer**, which straddles the West Bank and Israel. Israeli deep-well drilling - using advanced technologies Palestinians are forbidden to access - extracts far more than the aquifer can sustainably provide. This over-extraction has caused many **Palestinian wells to dry up or turn saline**, especially in the **Jordan Valley**.

In villages like **Al-Auja** and **Bardala**, traditional agriculture has become nearly impossible. Once-thriving fields lie fallow, and herders are forced to sell off livestock due to dehydration. The land itself is being killed - this is **ecocide**, not just apartheid.

## **Criminalizing Rain**

Even the sky is not free. **Rainwater harvesting**, a centuries-old practice in Palestinian farming communities, is frequently criminalized. Palestinians who build cisterns or collect rainwater without a permit risk **demolition orders**, fines, or confiscation. Israeli authorities have destroyed dozens of cisterns in areas deemed "unauthorized." In one notorious case, soldiers **punctured the walls of rainwater tanks** in a Bedouin village, allowing the harvested water to drain into the sand.

## **Water is Power**

This weaponization of water is not about scarcity - it is about power. Israel has more than enough water to share. What it denies Palestinians is not just H<sub>2</sub>O, but **dignity, sustainability, and the right to remain on their land**. By turning water into a tool of control and a symbol of domination, the occupation transforms daily life into an exhausting, degrading struggle for survival.

This is not environmental mismanagement. It is strategic deprivation - a war waged through pipes and pumps, with the aim of making life unlivable for those deemed expendable.

## Changing the Ecology

Israelis often claim deep ancestral ties to the land, invoking biblical rhetoric and framing themselves as “returning natives.” But their ecological footprint tells a different story - one of violent dislocation not only of people, but of nature itself. The landscape is being forcibly reshaped to reflect a settler-colonial ideology rather than any genuine rootedness in the environment. Even the trees testify against the lie.

### Uprooting Native Life

For centuries, Palestinian villages sustained themselves through agriculture deeply attuned to the local climate and terrain. Olive trees - some over a thousand years old - stood as living archives of continuity and culture. Citrus orchards, fig trees, pomegranate groves, and terraced hillsides embodied a delicate harmony between human life and the Mediterranean ecosystem.

Yet in the wake of the Nakba and ongoing land grabs, these native trees are being **uprooted** - often literally. In some cases, the removal is strategic: olive groves are destroyed to clear land for settlements or military zones. In others, they are erased to **obscure evidence of ethnic cleansing**, hiding the ruins of razed Palestinian homes beneath a façade of forest. The Israeli state and institutions like the **Jewish National Fund (JNF)** have led massive reforestation campaigns not with native species, but with **European pine trees** - fast-growing, sterile, and alien to the region.

### Ecological Colonialism

These pines do not bear fruit. They cannot support local food systems, wildlife, or biodiversity. Worse, they **acidify the soil** through resin and needle fall, disrupting the delicate balance of nutrients that supports native plants. The once-fertile land becomes hostile to agriculture - herbs, vegetables, and native trees like olive, carob, and almond cannot take root.

This isn't just bad environmental policy; it's **ecological colonization** - terraforming the land to reflect a European ideal, disconnected from local knowledge or sustainability. Where Palestinians cultivated life, Israeli policy imposes sterility. Where the landscape once offered food and meaning, it now offers flammability.

### Nature Resists

But even nature fights back. The European pine monocultures are **highly flammable** - their resin-rich needles, dry branches, and dense growth patterns create ideal conditions for fire. Summer after summer, **wildfires rage through these artificial forests**, endangering not only the settlements built around them but the broader region. The fires often

lead to **mass evacuations** of towns and outposts, choking skies with smoke and leaving large swaths of land charred and unusable.

These ecological disasters expose the unsustainable foundation of Israel's environmental transformation. The trees, like the walls and checkpoints, are meant to erase a people - but in doing so, they create new forms of vulnerability. Flames do not distinguish between settler and state. They consume the myth along with the forest.

