



# Selections from the Press

16 MAY–15 AUGUST 2016

This section includes articles and news items that are not readily available in the mainstream U.S. media and provide insightful or illuminating perspectives on events, developments, or trends in Israel and the occupied territories. They have not been edited to conform with *JPS* style.

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## **DIMA KHALIDI, “ANDREW CUOMO’S BDS BLACKLIST IS A CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT,” *THE NATION***

23 JUNE 2016

Governors have significant authority in issuing executive orders, and in many situations, they do so to circumvent legislative roadblocks. But executive orders cannot wish away the Constitution.

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This, however, is precisely what New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo tried to do when he signed Executive Order 157 on June 5. The executive order requires the state to create a blacklist of institutions and companies that engage in or promote boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) activities against Israel—and then further requires the state to withdraw or forgo investments in these blacklisted entities. The move has earned well-deserved comparisons to the red-scare tactics of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy. It is also unconstitutional.

Cuomo announced Executive Order 157 unexpectedly, after months of wrangling in the New York state legislature around two similar bills. He seems to have been spurred to action after the legislature's efforts foundered amid opposition from more than a hundred activist and civil-liberties groups. Indeed, the governor explicitly said he chose to deploy the executive order as a way to accomplish, with a stroke of his pen, what the legislature could not accomplish in its legislative session, presumably because of all of the constitutional and political concerns constituents raised. Now he is encouraging other governors to do the same.

"If you boycott Israel, New York will boycott you," Cuomo wrote in a June 10 op-ed in *The Washington Post* in which he attempted to justify his executive action as both righteous and constitutional. Wildly misrepresenting the BDS movement as a "politics of discrimination, hatred and fear," he cast it as "new brand of warfare" and linked it, bizarrely, to terrorism. In perhaps the most preposterous distortion, he insinuated that BDS was the province of "those who reject our way of life"—a phrase that sounds more akin to the reckless jingoism of George W. Bush than a Democratic governor talking about a grassroots boycott movement.

In fact, BDS fits within the highest traditions of protest in the United States. Based on a 2005 call from Palestinian civil society, BDS is a tactic to pressure Israel to comply with and respect international law by ending its nearly five-decade military occupation, granting equal rights to Palestinian citizens of Israel, and respecting the internationally enshrined right of return of Palestinian refugees. At a moment when all diplomatic efforts have failed, BDS offers a nonviolent way of getting Israel to face up to its responsibilities to the millions of Palestinians it continues to control by military force, the millions it discriminates against on a daily basis, and the millions more it has dispossessed over nearly seven decades. Its inspirations are the movement supporting the South African call for BDS against South Africa's apartheid regime as well as civil-rights boycotts and farm-worker boycotts in the United States.

As such, legal groups—including my organization Palestine Legal, along with the Center for Constitutional Rights, the New York Civil Liberties Union, and the National Lawyers Guild—have made clear that BDS falls squarely in the realm of constitutionally protected activity. Fundamentally, boycotts that are designed to "bring about political, social and economic change" involve protected First Amendment activities of speech, assembly, association, and petition. The Supreme Court confirmed this in *NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co.* in 1982, a case brought by boycotted white business owners against the NAACP and other activists in Mississippi at the height of the civil-rights era in 1969. In its unanimous decision, the Court found that state action "against a nonviolent, politically motivated boycott designed to force governmental and economic change and to effectuate rights" could not be justified. Targeting the BDS movement, which has as its end forcing governmental action to achieve freedom and equality for Palestinians, similarly cannot be justified.

Those who defend Cuomo’s order and similar legislation attacking BDS attempt to strip BDS of this First Amendment protection by claiming it is discriminatory conduct—that it targets Israelis because of their national origin—not political speech. But BDS efforts, which target an array of entities in an effort to halt Israel’s injustices against Palestinians, are no more discriminatory than a boycott of white businesses in Mississippi to address historical injustices against its black citizens.

From this legal basis, Cuomo’s order presents further constitutional problems. By requiring that state agencies divest money and assets from entities because they express certain views, the order imposes an unconstitutional condition on the receipt of state benefits. The government cannot condition financial benefits on a requirement that a recipient adopt or renounce a certain political position. Imagine an institution having to renounce its divestment from fossil-fuel companies in order for it to be eligible for state investments. Admittedly, it doesn’t mean it can’t divest from fossil fuels, but it means that if it does, it will face consequences.

The order’s requirement that the state create a blacklist of companies and institutions that promote or engage in BDS also presents a blatant effort to chill First Amendment-protected activities. The order is so vague and open to interpretation that people have no idea what actions would qualify an institution for the blacklist. What constitutes “promoting” a boycott? Is a Facebook post publicizing a boycott sufficient to get you on the list? Signing a petition? Whom will the state hire to make these determinations?

\* \* \*

There is an undeniable irony in Cuomo’s eagerness to punish Israel-related boycott activity. He knows that boycotts are time-honored ways to engage in collective action against injustice. In fact, executive orders 155 and 156—the two Cuomo signed prior this one—were themselves issued in support of boycotts. In the first instance, Cuomo barred state employees from traveling to North Carolina and breaking the picket line against the state for its attack on the transgender community; in the second, he barred state employees from traveling on the state’s dime to Mississippi, following that state’s enactment of a law condoning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Yet Cuomo is not alone. His move, along with comparable laws that have been passed in other states, is part of an unprecedented assault on our First Amendment rights to speak out and to take collective action to advance Palestinian rights without fear of government sanction. Indeed, we have never seen legislative efforts of this magnitude deployed to silence and intimidate human-rights activists by blacklisting them and leveraging states’ economic power against boycotts.

So far, anti-BDS laws have been enacted in nine states: Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, and Arizona. At least nine other states have considered or are considering anti-BDS legislation this year, including Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and California. This doesn’t include county-level anti-BDS laws, including one recently passed in Nassau County, New York. One such law was ultimately rejected in New Castle, Delaware.

The legislation is being pushed by an array of Israel advocacy groups, including StandWithUs, the American Jewish Committee, and local Jewish Federations, among others. Representatives of many such organizations, including AIPAC, were present when Cuomo signed the executive order. Tellingly, the legislation is also being championed by right wing groups such as the American

Center for Law and Justice, whose agenda includes opposing women's reproductive rights, immigrant rights and LGBTQ rights, and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which was a primary force opposing divestment from Apartheid South Africa in the 1980s. And the right-wing Christian Zionist group Proclaiming Justice to the Nations has also taken credit for anti-BDS legislation, and has said it is working in dozens of states to get bills passed. One Jewish community relations expert admitted to *Haaretz* that advocacy by these groups had been critical to politicians' interest in the legislation. "The notion that there are state legislators initiating action on a foreign policy issue without some approach by us in the community is implausible," he told the newspaper.

Earlier this week, on June 21, Palestine Legal, along with the Center for Constitutional Rights and Jewish Voice for Peace, filed a Freedom of Information Law request in New York in order to begin to understand what precipitated Cuomo's executive order. We expect to receive documents exposing the extent to which Cuomo's move was influenced by Israel advocacy groups, and even Israeli officials, whose interest is to silence a grassroots human-rights movement in order to shield Israel from scrutiny.

It has been particularly dispiriting to see that some of these very same Jewish organizations now championing the wave of legislation penalizing BDS efforts once stood as exemplars of a very different ethos: They supported the NAACP's right to boycott white businesses in Mississippi. In a 1981 amicus brief to the Supreme Court supporting the NAACP's 1960s boycott, the American Jewish Congress stated that the tactic of boycotts is consistent with the "long tradition of political protest" in the United States, and that boycotts are a "moral obligation." It enumerated the times when the organization itself "employed picketing and, where appropriate, boycotting" to protest injustices, including "the 1930s boycott against Nazi Germany . . . supporting boycotts of farm and textile products in connection with labor disputes."

It is a travesty that Cuomo and others are putting Israel's interests in stopping boycotts above the constitutional rights of people in the United States. But dismissing the BDS movement as anti-Semitic, as Senator Chuck Schumer recently did when he vowed to emulate Cuomo's effort in Congress, will not work, as more people refuse to ignore Israel's outrageous treatment of Palestinians and this country's support for it. The 2005 call from Palestinian civil society to stand up for Palestinian freedom and equality with the power of collective action is being answered around the United States. Students, scholars, labor unions, churches, and other institutions are signing on to BDS efforts.

