

# What Does Israel Expect?

***Israel is convinced greater levels of violence will finally crush Palestinian aspirations; it is mistaken.***

By Chris Hedges

The indiscriminate shootings of Israelis by Hamas and other Palestinian resistance organizations, the kidnapping of civilians, the barrage of rockets into Israel, drone attacks on a variety of targets from tanks to automated machine gun nests, are the familiar language of the Israeli occupier. Israel has spoken this blood-soaked language of violence to the Palestinians since Zionist militias seized more than 78% of historic Palestine, destroyed some 530 Palestinian villages and cities, and killed about 15,000 Palestinians in more than 70 massacres. Some 750,000 [Palestinians](#) were ethnically cleansed between 1947 and 1949 to create the state of Israel in 1948.

Israel's response to these armed incursions will be a genocidal assault on Gaza. Israel will kill dozens of Palestinians for every Israeli killed. Hundreds of Palestinians have already died in Israel air assaults since the launch of "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" on Saturday morning, which left 700 Israelis dead.

Prime Minister Benjamin [Netanyahu](#) warned Palestinians in Gaza on Sunday to "leave now," because Israel is going to "turn all Hamas hiding places into rubble."

But where are Palestinians in Gaza supposed to go? Israel and Egypt blockade the land borders. There is no exit by air or sea, which are controlled by Israel.

**The collective retribution against innocents is a familiar tactic employed by colonial rulers. We used it against Native Americans and later in the [Philippines](#) and Vietnam. The Germans used it against the Herero and Namaqua in [Namibia](#). The British in [Kenya](#) and Malaya. The [Nazis](#) used it in the areas they occupied in the Soviet Union, Eastern, and Central Europe. Israel follows the same playbook. Death for death. Atrocity for atrocity. But it is always the occupier who initiates this macabre dance and trades piles of corpses for higher piles of corpses.**

This is not to defend the war crimes by either side. It is not to rejoice in the attacks. I have seen enough violence in the Israeli occupied territories, where I covered the conflict for seven years, to loathe violence. But this is the familiar denouement to all settler-colonial projects. Regimes implanted and maintained by violence engender violence. The Haitian war of liberation. The Mau Mau in Kenya. The African National Congress in South Africa. These uprisings do not always succeed, but they follow familiar patterns. The Palestinians, like all colonized people, [have a right](#) to armed resistance under international law.

**Israel never had any interest in an equitable settlement with the Palestinians. It built an apartheid state and has steadily [absorbed](#) larger**

**and larger tracts of Palestinian land in a slow motion campaign of ethnic cleansing. It turned Gaza in 2007 into the world's largest open air prison.**

What does Israel, or the world community, expect? How can you trap 2.3 million people in Gaza, half of whom are unemployed, in one of the most densely populated spots on the planet for 16 years; reduce the lives of its residents, half of whom are children, to a [subsistence](#) level; deprive them of basic medical supplies, food, water, and electricity; use attack aircraft, artillery, mechanized units, missiles, naval guns, and infantry units to randomly slaughter unarmed civilians and not expect a violent response? Israel is currently carrying out waves of aerial assaults on Gaza, preparing a ground invasion and has cut the [power](#) to Gaza, which usually only operates two to four hours per day.

Many of the resistance fighters who infiltrated into Israel undoubtedly knew they would be killed. But like resistance fighters in other wars of liberation they decided that if they could not choose how they would live, they would choose how they would die.

I was a close friend of [Alina Margolis-Edelman](#) who was part of the armed resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in World War II. Her husband, [Marek Edelman](#), was the deputy commander of the uprising and the only leader to survive the war. The Nazis had sealed 400,000 Polish Jews inside the Warsaw Ghetto. The trapped Jews died in the thousands, from starvation, disease, and indiscriminate violence. When the Nazis began to transport the remaining Jews to the extermination camps the resistance fighters fought back. None expected to survive.

Edelman, after the war, condemned Zionism as a racist ideology used to justify the theft of Palestinian land. He sided with the Palestinians, supported their armed resistance, and met frequently with Palestinians leaders. He thundered against Israel's appropriation of the Holocaust to justify its repression of the Palestinian people. While Israel dined out on the mythology of the ghetto uprising, it treated the only surviving leader of the uprising, who refused to leave Poland, as a pariah. Edelman understood that the lesson of the Holocaust and the ghetto uprising was not that Jews are morally superior or eternal victims. History, Edelman said, belongs to everyone. The oppressed, including the Palestinians, had a right to fight for equality, dignity, and liberty.

"To be a Jew means always being with the oppressed and never the oppressors," [Edelman](#) said.

The Warsaw uprising has long inspired the Palestinians. Representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) used to lay a wreath at the annual commemoration of the uprising in Poland at the Warsaw Ghetto monument.

The more violence the colonizer expends to subdue the occupied, the more it transforms itself into a monster. The current government of Israel is [populated](#) by Jewish extremists, fanatic Zionists, and religious bigots who are dismantling Israeli democracy and calling for the wholesale expulsion or murder of Palestinians, including those who live inside Israel.

**The Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz, whom Isaiah Berlin called “the conscience of Israel,” warned that if Israel did not separate church and state it would give rise to a corrupt rabbinate that would warp Judaism into a fascistic cult.**

**“Religious nationalism is to religion what National Socialism was to socialism,” said Leibowitz, who died in 1994.**

He understood that the blind veneration of the military, especially after the 1967 war that captured Egypt’s Sinai, Gaza, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), and Syria’s Golan Heights, was dangerous and would lead to the ultimate destruction of Israel, along with any hope of democracy.

“Our situation will deteriorate to that of a second Vietnam, to a war in constant escalation without prospect of ultimate resolution,” he warned.

**He foresaw that “the Arabs would be the working people and the Jews the administrators, inspectors, officials, and police—mainly secret police. A state ruling a hostile population of 1.5 million to 2 million foreigners would necessarily become a secret-police state, with all that this implies for education, free speech, and democratic institutions. The corruption characteristic of every colonial regime would also prevail in the State of Israel. The administration would have to suppress Arab insurgency on the one hand and acquire Arab Quislings on the other. There is also good reason to fear that the Israel Defense Force, which has been until now a people’s army, would, as a result of being transformed into an army of occupation, degenerate, and its commanders, who will have become military governors, resemble their colleagues in other nations.”**

He saw that prolonged occupation of the Palestinians would inevitably spawn “concentration camps.”

**“Israel,” he said, “would not deserve to exist, and it will not be worthwhile to preserve it.”**

The next stage of this struggle will be a massive campaign of industrial slaughter in Gaza by Israel, which has already begun. Israel is convinced greater levels of violence will finally crush Palestinian aspirations. Israel is mistaken.

**The terror Israel inflicts is the terror it will get.**