## International Bailouts

When the fires rage out of control - as they did in **Mount Carmel (2010)**, **Jerusalem Hills (2021)**, and **Galilee (2023)** - Israel often finds itself **appealing for international assistance**. The same state that imposes siege on Gaza and annexes Palestinian land without remorse is quick to **beg foreign governments for firefighting planes, equipment, and aid**. The irony is stark: the very policies that disfigure the land and displace its people also **undermine the state's own resilience**.

## A Policy of Scorched Earth

The replacement of native ecology with foreign, fragile ecosystems is a metaphor for the entire Zionist project: a settler ideology attempting to graft itself onto a land that resists, a people who persist, and a natural order that cannot be indefinitely suppressed. The trees are not just silent witnesses. They are casualties - and sometimes, they are fighters.

Here is an expanded and structured version of your chapter:

## Implications Under International Law

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is not just morally indefensible - it is **legally criminal**. Under established principles of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and binding conventions, Israel's actions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem constitute a **litany of grave violations**, many of which rise to the level of **war crimes and crimes against humanity**.

### 1. Illegal Transfer of Population

The **Fourth Geneva Convention (1949)**, Article 49(6), explicitly prohibits an occupying power from **transferring parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies**. Israeli settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, housing over 700,000 settlers, are a direct violation of this provision. These settlements are not mere "disputed neighborhoods" - they are a **systematic colonization of occupied land**, in contravention of one of the most fundamental norms of post-World War II international law.

### 2. ICJ Advisory Opinion (2024)

In **2024**, the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** issued a binding **advisory opinion to the UN General Assembly**, reaffirming that:

- **Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal** under international law;
- **All settlers must be withdrawn;**
- **Israel owes reparations to the Palestinian people** for prolonged occupation, land confiscation, resource exploitation, and human rights violations.

The ICJ also reiterated that **third states have a legal obligation not to recognize or assist the illegal situation** created by Israel's policies. In other words, complicity - whether through trade, arms sales, or diplomatic cover - is itself a breach of international law.

The UN General Assembly adopted this opinion with an **overwhelming majority**, giving it **strong legal weight** under customary international law. Although advisory opinions are not per se enforceable, they **codify international legal consensus** and affirm state responsibilities under existing treaties.

### 3. Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources

Under the **Hague Regulations of 1907 (Articles 55–56)** and the **Fourth Geneva Convention**, an occupying power must act as a **temporary administrator**, prohibited from **permanently exploiting or depleting the natural resources** of the territory it occupies.

Israel's practices - from monopolizing West Bank water through Mekorot, to restricting Palestinian access to aquifers, to redirecting resources for exclusive settler use - constitute **systematic plunder**. The denial of water and destruction of agricultural systems amount to **pillaging**, a war crime under **Article 8(2)(b)(xvi)** of the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**.

### 4. Forced Displacement and Home Demolitions

International humanitarian law prohibits **forced displacement**, except for urgent security or humanitarian reasons, and even then only temporarily. The **Rome Statute** (Article 7(1)(d)) classifies "**deportation or forcible transfer of population**" as a **crime against humanity** when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack.

Israel's routine demolition of Palestinian homes, eviction orders in areas like Sheikh Jarrah, and forced displacement in regions such as Masafer Yatta - often to expand settlements or declare military zones - **clearly fall under this definition**.

### 5. Apartheid as a Crime Against Humanity

Perhaps the most damning legal classification of Israel's regime in the West Bank is **apartheid** - a system of **institutionalized racial domination**. Palestinians and Israeli settlers live under **two entirely separate legal systems**:

- **Palestinians** are governed by Israeli **military law**, tried in military courts, denied freedom of movement, and subjected to collective punishment.

- **Settlers**, often living just meters away, are governed by **civil Israeli law**, enjoy full rights and protections, and act with near-total impunity.

This dual legal regime, paired with systematic land theft, segregation, and suppression of political rights, meets the **legal definition of apartheid** under:

- The **International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973)**;
- The **Rome Statute of the ICC** (Article 7(2)(h));
- And **customary international law**, which prohibits racial discrimination and domination.

Apartheid is not merely a political accusation - it is a **crime against humanity**, and those who design, implement, or support it may be subject to **international prosecution**.