In turn, Israel and its defenders in the United States are pouring energy and resources into bludgeoning this growing grassroots movement into silence and inaction. As the Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights thoroughly documented in our 2015 report, *The Palestine Exception to Free Speech*, Israel advocacy groups in the United States use their heavy weight to pressure government actors and public and private institutions into condemning, censoring, and punishing advocacy for Palestinian rights.

Such a reaction is a testament to the increasing effectiveness of the BDS movement in shattering the sense of business-as-usual in Israel and the United States. It is also a testament to how far organizations like the AJC have veered from their days as champions of freedom, justice, and equality for oppressed populations in the United States.

We can at least be grateful that the AJC weighed in then, and helped to ensure that boycotts—even those that it now dislikes—are First Amendment-protected activity. History will eventually

recognize their efforts to punish collective action for human rights as craven and wrong. And we expect the courts will do so too.

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## STEVEN SALAITA, "ISRAEL BOYCOTT HAS STAYING POWER," *CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION*

8 JUNE 2016

The American Anthropological Association resolution pledging to honor the academic boycott of Israel just [lost a membership vote](#) by 2,423 to 2,384. The closeness of the tally illustrates how acutely the issue divides scholars inside and beyond the United States. It is also clear that academic boycott, and the broader boycott, divestment, and sanctions, or BDS, movement, is now established on campuses.

Even though the resolution won't go into effect, in November its organizers persuaded 88 percent of voting members at the business meeting of one of the world's larger scholarly organizations to formally consider boycotting Israeli academic institutions. Then they achieved a virtual tie in the actual referendum. An unprecedented 51 percent of AAA members participated. Academic boycott, even the possibility of it, compels us to pay closer attention to things we might otherwise find tangential to our daily lives. That's a good thing.

The organizers of the resolution managed these feats despite a general opposition to boycotts of Israel that includes governors, financiers, university presidents, and heads of state. Legislation has been introduced in numerous states curtailing speech rights vis-à-vis opposition to Israeli policy. This month, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered state agencies under his control to divest themselves of BDS-affiliated organizations and companies, a move that many legal scholars consider to be unconstitutional. Various colleges have sought to conceptualize criticism of Israel as a form of anti-Semitism and thus a type of hate speech. Those in support of BDS, in other words, are not merely in conflict with colleagues; they have run afoul of institutions capable of doing serious harm. Even those who oppose academic boycott should be mindful of the forces now using it as pretext to intervene on campus.

People absorbed in the debate usually focus on the ethics and philosophies of academic boycott, but the issue transcends the question of whether it is an appropriate political gesture. It's crucial to think about why academic boycott exists in the first place. It is not a silly diversion from the serious work of teaching, service, and research. It affirms the ideals of equal access underlying that work. The immediate goal of academic boycott is to offer fellowship to our colleagues in Palestine. Its ultimate goal is to help provide much-needed relief from the miserable conditions under which they often labor.

Violations of Palestinian academic freedom, and much worse, continue unabated. Students and teachers in Palestine must navigate checkpoints, campus closures, police violence, the destruction of equipment, and an inequitable legal system. Israel periodically raids and bombs Palestinian universities. Students and instructors are arrested for their speech and activism—most recently the astrophysicist Imad Barghouthi, of Al-Quds University, who was charged with incitement for a Facebook post after having already spent three months in prison.

Whenever a BDS action is successful, colleges' upper administrators mobilize with remarkable speed to condemn it as anathema to the values of free inquiry. Yet they offer silence, consent, or encouragement when pro-Israel groups push initiatives that brazenly violate constitutional rights, the principles of academic freedom, or the integrity of students and faculty members. I am unimpressed by the invocation of "academic freedom" as a rationale for curtailing boycott, which U.S. courts repeatedly rule is a form of protected speech.

Academic freedom has never been applied equally. Depending on the era, certain groups have much less leeway than others to raise unpopular criticism. Repression of scholars who are vocal about racism and inequality predates the McCarthy era. The consistent trend across eras is that those who oppose structural violence or state power are the ones most likely to face recrimination. Between the dueling parties in the BDS debate, only the side working in favor of Palestinian human rights now faces systematic repression.

In this era of corporatization and discontent, we are hard-pressed to find a site of greater discipline and solidarity than among the campus managerial class, illuminated by its lock-step opposition to criticism of Israel. Scholars ought to seriously consider the utility of academic boycott based on that fact alone. It acts as a corrective to the exercise of arbitrary power. Boycott arises where dialogue fails.

While the impulse to reduce the issue to its effect on scholars inside the United States and Israel is understandable, it is important to pay mind to the Palestinians and those who face punishment for criticizing Israel. BDS doesn't exist to protect the comfort of Western scholars. It offers an ethical way to respond to appeals for solidarity from those who must survive the brutal conditions of military occupation.

The narrowness of the AAA vote illustrates that academic boycott is here to stay, at least as long as Israel's military occupation makes it necessary. The organizers of the resolution have pledged to continue, and similar resolutions have succeeded after first being rejected.

As scholarly associations debate boycott, the final tallies are less important than the ethics we create by imagining a world that treats Palestinians with dignity. Thanks to the AAA boycott resolution, a larger number of people now openly discuss Israel's military occupation and its violations of Palestinian human rights, which is, in and of itself, a considerable victory.

That discussion needs to continue. We can debate ad nauseam the probity of academic boycott, but it would be more useful to address the problems of repression and occupation that spurred the boycott movement to begin with.

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## **DALIA HATUQA, "FIRST MUSHROOM FARM IN PALESTINE ENDS ISRAEL'S MONOPOLY," AL JAZEERA**

16 JUNE 2016

Tucked away amid the palm trees in one of the world's oldest cities, an unadorned white warehouse sits on a dusty plot of land. Inside, air conditioners hum as workers hover over elevated beds of dirt.



They methodically pick out the pearly white domes peeking out from the compost as a strip of neon lights shines overhead. When their work is done, the first locally produced mushrooms in Palestine will be packaged and shipped to Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin, Bethlehem and other cities across the West Bank.

The Amoro farm was formed three years ago by four young Palestinians who noted the absence of local mushroom production in the Palestinian market, which is saturated with Israeli goods.

The group of friends had no agricultural background—their studies focused on IT, web development and business—but they researched mushroom-growing techniques and enrolled in classes in Europe on how to cultivate the organic, white fungi.

Two of the co-owners ditched their high-paying NGO jobs and immersed themselves in what they soon found to be a sophisticated art form. Mahmoud Kuhail and Sameer Khrishi now work on the farm full-time.

They hope their business will make Palestinians less reliant on Israel and bolster local production. “[In the] donor industry everything you produce is reports and proposals, which nobody even reads,” Kuhail said.

“You don’t feel like you are producing anything for your community and yourself. It’s good money, but you don’t sleep well at night, because you don’t believe in what you do.”

The owners soon found that their product was well received, with consumers showing more interest in locally-farmed goods. “We realised that there’s a lot of demand for our mushrooms because the culture of boycotting Israeli mushrooms was gaining traction,” he said.

“Our parents never bought Israeli goods and we have been boycotting their products ever since I can remember,” Kuhail said. “So with this venture, we hit all our target points: boycotting Israel, and doing something good for the community and for ourselves.”

According to Kuhail, Amoro has already taken roughly half of the market share from Israeli producers. But even this accomplishment had its drawbacks: Palestinian shops and grocery stores were running out of the mushrooms quickly, so the owners decided to expand the farm’s growing area—a decision that brought production to a grinding halt for four months late last year.

The journey of Amoro, named after [the Amorites](#) that lived in the area more than 4,000 years ago, has been peppered with bumps in the road. The first of which was finding a piece of suitable land outside of Area C—the most fertile part of the West Bank, which is under complete Israeli control.

“The ongoing Israeli control of Area C, which comprises 60 percent of the West Bank, deprives farmers from essential agricultural and water resources,” said Mahmoud al-Attari, a Palestinian agriculture expert. “The picture is bleak: productivity is down and a lot of farmers are moving away from farming their land to taking up desk jobs.”

Also, the Amoro team needed to find land that they could afford—a difficult task in the Ramallah area, where the men live, and where a recent property boom has skyrocketed the price of a single dunam (1,000 square metres) of land to \$1m.

Jericho, the ancient, sleepy city, home to many Palestinian farms, proved a more sustainable choice, but also meant delays at Israeli checkpoints as they made their way to and from the Jordan Valley.

With the Palestinian borders also under Israeli control, the farm’s founders pay hefty customs duties at Israel’s Ashdod Port to bring in raw materials such as fungal spores.

The compost they recently bought from Holland was held up for more than two months by the Israeli authorities for “security reasons,” costing them extra fines for storage.

Using World Bank data, the Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem (ARIJ), a Bethlehem-based NGO that promotes sustainable development, found that border and documentary compliance procedures imposed on Palestinian exporters are **2.6 times** those imposed on their Israeli counterparts, and subject to double the cost associated with these delays.

According to Kuhail, such restrictions are tantamount to Israeli government support for Israeli compost growers, because it forces Palestinian farms such as Amoro to buy from them to avoid customs delays and fines. “It also means competition would be reduced for the Israeli [mushroom] producers, who would go back to owning 100 percent of the market share,” he said. “We had to stop production for 77 days and that’s a long time.”

The ARIJ estimates the total economic cost of the Israeli occupation of Palestine at approximately **\$9.5bn** a year due to Israeli restrictions on industries and services, infrastructure, access to natural resources, and constraints on movement of goods.

“Israeli [companies or suppliers] exploit restrictions on Palestinians’ ability to produce or purchase goods and services at a competitive price, by providing the Palestinian market with the same goods and services,” said Nur Arafeh, a policy fellow at Al-Shabaka, the Palestinian Policy Network.

“The Palestinian market thus becomes ‘captive,’ filled with Israeli products, and subject to impediments imposed by Israel.”

Since Amoro was founded, Israeli producers have slashed their white button mushroom prices by 45 percent—two kilos of the fleshy fungus now cost 35 shekels (\$9)—a change that Amoro believes is intended to pressure the Palestinian mushroom farmers economically.

“This is another strategy by [the] Israeli producer to get us out of the market,” he said. “We took a remarkable market share from Israeli producers, it meant they didn’t have as big of an opportunity to continue giving us their [rejected] B-quality mushrooms, which they cannot sell in the Israeli market.”

Despite the difficulties, homegrown mushrooms are fast becoming a popular alternative for Palestinian green grocers and restaurants. The Amoro farmers believe their product is more marketable because it goes from harvest into the Palestinian market on the same day, whereas Israeli mushrooms make a longer journey via Israeli and Palestinian distributors.

“Consumers realised the quality difference between the two in terms of shelf life and what they see,” co-owner Khrishi explained. “Compared with our white mushroom, the Israeli product always has blotches, because it takes two or three days before it reaches customers.”

The mushrooms have a growth cycle of 40 days, half of which is for incubation, and the remainder for picking. During incubation, temperatures, humidity and carbon dioxide levels, and watering, are all controlled to simulate the climate conditions conducive to their growth.

Multiple “flushes” or yields from one cycle are also made possible by adding more water and altering the temperature and humidity.

So far the business has not broken even, but the Amoro team remains optimistic as production increases and demand from customers—namely grocers, supermarkets, and some restaurant chefs who want specific sizes of the spongy growths for recipes—rises.



“These days there is more acceptance of Palestinian goods,” Khrishi said. “Local produce is the main pillar of the Palestinian economy, and it paves the path to its independence and sustainability. It is a source of power for all of us.”

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## RYAN MCNAMARA, “THE FALSE FRIENDS OF PALESTINE,” *JACOBIN*

12 JULY 2016

In May 2010, a group of Turkish activists calling themselves the Gaza Freedom Flotilla attempted to defy Israel’s [illegal](#) naval blockade of Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid to the impoverished Palestinian coast.

Still in international waters, medical, educational, and infrastructural supplies in tow, they were stopped by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The Israeli soldiers boarded the [Mavi Marmara](#) and opened fire, killing ten and wounding many others.

The attack sparked a major diplomatic fallout between the two nations. Turkey demanded that Israel issue an official apology and, more importantly, end its embargo. Israel balked. Now, after six years of impasse, Turkey and Israel have announced a deal that normalizes relations between the two countries.

What allowed for this unanticipated rapprochement? Simply put, Turkey abandoned Gaza in all but the most superficial ways.

For the Israeli government, ending the blockade is unthinkable. If Palestinians had freedom of maritime travel in and out of Gaza, they could begin creating global and independent connections—connections that would surely undermine the strength of Israel’s occupation.

Until recently, Turkey’s opposition offered crucial support to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who imagined an end to the food and resource shortages caused by the Israeli siege. But the new deal offers only cosmetic changes and negligible concessions, doing little to quicken the demise of Israel’s punishing blockade.

### A RAW DEAL

While the full text of the Turkey-Israel accord is yet to be released, the general outline has emerged.

First, the two nations will normalize relations: they will accept ambassadors, remove sanctions, and cooperate militarily. Second, in exchange for Israel’s official apology, as well as \$20 million for the families of the [Mavi Marmara](#) victims, Turkey will enact a law canceling legal claims against Israeli soldiers involved in the attack.

Third—if Israeli prime minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) is to be believed—Turkey will prevent Hamas from using its Turkish offices to plan anti-Israeli actions. And finally, Israel will allow Turkey to send humanitarian aid to Gaza through the Israeli Ashdod Port. In return, Turkey will drop its half-decade-long demand that the Gaza blockade end, and acknowledge Israel’s right to control the territory.

Arabic and English media outlets across the political spectrum have been quick to present the agreement as a “lessening of the blockade,” largely because Turkey and Hamas have sold it that

way. In an unabashedly false statement, Turkish prime minister Binali Yildirim [claimed](#) that the embargo on Gaza had been “largely lifted.” And in a widely cited press release, Hamas [thanked](#) President Erdoğan for “easing the blockade.”

But there is also evidence that the agreement has created tension within Hamas, which has been reticent about its own alleged participation in the deal. When rumors began appearing that Hamas leader Khaled Mashal was [consulted](#) prior to the deal—or was at least made aware of the upcoming accord—Hamas publicly distanced itself from the negotiations. The agreement, spokesperson Usamah Hamdan [said](#), “is a Turkish decision, without the involvement of Hamas.”

Their tight-lipped posture may reveal internal disagreement—the Lebanese paper *al-Akhbar* [reports](#) that many in Hamas are not satisfied with the terms of the deal, despite public statements to the contrary. Nevertheless, Hamas’s and Turkey’s rhetoric seems to have created a narrative of mutual benefit—satisfying both Turkey’s desire to save face after dropping its anti-blockade demand and Hamas’s desire to remain friendly with Ankara, one of its few remaining allies.

Turkey’s aid commitments include much-needed projects like a power plant, a desalination facility, and a two-hundred-bed hospital—all of which, on the surface, sound like important victories against the Israeli occupation. However, the nature of the blockade and occupation will impede Turkey’s ability to address Gaza’s devastating electricity, water, and medical problems.

Take the hospital. Without major changes, the Israeli siege will keep essential equipment and supplies from ever reaching its doors and prevent Gazans from studying medicine abroad. And when military and political figures decide it’s once again time to “[mow the grass](#)” in Gaza, the Israeli air force will wipe out any infrastructural improvements that have been made.

Furthermore, these projects will be subject to Israeli “security” oversight that systematically undermines their aims. For example, one year after the 2014 massacre, despite hundreds of millions of dollars raised, the UN program to restore Gazan infrastructure had rebuilt exactly [zero](#) of the eighteen thousand homes destroyed by the IDF—because Israel, citing security concerns, allows concrete and building supplies through the Ashdod Port at a very slow rate.

Without strong, explicit language in the new agreement, there is little reason to believe that Turkey will have freer access to Gaza than the United Nations. Netanyahu has already made it [clear](#) that the security measures will remain in place, and that all Turkish aid must travel through Ashdod first.

And it’s not just infrastructural supplies. The list of items prohibited from entering Gaza on security grounds is notoriously comprehensive. During a 2009 American delegation to Gaza, for instance, a ban on lentils, pasta, tomato paste, and similar food prompted then congressman Brian Laird to [ask](#), “When have lentil bombs been going off lately? Is someone going to kill you with a piece of macaroni?”

Even if Turkey is able to circumvent Israeli restrictions, an increase in humanitarian aid—no matter how big—still stops far short of “largely lifting” the siege.

In particular, the deal says nothing about Palestinians’ freedom of movement—a major concern for a population whose most important route out of the country, the [Rafah Crossing](#), is often closed and who languish in an “open-air prison” because they’re denied the right to travel or leave. Any accord that is silent on such a pressing issue can’t be seen as a win against Israeli occupation.