## Obligations for the International Community

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank is not just an unresolved political dispute. It is a **criminal enterprise**, maintained through violence, enabled by a web of discriminatory laws, and sustained by violations of core principles of international law. The legal framework is unambiguous: what is happening is illegal, and the world has a **clear obligation** - not only to denounce it, but to act.

This includes:

- Enforcing **UN resolutions**;
- Supporting **international investigations and prosecutions**;
- Ending **military, economic, and diplomatic support** to the occupying power;
- And ensuring **justice and reparations** for the Palestinian people.

International law is only meaningful when it is upheld. And in Palestine, its application is long overdue.

Here is a developed version of your next chapter, keeping the moral weight and clarity of your original framing while grounding it firmly in legal, historical, and political analysis:

## International Complicity and Enforcement Failures

The Palestinian struggle for justice, dignity, and self-determination is often portrayed as a local or regional conflict. But in truth, it is part of a broader historical arc - one that mirrors the **Enlightenment-era struggle against monarchic absolutism** in 17th and 18th century Europe. Then, as now, a ruling power claimed a **divine mandate** to rule, to dispossess, and even to determine who lives and who dies. Then, it was kings invoking the will of God; now, it is a state invoking divine entitlement to justify the colonization and subjugation of an entire people.

What was once called the **divine right of kings** has become the **divine right of settlers**. But unlike European monarchies, which have been largely transformed into ceremonial

relics of history, the Israeli regime over Palestine remains an **anachronism of unrestrained supremacy**, insulated from accountability by the very institutions that were created to prevent such abuse.

## **Paralysis at the Security Council**

Under **Article 94 of the UN Charter**, the **UN Security Council (UNSC)** bears the primary responsibility for enforcing the judgments of the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**. Yet when the ICJ declared in its 2024 advisory opinion that Israeli settlements are illegal and must be dismantled, the UNSC did nothing. Why? Because the **United States** - a permanent member - continues to **shield Israel from all consequences** using its veto power.

Decade after decade, the U.S. has **vetoed dozens of resolutions** condemning Israel's violations of international law, blocking calls for sanctions, ceasefires, or even independent investigations. This is not principled diplomacy - it is the **systematic obstruction of justice**. Through its vetoes, Washington has turned the Security Council into a **graveyard of Palestinian rights**.

## **European Hypocrisy: Germany and the EU**

While the U.S. plays defense at the Security Council, **Germany and other European Union members** play the game more subtly. Germany - haunted by its Nazi past - has made unconditional support for Israel a **state dogma**, even when that support contradicts its legal obligations under **international human rights treaties** and **the Genocide Convention**. As Israel starves Gaza and displaces West Bank Palestinians, Germany supplies weapons, funds, and diplomatic cover - while working behind the scenes to **block EU-wide sanctions** or trade restrictions.

This has effectively turned **international law into an apartheid system of its own**, where enforcement depends not on the severity of the crime but on the identity of the perpetrator. The very acts that would trigger **condemnation, sanctions, or prosecution** if committed by **Russia, Iran, or Myanmar** are **sanctified** when committed by Israel. The message is clear: **some lives are worth more than others**, and some states stand above the law.

## **A Crisis of Global Legitimacy**

This hypocrisy has devastating consequences - not only for Palestinians, but for the **credibility of the international system itself**. What meaning does the **Rome Statute** have if its enforcement is selective? What weight do **UN resolutions** carry when they are enforced against some states but not others? What hope can victims of genocide or apartheid have when the **most powerful nations subvert justice in plain sight**?

This is not just complicity - it is **collaboration**. By blocking consequences, these governments are not neutral observers but **active enablers of a crime**.

## **Ending the Myth of Divine Exceptionalism**

It is long past time to end the notion that **“God’s chosen people can do no wrong”** - a myth that has been **weaponized** to excuse colonization, mass displacement, and apartheid. No state - no matter its history, religion, or identity - has the right to violate international law, to dispossess a people, or to be exempt from the consequences of its actions.

The promise of **“Never Again”** was meant to be universal. Not “never again to Jews,” but **never again to anyone** - ever. That promise rings hollow when it is invoked to **justify** oppression rather than to **prevent** it.

## **Toward a Secular and Just Global Order**

What is needed now is not more rhetoric, but a **secular, rules-based international order** where **international law applies equally to all** - including allies, including Israel, including settler-colonial regimes. Only when the law is applied without fear or favor can justice be more than a slogan.

The world stood by too long in Rwanda. In Bosnia. In Myanmar. And now, in Palestine. Each time, the institutions of international law are tested. Each time, their failure is written in the blood of the victims.

History will not forgive silence. It will not excuse double standards. It will not tolerate divine exceptionalism disguised as diplomacy.

The time to act is now - not just for Palestine, but for the future of international law itself.

## **The Delusion of a Two-State Solution**

As the genocide in Gaza continues into its second year, many governments around the world have attempted to salvage their reputations by floating symbolic gestures - the most prominent being renewed calls to **recognize the State of Palestine** at the **UN summit in September**. Yet this belated recognition, in the face of catastrophic violence, is not a serious act of justice - it is **gaslighting**, a way to **mask international inaction with hollow declarations**.

The very idea of a two-state solution has long been dead. Now, it is being **resurrected not as a path to peace, but as a smokescreen** for enabling Israel’s final acts of destruction.

## **Recognition With Strings Attached**

Several states have expressed willingness to recognize Palestine - but **only under grotesque conditions**:

- **France** has demanded that **Palestinians disarm**, effectively asking a besieged, starved, and bombed people to **surrender their last means of resistance** while Israel continues its siege and illegal occupation.
- **The UK** has conditioned recognition on the **continuation of Israel’s genocidal assault** - stating that recognition must “support Israel’s right to self-defense,” even as

that “defense” takes the form of **mass starvation, forced displacement, and military occupation**.

This is not recognition; it is a **coerced offer of surrender**. It demands that Palestinians accept their subjugation, their fragmentation, and their annihilation as the price of being acknowledged on paper - a cruel parody of diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Israel lashes out at these states, accusing them of “**rewarding terrorism**.” But this is the **pot calling the kettle black**.

## **The Terrorist Origins of the Israeli State**

If terrorism is to be condemned, Israel’s founding must be included. The **Zionist paramilitary groups** Irgun, Lehi (the “Stern Gang”), and the Haganah - **all precursors to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)** - carried out a wave of violent attacks during the British Mandate:

- The **King David Hotel bombing** (1946) killed 91 people.
- The **assassination of UN envoy Folke Bernadotte** (1948) by Lehi aimed to stop peace efforts.
- The **British Embassy in Rome** was bombed in 1946.
- Countless **bridges, markets, and Arab villages** were attacked and destroyed.

By today’s standards, these acts would be unequivocally classified as **terrorism**. Yet when Israel emerged from this violence, it was not isolated or sanctioned - it was **embraced by the West**.

The message is clear: **when Israel uses violence, it is heroic**; when Palestinians resist, it is terrorism. This double standard continues to define international discourse.

## **Creating Facts While the World Talks**

As world leaders debate symbolic recognition, **Israel continues creating facts on the ground**:

- The **illegal settlements** in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continue to grow. Recognition will not **magically remove** them, nor return stolen land.
- In **Gaza**, people are **dying as we speak**. The **IPC** (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) has declared a **catastrophic, irreversible stage 5 famine**. Babies, the elderly, and the infirm are dying **not from lack of food, but from its deliberate denial**.

Even if food access were suddenly restored - which it is not - **the damage is irreversible**:

- **Children’s brains** deprived of nutrients will **never fully develop**, leading to **lifelong cognitive impairments**.
- **Schools and universities**, systematically bombed, have wiped out an entire generation’s access to education.

- **Psychological trauma**, orphanhood, and mass amputations have created a legacy of pain unlike anything seen in modern history. **Gaza now has the highest number of child amputees in the world** - a grotesque record no one should hold.

To suggest that Palestinians should **disarm in the face of this** is not a peace proposal - it is a **suicide pact**. No people on Earth would agree to lay down their arms while being systematically starved, bombed, and erased.