## TURKEY TURNS ITS BACK

By negotiating without Palestinian representatives, Turkey has further solidified the notion that Israel is sovereign over Gaza—a major compromise that both Turkish and Palestinian observers have not missed. Addressing the Turkish authorities, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of Turkey’s main opposition party, said, “From the moment you sign it [the agreement], you are making this blockade legal.” Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) executive committee member Hanan Ashrawi was equally critical, [saying](#), “They didn’t get the siege lifted, which is the real issue.” Instead, Ashrawi contends, the two nations signed “a pact of self-interest.”

Turkey—perhaps feeling the strain of its mediocre bid for European Union membership, its war on Kurdistan, and its involvement in the larger Syrian war—wants a stronger relationship with Israel. And it has at least one specific economic reason to restore relations with the regional powerhouse: the deal will open talks over a potential gas pipeline that would funnel fossil fuels from sites on the Israeli-controlled Mediterranean coast through Turkey on their way to Europe.

Such a pipeline could make Turkey more valuable to the European Union, especially because it would eat into Russia’s large share of the European natural gas market. [Stock in Zorlu Enerji](#)—a Turkish energy company with operations in Israel—and [Dalek Group](#)—an Israeli conglomerate with a share in the Leviathan Gas Field in the Mediterranean—jumped at news of the deal.

But enrichment and aggrandizement won’t help the Palestinians, and more empty promises and pledged aid won’t end the blockade.

Palestinians have already received plenty of rhetorical [commitments](#). What they lack—and what is needed to challenge the Israeli occupation—is what their fair-weather friends in the Turkish government now refuse to give: genuine solidarity.

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## BEN WHITE, “CHRISTIAN CHARITY ‘TOP OF ISRAEL’S TARGET LIST,’” AL JAZEERA

9 AUGUST 2016

Last week, the Israeli Security Agency (ISA)—or Shin Bet—announced serious charges against a Gaza-based Palestinian employee of the global Christian charity, World Vision.

According to Shin Bet, Mohammad el-Halabi, the head of World Vision’s Gaza office, funnelled tens of millions of dollars of aid money to Hamas’ al-Qassam Brigades in an elaborate, years-long scheme.

Israeli officials wasted no time in publicising allegations that boost Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government’s narrative that Hamas is exploiting naive, or nefarious, international aid groups.

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs [wrote](#) directly to counterparts around the world, connecting the affair to both Iran and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS), as well as publishing background [briefings](#) and graphics for [social media](#). Israel’s military spokesperson has also been [active](#) about the case.

Israeli diplomats were **reportedly** "specifically . . . instructed to spread the news . . . among liberal and religious groups who support World Vision."

But is everything as it seems? The lawyer representing Halabi, Mohammad Mahmoud, told Al Jazeera that his client did not see a lawyer for 21 days, and says the World Vision official was physically abused in detention: "They beat him a lot."

Mahmoud added that Halabi "denies all allegations," including the "confession" cited by a senior Israeli official as "**the evidence**" grounding the allegations.

Claims of torture were also made by Samir Zaqout, assistant director of al-Mezan Center for Human Rights in Gaza City, the group that first provided a lawyer for Halabi. "He told our lawyer that they beat him and bound him to a small chair. He was afraid they would kill him."

Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups have long maintained that Shin Bet agents inflicted "physical pain as part of interrogations," as part of their "routine" methods. As many as 90 percent of Palestinian prisoners interrogated by Shin Bet are prevented from seeing a lawyer during interrogation.

Amnesty International's report for 2015–16 says Shin Bet personnel "tortured and otherwise ill-treated Palestinian detainees . . . particularly during arrest and interrogation," while a study published last year in a peer-reviewed medical journal found that "sexual ill-treatment is systemic."

Commenting on the issue in general, Sari Bashi, Israel and Palestine country director at Human Rights Watch, told Al Jazeera how provisions that "suspend due process protections for suspects," intended for "emergency situations," are used "quite routinely against Palestinian detainees."

The Shin Bet charges against Halabi have been **denied** by his family members. His father Khalil has **told** reporters that the charges were based on "misinformation provided by a disgruntled World Vision employee." Hamas also has denied any links to Halabi, and called the allegations "lies."

Last week, World Vision **said** that "based on the information available to us at this time, we have no reason to believe that the allegations are true." On Monday, World Vision International CEO Kevin Jenkins pointed to discrepancies in the Shin Bet charges: "World Vision's cumulative operating budget in Gaza for the past 10 years was approximately \$22.5m, which makes the alleged amount of up to \$50m being diverted hard to reconcile."

In addition, "Mohammad el-Halabi was the manager of our Gaza operations only since October 2014. Before that time he managed only portions of the Gaza budget."

When pressed on whether "the Israeli government still stood by figures alleging approximately \$50m had been taken," an Israeli government spokesperson **said** the amount was irrelevant.

Speaking last week to Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, Halabi's lawyer **suggested** that armed Hamas members had stolen from the organisation's depots, but that the charges against his client were significantly "inflated."

World Vision has long been an enemy for pro-Israel groups who, in the words of one lobbyist, **believe** the group "assists Hamas in its propaganda war against the Jewish state." A U.S.-based, pro-Israel think-tank has listed World Vision as part of an NGO "**jihad**" against Israel.

NGO Monitor, a group that plays a key **role** in the escalating intimidation of local and international human rights groups and NGOs in Palestine/Israel, **accused** World Vision back in 2004 of "encouraging or at least condoning terrorism and incitement."

It is that wider context of a [crackdown](#) on humanitarian groups and human rights defenders that worries Palestinians and other observers.

Israeli minister Gilad Erdan has [claimed](#) that the accusations against Halabi prove the government's claim that "there are extensive ideological and monetary ties between terrorist organisations and delegitimation organisations that work against Israel."

World Vision, like many other international organisations, has been clear in its [call](#) for Israel to end its blockade of the Gaza Strip, and has also spoken up on other issues, such as the [forcible transfer](#) of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

At al-Mezan in Gaza, Zaqout is clear about why Israel has targeted World Vision in this way: "The Israeli government and [Shin Bet] are using very dirty tools in order to harass and pressure both Palestinian civil society and international NGOs."

Senior UN official Robert Piper has [stressed](#) the need for a "prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent" legal process. Some, however, [wonder](#) how the court will reach "anything but a foregone conclusion," given the [experience](#) of Palestinians in both [military](#) and [civilian](#) courts.

Last week, Israeli authorities claimed that as part of the World Vision investigation, information was obtained [implicating](#) "other humanitarian aid organisations." Israeli officials have also accused an employee of Save the Children of being recruited by Halabi for Hamas.

Israeli authorities are also [reportedly](#) "preparing to release information soon on a United Nations organisation Israel also alleges is linked to Hamas."

A senior British NGO official, familiar with the situation in Gaza, told Al Jazeera: "This is about Israel trying to put international NGOs, who are increasingly critical of Israeli policies, in their place. It is possible that World Vision, with its strongly evangelical supporter base in the U.S., was simply top of Israel's target list. The question is: Which NGO is next?"

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## MICHAELA WHITTON, "MEET THE PALESTINIAN VOLUNTEERS ON THE FRONTLINE OF EUROPE'S REFUGEE CRISIS," *MONDOWEISS*

2 AUGUST 2016

Millions of refugees are fleeing war and risking their lives on unequipped boats to reach European shores. Parallel to the unstoppable mass migration of those fleeing persecution, another form of mobilization has taken place. Volunteers from all of the world have arrived at the receiving end and are offering their aid and support to the biggest global displacement crisis since the Second World War, and Palestinians are no exception.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) lists more than 57,000 "persons of concern" in Greece. What originally began as a transit area for refugees after the short but deadly boat journey from Turkey has become a place where thousands are stuck in squalid and inhumane conditions.

European Union leaders are sitting on their hands after they've closed their countries' borders and smugglers have grown greedy, turning the Mediterranean sea into one of the biggest refugee graveyards. Nowhere is this situation more apparent than in a village on the island of Lesbos.

There lies a patch of private land with mounds of windswept graves of those who died while trying to make the perilous journey of crossing the sea. Tens of lives memorialized in simple marble plaques inscribed with “Unknown,” and the victim’s presumed gender, age, and date of death.

### WE TEACH LIFE SIR

At the forefront of the crisis, Palestinians from the humanitarian organization [Humanity Crew](#) can be found dealing with the most harrowing scenes to hit European shores in modern history. Launched less than a year ago in Haifa as a response to the Syrian war, the organization is leading the way in delivering mental health and psychosocial support to refugees from Syria to Sudan.

Based in Greece’s two refugee hotspots, Lesbos and the port city of Thessaloniki, Palestinian volunteers in distinctive Hi-Viz jackets can be spotted everywhere from barbed-wire topped detention centers to local hospitals. Generally among the first responders to the endless stream of emergency situations, all have a background in social work, psychology or medicine, and serve for a minimum of two weeks. Many took unpaid leave to help those shackled by European bureaucracy.

Currently the only Arabic-speaking organization working within the crisis, Humanity Crew has a lengthy waiting list of those keen to volunteer. Mental Health Activities Manager and Psychologist Jumana Abo Oxa explained why:

“Everyone’s listening to the news and watching the Syrian crisis, they want to do something but it’s difficult. As soon as we provided the opportunity, people jumped on it,” she said.

With applicants from the West Bank and the diaspora, the Palestinian volunteers must all speak Arabic and English. According to 33-year-old Abu Oxa, Greek would be a bonus. Asked if there is any truth to the rumor that those working with the organization refuse to work with IsraAid, an Israeli NGO doing similar work, she was diplomatic.

“It’s an individual choice, they want to help however they can so they look at their options,” she said, before explaining that Humanity Crew is an international organization, which happens to employ Palestinians mostly, because that’s where it originated.

### THIS IS MY DREAM

After hearing about the organization through Facebook, Palestinian nursing student Mariam Kanaani knew she had to be part of it. The 24-year-old from the Acre district explained why.

“It’s very hard to be Palestinian, we always have Israeli opposition or counterparts. For example, if you want to volunteer anywhere, all the organizations are Israeli. Obviously, I am more myself in a Palestinian organization.”

After being denied leave from her job in a psychiatric hospital to take part in the initiative, she refused to take no for an answer and resorted to radical measures: “When I asked for three weeks off to help with the crisis, they said no, so I quit! This is my dream,” she grinned.

Like thousands before her, witnessing the carnage of the crisis has been a life-changing experience for Kanaani. During her three weeks in Lesbos, she’s undoubtedly witnessed more tragedy than most twenty-somethings will in their entire lives. For her, one experience



stands out. Recently, a boat capsized near Lesbos, four people died and three were never found.

She described what happened. “We were in the marina and I saw body bags being carried to the ambulance. One was small, I found out later it was a five-year-old girl,” she said solemnly. The tragic scene didn’t end there. That evening, her shift translating at the local hospital included comforting the survivors of the tragedy.

She continued: “I met the man who carried that dead girl in the sea for eight hours. He only met her the night before. I asked myself, why? It was a body, she wasn’t alive! He could have left her and swam, but he didn’t.” Still puzzled by the behaviour of the miraculous hero, Kanaani said she will never forget him for as long as she lives, adding: “I was so shocked. In this world with all these bad people, there are good people too.”

After working tirelessly for three weeks, with no days off, Kanaani returned to Palestine on Thursday to start work at a Jerusalem hospital. Determined that her experience in Greece is just the beginning, she plans to continue volunteering while there is so much injustice in the world. Describing how the experience with Humanity Crew has affected her, she was frank:

“It’s changed my whole life; how I think, how I see the world, how I see politics. I can’t understand it, I don’t want to understand it. How can people do this to each other? Really, I don’t have the answer, but I can’t accept it,” she added. “I only know one thing, politics is shit. Those with power stand together while the poor suffer, die or are here in camps.”

## A SENSE OF NORMALITY

For thousands of refugees stuck in limbo on Lesbos, frustration levels are high and Abu Oxa said the need for psychosocial support has never been more crucial.

“They don’t know what’s happening with their papers, or where they are going,” she said. “The destinations they were hoping to get to when the borders were open have changed. They can only rely on the relocation program or family reunification if they have family members in Europe already.”

On call 24/7 and focusing mainly on Arabic-speaking refugees, the Humanity Crew has a unique capacity to connect with the culture and language of those arriving at the gateway to Europe. Hearing their own language immediately gives people a sense of security and things don’t get lost in translation. Abu Oxa gave an example:

“When we accompany a search and rescue team to a boat in distress and everyone is shouting and panicking, as soon as they hear somebody speaking Arabic, suddenly there is silence,” she said. After the volunteers reassure those on board that they have reached Europe and are safe, what happens next depends on the situation.

She continued: “We normally try to detect people in shock. If a child gets out of the boat and is completely silent, that’s someone we need to pay attention to. If they’re crying, they’re processing in a more healthy way. They’ve been through a terrifying experience, it’s a death trip, especially at night with the waves, the wind and people screaming. They’re already running from trauma and this adds to it.”

While Greece’s overwhelmed refugee camps struggle to meet basic needs, Abu Oxa is adamant this is not enough and more developed mental health support is required. She stressed that a

sense of normality in this abnormal situation is crucial, adding: “Everyone comes here with a lot of resources, but because of the trauma they forget about the strength and resilience they have. What we try to do is empower them, connect them with their resources to help them move on and survive this rough period until they reach their destination.”

It’s impossible to say what the future in Greece will hold. A spike in boat arrivals and political instability in Turkey means anxiety levels are high in the economically stretched country. What is clear is that Humanity Crew will be on the frontline of the crisis for as long as it continues and Abu Oxa explained why: “When you look at the TV, there are horrible things happening all over the world, but this is happening in Europe, which is supposed to lead in human rights issues. Most are fleeing war, running for their lives and looking for dignity,” she said, before recalling a conversation with someone who said he came to Europe to feel human. Chillingly, she added that the inhumane conditions have prompted others to declare that they would rather they had died in Syria instead of experiencing this “slow death.”

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## **JONATHAN COOK, “THE SHOCKING STORY OF ISRAEL’S DISAPPEARED BABIES,” AL JAZEERA (EXCERPTS)**

5 AUGUST 2016

For nearly 40 years, everything about Gil Grunbaum’s life was a lie, including his name. He was not, as he had always assumed, the only son of wealthy Holocaust survivors who owned a baby garments factory near Tel Aviv. Grunbaum had been stolen from his mother by doctors at a hospital in northern Israel in 1956, moments after she gave birth.

His biological parents—recent immigrants to Israel from Tunisia—were told their child had died during delivery. They were sent home without a death certificate and denied the chance to see their baby’s body or a grave.

Despite his darker looks, it never occurred to Grunbaum that the parents who raised him were not biologically related to him. Now aged 60, he says the discovery was “the most shocking moment imaginable. Everyone I loved—my parents, aunts, uncles and cousins—had been deceiving me for decades.”

And so had government officials. “Even when I discovered by chance that I was adopted, the welfare services did everything they could to try to stop me finding my biological family,” Grunbaum told Al Jazeera. “No one wanted me to know the truth.”

After a three-year search in the late 1990s, he finally learned his family’s name—Maimon—and tracked down his birth mother to the suburbs of Haifa in northern Israel. Some 41 years after they were separated, the two met for the first time, in an emotional reunion.

Grunbaum’s story would be deeply disturbing if it was unique. But growing evidence suggests that there could be thousands of other children who were abducted in Israel’s first decade.

Last weekend, Tzachi Hanegbi, a government minister tasked with studying the disappearances, conceded that at least “hundreds” of children had been taken without their parents’ consent. It is the first time a government official has ever made such a public admission.

After weeks of re-examining evidence presented to a commission of inquiry in the late 1990s, Hanegbi told Israeli TV: “They [took the children](#) and gave them away. I don’t know where.”

The Kedmi inquiry, which had issued its findings in 2001, found that as many as 5,000 children may have disappeared in the state’s first six years alone, although it examined only 1,000 of those cases. Jacob Kedmi, a former Supreme Court judge who died last month, concluded that in most cases, the children had died and been hurriedly buried.

Hanegbi’s admission appears to confirm allegations long made by the families—and supported by scholars and journalists—that the inquiry was little more than a whitewash by the Israeli establishment. Kedmi placed the hundreds of thousands of documents relating to testimonies and evidence under lock for 70 years. They will not be made publicly available until 2071. [. . .]

When asked by Israeli TV programme *Meet the Press* whether government officials were involved, Hanegbi would say only: “We may never know.”

His reluctance to be more forthcoming may be understandable. Shoshana Madmoni-Gerber, an Israel academic who has written a book on the disappearances titled *Israeli Media and the Framing of Internal Conflict: The Yemenite Babies Affair*, noted that the “forcible transfer” of children from one ethnic group to another satisfied the United Nations definition of “genocide.” The 1951 convention includes the crime of “complicity.”