## **Recognition Does Not Stop Colonization**

Nor does statehood guarantee protection. **Syria** was a recognized state when Israel **seized and later annexed the Golan Heights**. **Lebanon** and **Iran** have both been targeted by Israeli airstrikes, assassinations, and sabotage. **Recognition has never stopped aggression** when the aggressor enjoys total impunity.

And to pretend that Gaza and the West Bank are two distinct problems is to miss the point entirely. They are **two fronts of the same war** - a war to **erase the Palestinian people**:

- **Gaza** faces **obliteration through starvation and bombardment**.
- The **West Bank** is strangled by **settler violence, water theft, military occupation, and creeping annexation**.

Both are part of one coordinated strategy of **elimination**.

## **Coexistence Is Not Possible Under Supremacy**

How can the world expect Palestinians to live side-by-side with those who:

- **Chant openly for their extermination;**
- **Slaughter their children;**
- **Steal their water;**
- And **build homes atop their ruins?**

**If disarmament is required**, it must begin with **Israel** - the occupying power, the possessor of nuclear weapons, and the architect of this apartheid regime. If settlers feel "insecure" in the presence of the people they displaced, **they are welcome to return to the countries from which they came**.

## **A Manufactured History**

Before Zionist colonization, **Jews, Christians, and Muslims coexisted** for centuries under the **Ottoman Empire**. This fragile coexistence was **shattered** not by Palestinians, but by the ideology of **political Zionism**, which sought to create a Jewish state on already-inhabited land.

In **1933**, the Zionist movement even signed the **Haavara Agreement** with **Nazi Germany**, facilitating the transfer of thousands of German Jews to Palestine in exchange for economic cooperation - a betrayal of the Jewish anti-fascist resistance in Europe.

The demographic transformation was not organic:

- **1917:** ~95% of Palestine spoke Arabic; **<1% spoke Hebrew.**
- **1922:** ~6% spoke Hebrew.
- **1931:** ~12%.
- **1947:** ~31%.

This was not “return” - it was **settler-colonial transformation.**

As one Israeli commentator, **Avi Grinberg**, bleakly noted on X:

“UK: We will recognize a Palestinian state in September.” “That’s fine. By September, God willing, there will be nothing left to recognize.”

That is the path we are on. And unless the world acts now - not just with words, but with **consequences** - that prophecy may come true.

## **Conclusion: The Time for Neutrality Has Ended**

The world said “*Never again.*” It was meant as a universal promise - not just to the victims of one genocide, but to all peoples, everywhere, always. That promise now lies in ruins beneath the rubble of Gaza and the bulldozed villages of the West Bank.

The evidence is overwhelming. What is unfolding in Palestine is not a “conflict.” It is not a “dispute.” It is a deliberate, systematic effort to erase a people - through starvation, displacement, bombardment, ecological destruction, and apartheid law. Gaza is starving. The West Bank is being carved up, village by village. Together, they form a single project of colonization and annihilation.

International law has been clear. The ICJ has ruled. The conventions are written. The treaties are binding. What is missing is not knowledge - it is **will**. And nowhere is this failure more visible than in the **United Nations Security Council**, paralyzed by the **U.S. veto** which has shielded Israel from accountability and enabled its crimes.

But there is still a path forward.

Under **UN General Assembly Resolution 377 (“Uniting for Peace”)**, when the Security Council fails to act due to the veto of a permanent member, the General Assembly has the legal authority to **override that paralysis**. It may convene an emergency session and **recommend collective action** - including **the use of force** - to restore peace and protect populations facing grave violations of international law.

The General Assembly must invoke this power **now**.

It must:

- **Recognize that a genocide is in progress;**
- **Condemn the apartheid regime in the West Bank;**
- **Authorize military protection for Palestinian civilians;**

- And **demand an immediate end to Israel's blockade, occupation, and settlement expansion.**

This is not radical. It is lawful. It is necessary. And it is long overdue.

The UN was created in the ashes of World War II. Its Charter was written to prevent the very horrors we now witness. If it cannot act now, when children are starving by design and entire towns are erased with impunity, then it has failed in its founding mission.

The international community must choose: **Will it stand with law, justice, and humanity - or with exceptionalism, hypocrisy, and genocide?**

Palestine is the test. And history is watching.