“Ultimately, I don’t think it matters whether government officials actively planned what happened or they simply looked the other way while others carried out the kidnappings,” she told Al Jazeera. “Either way, this was a crime perpetrated against thousands of parents who still don’t know the truth about their children’s fate.”

Almost all of the missing children were from Jewish families that had arrived from Arab countries shortly after Israel’s creation during the [Nakba](#) of 1948, when hundreds of thousands of native Palestinians were expelled from their homes.

The mystery has been dubbed the Yemenite Children Affair, because most of the children who disappeared were from Yemen. But there were also significant numbers from Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia and the Balkans. [. . .]

In late June, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded by announcing a fresh examination of the evidence. In a video posted to his Facebook page, he promised to get to the bottom of the affair: “The subject of the Yemenite children is an [open wound](#) that continues to bleed for many families who don’t know what happened to the infants, to the children who disappeared.” He appointed Hanegbi to re-examine the documents from three previous inquiries. [. . .]

“The evidence from that time, the 1950s, clearly shows government officials, judges, lawmakers and hospital staff speaking openly about the fact that the children were being abducted. The public may not have known, but the authorities certainly did,” Tzadok said.

Tzadok, who is active with Achim Vekayamim, a forum for the families of missing children, said deep prejudices among European Jews against the Mizrahim—and especially the Yemenites—had made the kidnappings possible. [. . .]

Racism among European Jews toward Jews from Arab countries reached the very top of the government. Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, [described](#) the Mizrahim as “rabble” and a “generation of the desert,” concluding that they lacked “a trace of Jewish or human education.”

In the early 1950s, he warned: “We do not want the Israelis to become Arabs. It is incumbent upon us to struggle against the spirit of the Levant, [which corrupts](#) individuals and societies.” [ . . . ]

Shlomi Hatuka, a 38-year-old Yemenite poet and teacher who three years ago helped found Amram, an organisation campaigning on behalf of the families, said that continuing racism towards the Mizrahim had made possible a “conspiracy of silence” lasting more than six decades.

His activism began after his grandmother revealed to him 22 years ago that she had been asked by a nurse in the early 1950s to give up for adoption one of the twins she had just given birth to.

“The nurse said, ‘You have lots of children, why not let us take one of them?’” Hatuka told Al Jazeera. “My grandmother refused. A couple of days later, the nurse told her her baby girl had died. She did not receive a death certificate and was not shown a grave.” [ . . . ]

Currently, a 1960 Adoption Law makes it a criminal offence for an adopted child or their adoptive parents to publicly reveal that an adoption took place. Officials have claimed the restriction is needed to protect privacy, but there is [mounting pressure](#) to scrap it.

Amram has also established a database of missing children on its website. Hundreds more families have come forward with information of children who disappeared, including cases that have never been investigated. Hatuka believes that the total number of children who are missing could be as high as 8,000.

Even based on the official figures, one in eight Yemenite infants under the age of four may have disappeared in the state’s first six years. Boaz Sangero, a law professor at a college near Tel Aviv, wrote in the *Haaretz* newspaper this month that the figure was “astonishing,” and demanded an [urgent re-examination](#) of the evidence.

The extent of the problem was further underscored last month when four legislators in the 120-seat Israeli parliament came forward to reveal that their own relatives had disappeared in the 1950s. Two were from Netanyahu’s Likud party. [ . . . ]

There has also been widespread criticism of the way the inquiry was conducted. Tzadok called the panel’s report “shameful,” and accused it of ignoring the evidence of wrongdoing it unearthed.

Sangero noted that the commission employed only two investigators to look into the case files of some 1,000 missing children. In 69 cases, it said it could not determine the children’s fate.

The panel avoided using its subpoena powers, thereby allowing officials to refuse to testify, or agreed to let them give evidence behind closed doors. The inquiry also did not carry out DNA tests.

On many occasions, birth and burial records requested by the Kedmi inquiry either disappeared or were reported to have been destroyed by fires or floods. The inquiry, Sangero observed, did not investigate how so many files could have been lost.

The panel was equally trusting of a 1960 census that listed many of the supposedly dead children as having “left the country.” In addition, the inquiry failed to examine why many of the biological parents received military draft notices for their children on what would have been their 18th birthdays.

Tzadok noted that, in one of the most disturbing oversights, the inquiry failed to probe the disappearance of 40 infants after they were supposedly sent from an absorption camp to Jerusalem for immunisations. [ . . . ]

Hanna Gibori, head of adoption services in the country’s north at that time, testified: “Hospital physicians handed over babies for adoption straight out of the hospital, without the official adoption agencies being involved.”

As late as 1959, a Knesset member, Ben-Zion Harel, said a significant number of children were being placed for adoption at Israeli hospitals in “unacceptable ways,” bordering on “trafficking.”

All of this appears to have occurred with minimal or non-existent judicial oversight. In 1955, a high court judge, Shneur Cheshin, wrote in a decision: “To our embarrassment, fictitious adoption orders and custodial orders are issued weekly, indeed daily.”

Hospitals and government officials were able to take advantage of the absence throughout the 1950s of any adoption laws. Oversight was only tightened up in 1960, with the passage of the Adoption Law. [ . . . ]

After Amram launched its website, a friend of the family revealed to Hatuka that she had been in an institution where she believed Yemenite children like herself were trafficked.

Hatuka has been able to piece together the early life of the woman, who agreed to be identified by the pseudonym Shoshana. She and her twin brother were taken from their mother at birth and placed in a care home in Jerusalem run by WIZO.

WIZO, which still runs childcare services in Israel, is mentioned in [several cases](#) of missing children who were later found. In a statement to Al Jazeera, WIZO said that the process of admitting and releasing children from the institutions it ran was managed by authorised government authorities, noting: “WIZO’s sole responsibility was to care for the health and wellbeing of the children. Throughout the years, WIZO has provided authorities, upon request, with all of the records and materials relevant to the children in its institutions. WIZO fully supports any investigation that could shed light on issues subject to public debate.”

At seven, Shoshana and her brother were moved to an ultra-Orthodox institution for parentless Yemenite children called Gur Aryeh, in Bnei Brak, near Tel Aviv. Shoshana told Hatuka that intermittently they would be gathered in a room and visitors, called “American aunts,” would inspect them. Children would regularly disappear.

During her stay in Gur Aryeh, Shoshana was told that her biological mother had died five years after giving birth to her. [ . . . ]

Hatuka said Amram was now working to create a private DNA database abroad. It would allow both those who suspected they were kidnapped—including those now living in Europe or the U.S.—and the parents of missing children to submit their DNA to see if matches could be made.

Grunbaum said the families’ campaign was not a quest for revenge against those behind the kidnappings. “It is time for the country to be more open about its past,” he said. “We need to drag these issues into the sunlight and see what really happened.”

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## JACLYNN ASHLY, “‘WAITING IS THE WORST PART’: FAMILIES OF SLAIN PALESTINIANS WITHHELD BY ISRAEL CONTINUE THEIR FIGHT,” MA’AN NEWS AGENCY

5 JULY 2016

“We are hopeful,” Muhammad Elayyan said, as a few dozen Palestinians trickled into the quiet halls of Israel’s Supreme Court in Jerusalem on Monday. “These days, we have to see the glass as half full. We must stay hopeful.”

Elayyan is the father of one of seven slain Palestinians whose bodies are currently locked inside refrigerators in Israel's mortuary in Jaffa, withheld from their grieving families since they were killed by Israeli forces after carrying out or allegedly carrying out attacks on Israelis.

Family members of the slain Palestinians and their supporters crowded into the Israeli courtroom, eagerly awaiting a decision on whether the bodies of their loved ones would be released to them, after months of appeals to the courts.

Courtroom guards periodically scolded attendees to quiet down during the hearing, as Hebrew-speaking Palestinians tried to quickly translate for those who couldn't understand, while one man bowed his head in anxious anticipation and quietly recited Islamic prayers.

After a few minutes of private deliberation, the Supreme Court judges announced their decision to once again delay the release of the bodies until a government legal adviser was consulted, whose proposed resolution to the case is expected to be submitted to the courts by July 11, when a final decision could be made.

"The waiting is the worst part," Elayyan, whose slain son [Bahaa Elayyan](#) has been held by Israel for more than eight months, told Ma'an outside the courtroom after the decision was announced, as his visibly disappointed wife stood by his side. "It is important for us to bury our loved ones so that we can say goodbye, and then move on with our lives."

"Israel has made it so we are frozen in the stage of mourning. We have been mourning since October when our son was killed," Elayyan said. "And we will continue to mourn until his body is finally returned to us and we can properly say goodbye."

Israeli authorities [dramatically escalated their policy of withholding slain Palestinian bodies](#) since a wave of unrest swept across the Palestinian territory and Israel in October, so far leaving more than 220 Palestinians and some 32 Israelis killed.

The United Nations [released a report in May](#) stating that Israeli authorities have prohibited autopsies from being conducted on Palestinian corpses, and that the bodies were kept in poor and inhumane conditions, "stacked on top of each other."

"The bodies returned to the families are often disfigured, sometimes beyond recognition, denying the families the right to accord, with dignity, final religious rites," the report read.

Human rights organizations have also widely condemned the policy, with prisoners' rights group Addameer calling it a form of "collective punishment" against Palestinians who had not been accused of any wrongdoing, also noting that it "adds to the severe grief and trauma of families of the deceased."

Following the backlash and an appeal submitted on behalf of the families by Muhammad Mahmoud, an Addameer lawyer, the Israeli Supreme Court in May [ordered the release](#) of nine Palestinian bodies, including 22-year-old Bahaa Elayyan.

The ruling recommended that the bodies be returned by June 6, the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

However, Israel's Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan ordered that Israeli police [suspend the return of the bodies](#) just a few weeks after the ruling, claiming that the funeral of Alaa Abu Jamal had encouraged "incitement" against the Israeli state.

Seven months after 22-year-old Abu Jamal was killed by Israeli forces after carrying out an attack on Israeli civilians in October, his funeral was held in the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal al-Mukabbir.



Like other Palestinian families, Abu Jamal's family were forced to abide by Israeli-imposed preconditions to hold the ceremony, including having to pay the Israeli state more than \$10,000 as collateral against potential "incitement" and limiting the number of attendees to 50 people—conditions which Erdan said were violated during the funeral.

Meanwhile, Israeli soldiers were heavily deployed throughout the procession. Funeral attendees had chanted "God is great," a phrase used regularly during Muslim funerals, as well as "with our souls, with our blood, we sacrifice ourselves for you, martyr," a variation on a popular Arabic political slogan.

Erdan called the scene "inadmissible by all standards and measurements everywhere, the more so in the capital Jerusalem," in reference to the contested status of the holy city as the exclusive capital of the Jewish state of Israel, which is not recognized by the international community.

His decision effectively halted the implementation of the Supreme Court ruling, forcing the bereaved families, who had expected a long-awaited reprieve from their mourning, back into the Israeli courts.

The judges at Monday's hearing ruled against the prosecutor's reasoning to halt the return of bodies due to "incitement" during Abu Jamal's funeral, and also rejected the prosecutor's attempts to link a [recent escalation of attacks](#) to the release of Palestinian corpses.

Mahmoud, the Addameer lawyer, had attended Abu Jamal's funeral, and underscored to the Israeli judges during the hearing that the conditions were in fact not violated during the funeral. "We continue to accept all of the conditions set by Israel, and no one violated them or has plans to violate them in the future," Mahmoud said to the court.

Mahmoud also announced that the families had accepted a [new condition set by Israeli police](#) in June that would prohibit Palestinians from holding funerals for the released bodies in their neighborhoods or villages, as the bodies would instead be buried in cemeteries chosen by the Israeli police.

The families' main demand remains that exact dates be determined for the release of each body, while Israeli police are pushing the courts to allow them to exercise complete control over the timing based on Israel's changing security assessments.

The prosecutor also [reiterated a proposal](#) made on Saturday night by Israeli leaders to build a special cemetery in Israel for Palestinians killed by Israeli forces to avoid returning the slain bodies to their families. The proposal was promptly rejected by the Supreme Court judges.

The proposal referred to what Palestinians have termed "cemeteries of numbers," where Palestinians slain by Israeli forces have been buried. The cemeteries, where [the remains of 262 Palestinians are believed to be held](#), were built in undisclosed locations in Israel, with only numbers marking each grave. However, the policy was reversed in 2004.

After Monday's court hearing, member of Israel's Parliament, the Knesset, Osama Saadi, said "We are demanding a simple humanitarian solution to this case, which is for the Israeli government to give back the corpses to their families so they can be buried in cemeteries."

Saadi added that he was confident that the courts would order the release of the bodies in line with the ruling in May.

“We will continue to [organize and resist](#),” Elayyan told Ma’an on his way out of the courthouse. “When they return our children’s bodies, then we will move to punish those who did this to us. We will submit a complaint to the international courts.”

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## AMIRA HASS, “ISRAEL INCAPABLE OF TELLING TRUTH ABOUT WATER IT STEALS FROM PALESTINIANS,” *HAARETZ*

22 JUNE 2016

Israeli spokespeople have three answers ready to pull out when they respond to questions on the water shortage in West Bank Palestinian towns—which stands out starkly compared to the hydrological smugness of the settlements: 1) The Palestinian water system is old, so it suffers from water loss; 2) the Palestinians steal water from each other, and from the Israelis; and 3) in general, Israel has in its great generosity doubled the amount of water it supplies to the Palestinians, compared to what was called for in the Oslo Accords.

“Supplies,” the spokespeople will write in their responses. They will never say Israel sells the Palestinians 64 million cubic meters of water a year instead of the 31 million cubic meters agreed to in the Oslo Accords. Accords that were signed in 1994, and that were supposed to come to an end in 1999. They will not say that Israel sells the Palestinians water that it first stole from them.

Bravo for the demagoguery. Bravo for the one-eighth portion of truth in the answer. Water is the only issue in which Israel (still) finds it difficult to defend its discriminatory, oppressive and destructive policy with pretexts of security and God. That is why it must blur and distort this basic fact: Israel controls the water sources. And being in control, it imposes a quota on the amount of water the Palestinians are allowed to produce and consume. On average, the Palestinians consume 73 liters per person per day. Below the recommended minimum. Israelis consume a daily 180 liters on average, and there are those who say even more. And here, unlike there, you will not find thousands who consume 20 liters a day. In the summer.

True, some Palestinians steal water. Desperate farmers, regular chiselers. If it was not for the water shortage, it would not happen. A large part of the thefts are in Area C, under full Israeli control. So please, let the IDF and police find all the criminals. But to justify the crisis with theft—that is deceit.

With the Oslo Accords, Israel imposed an outrageous, racist, arrogant and brutal division of water sources in the West Bank: 80 percent for Israelis (on both sides of the Green Line), and 20 percent for the Palestinians (from wells drilled before 1967, which the Palestinians continued to operate; from the Mekorot water company; from future wells to be drilled in the eastern basin of the mountain aquifer; from agricultural wells and springs. Many of the springs, by the way, dried out because of Israeli deep wells, or because the settlers took them over. The ways of theft know no bounds.)

Twenty percent is actually good, because now only about 14 percent of the water from the mountain aquifer is accessible to Palestinians in the West Bank. Technical reasons, irregularities and human error, insufferable Israeli bureaucratic foot-dragging, whose entire goal is to delay the development of the Palestinian water infrastructure and the upgrading of

what now exists; unexpected difficulties in producing water from wells in the allowed places, old wells that have dried out or whose production has fallen, and which Israel does not allow to be replaced by newly-drilled wells—all these explain how we have reached 14 percent instead of what was signed in Oslo, and why Israel sells the Palestinians more water than it committed to back then. After all, it has been left with more water to produce from this natural resource, which, according to international law, an occupying country is forbidden to use for the purposes of its civilian population.

During the summer, the problem becomes worse, of course. The heat rises and the Palestinians' demand for water rises, not just the settlers'. So in the Salfit district and east of Nablus, Mekorot reduces the amount of water it sells to Palestinians. The spokespeople will not state it that way. They will say "regulating," they will say, too that in the settlements "there are also complaints about a water shortage" (it seems I missed the report on Arutz 7 about it).

But in Farkha, Salfit and Deir al-Hatab people describe, on the verge of tears, how humiliating it is to live for weeks without running water. And we have not even spoken about the dozens of Palestinian communities on both sides of the Green Line that Israel, a light unto the nations, refuses to allow to connect to the water infrastructure.

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## MICHAEL SCHAEFFER OMER-MAN, "HOW ISRAEL IS TURNING ANTI-OCCUPATION ACTIVISTS INTO DISSIDENTS," *+972 MAGAZINE*

4 JULY 2016

Israel's parliament passed the so-called "NGO Law" Monday night, a piece of legislation meant to stigmatize left-wing and human rights organizations in Israel as agents of foreign powers.

The law singles out non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive the majority of their funding from foreign state entities ([friendly European governments](#)), and compels them to prominently declare their foreign funding in any publication or public engagement such as media appearances or events.

The law is not intended to create more transparency; Israel already has very strict transparency laws and regulations. Furthermore, the vast majority of the organizations in question already list their sources of funding on their own websites and report the information to the government, which [also makes it available online](#).

The intended effect of the NGO Law is to send a dangerous and stifling message to the Israeli public. The message it sends is that the values espoused and advanced by these organizations—like [B'Tselem](#), [Breaking the Silence](#), and others—do not exist organically in Israel; lawmakers are saying that the values of human rights and opposing the occupation are being imposed on Israel from the outside-in, and only for the malicious purposes of harming the Jewish state, its citizens and its global image. (Of 27 organizations believed to be affected by the law, [25 were found to be](#) left-wing or human rights groups. Full disclosure, my wife serves as legal advisor for several organizations that will be affected by the law.)

Earlier this year, [Im Tirtzu](#), a radical right-wing organization with ties to the Israeli government, [launched a campaign](#) accusing prominent Israeli human rights organizations and their staff of being

foreign-planted “moles,” citing the funding they receive from friendly European countries. The campaign even suggested that the “moles,” some of the country’s most prominent activists, were responsible for Palestinian stabbing attacks.

On another front, Culture Minister [Miri Regev](#) has been working for several years to curtail political dissent in the arts. Last month Regev [sent questionnaires](#) to artists asking them whether they perform in West Bank settlements, the first step in cutting funding on the basis of political [conscience]. A year earlier [she warned](#), “institutions that delegitimize the State of Israel will not receive funding.”

Combined with a range of other pieces of legislation, policies and actions by government officials and extra-parliamentary groups, the cumulative effect of the NGO Law is to portray those working to end the occupation, fighting for equality and liberal democratic values as dissidents subverting the State of Israel itself.

Speaking at the Herzliya Conference last month, Public Security Minister [Gilad Erdan](#) announced [a new legislative initiative](#) to install legal—perhaps criminal—sanctions against Israelis who actively oppose government policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians.

“There’s no real price for somebody or an organization working against his country in order to isolate it in the world,” explained Erdan, whose ministerial responsibilities include Israel’s law enforcement agencies. “I’ve already established a legal team together with the Justice Ministry to create government-sponsored legislation in that context.”

“We understand that there is a need to draw a line between freedom of expression and democratic values, in which we believe and want to safeguard,” Erdan continued, “but if we want to convince the world that delegitimization is unacceptable and for which a price must be paid, then it needs to start here in Israel.”

In the same speech, Erdan discussed the need to use Israel’s intelligence capabilities against individuals and organizations working toward a boycott and to end the occupation, drawing direct parallels to the methods Israel has used to fight terrorism, including searching for tangential and indirect ties to terrorist organizations, finding financial improprieties, smearing individuals, and shutting down bank accounts.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF A POLITICS OF FEAR

These developments are taking place for a reason: the Israeli political establishment has utterly failed to deal with the Palestinian conflict. Not since the miscarried premiership of [Ehud Olmert](#) has a senior Israeli politician even attempted to tackle the Palestinian conflict with any earnestness. Not a single politician, neither on the left nor the right, has attempted to resuscitate the two-state solution into relevance, certainly not taking into account the changes that have taken place since [Oslo](#) was first negotiated 20 years ago. No Israeli politician has offered the public any vision of a better future.

In the absence of any hope for resolving the conflict, with increasingly frequent and predictable outbursts of violence, and as the future of the region becomes frighteningly unstable, Israelis have turned inward to a different type of hardline politics. In the worldview of Israel’s current political ethos, Zionism has mutated into a zero-sum ideology of Jewish supremacy in which dissent must be met with an iron fist, and opposing the occupation (which much of the perceives as caring

more about Palestinians than Jews) is akin to something short of treason. With no alternatives to offer, the country's political elite has led the charge.

The appointment of [Avigdor Liberman](#) as defense minister is perhaps the most telling sign that this government has nothing better to offer—not to its own constituents, but more significantly, to the world. Because the Netanyahu government is comprised almost entirely of hardliners who oppose the two-state solution both in theory and in practice, it knows that it has little chance of gaining favor with an international community which has largely lost its patience.

Netanyahu, Liberman and Bennett know very well that passing the NGO bill into law, advancing other regressive legislation like a [death penalty only for Palestinians](#), [curbing free speech](#), approving settlement construction [left](#) and [right](#), and targeting anti-occupation and human rights groups, will very likely agitate the international community, contributing to Israel's creeping international isolation. They also know that the international community will only go so far, that [nobody is coming to end the occupation](#), and that in Israel's current domestic political climate they can only win.

To be fair, right-wing political movements are sweeping the Western world at the moment. From the anti-immigrant sentiments driving Brexit to the rise of right-wing parties across Europe to the political phenomenon in the United States that started with the Tea Party and somehow resulted in Donald Trump, what Israel is experiencing is not entirely unique. But by virtue of half-a-century of experience operating a fundamentally undemocratic regime, the occupation, Israel is ahead of the pack.

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## NAOMI KLEIN, "LET THEM DROWN: THE VIOLENCE OF OTHERING IN A WARMING WORLD," *LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS* (EXCERPTS)

2 JUNE 2016

Edward Said was no tree-hugger. Descended from traders, artisans and professionals, he once described himself as "an extreme case of an urban Palestinian whose relationship to the land is basically metaphorical." In *After the Last Sky*, his meditation on the photographs of Jean Mohr, he explored the most intimate aspects of Palestinian lives, from hospitality to sports to home décor. The tiniest detail—the placing of a picture frame, the defiant posture of a child—provoked a torrent of insight from Said. Yet when confronted with images of Palestinian farmers—tending their flocks, working the fields—the specificity suddenly evaporated. Which crops were being cultivated? What was the state of the soil? The availability of water? Nothing was forthcoming. "I continue to perceive a population of poor, suffering, occasionally colourful peasants, unchanging and collective," Said confessed. This perception was "mythic," he acknowledged—yet it remained.

If farming was another world for Said, those who devoted their lives to matters like air and water pollution appear to have inhabited another planet. Speaking to his colleague Rob Nixon, he once described environmentalism as "the indulgence of spoiled tree-huggers who lack a proper cause." But the environmental challenges of the Middle East are impossible to ignore for anyone immersed, as Said was, in its geopolitics. This is a region intensely vulnerable to heat and water stress, to sea-level rise and to desertification. A recent paper in *Nature Climate Change* predicts

that, unless we radically lower emissions and lower them fast, large parts of the Middle East will likely “experience temperature levels that are intolerable to humans” by the end of this century. And that’s about as blunt as climate scientists get. Yet environmental issues in the region still tend to be treated as afterthoughts, or luxury causes. The reason is not ignorance, or indifference. It’s just bandwidth. Climate change is a grave threat but the most frightening impacts are in the medium term. And in the short term, there are always far more pressing threats to contend with: military occupation, air assault, systemic discrimination, embargo. Nothing can compete with that—nor should it attempt to try.

There are other reasons why environmentalism might have looked like a bourgeois playground to Said. The Israeli state has long coated its nation-building project in a green veneer—it was a key part of the Zionist “back to the land” pioneer ethos. And in this context trees, specifically, have been among the most potent weapons of land grabbing and occupation. It’s not only the countless olive and pistachio trees that have been uprooted to make way for settlements and Israeli-only roads. It’s also the sprawling pine and eucalyptus forests that have been planted over those orchards, as well as over Palestinian villages, most notoriously by the Jewish National Fund, which, under its slogan “Turning the Desert Green,” boasts of having planted 250 million trees in Israel since 1901, many of them non-native to the region. In publicity materials, the JNF bills itself as just another green NGO, concerned with forest and water management, parks and recreation. It also happens to be the largest private landowner in the State of Israel, and despite a number of complicated legal challenges, it still refuses to lease or sell land to non-Jews. [ . . . ]

The JNF is an extreme and recent example of what some call “green colonialism.” But the phenomenon is hardly new, nor is it unique to Israel. There is a long and painful history in the Americas of beautiful pieces of wilderness being turned into conservation parks—and then that designation being used to prevent Indigenous people from accessing their ancestral territories to hunt and fish, or simply to live. It has happened again and again. A contemporary version of this phenomenon is the carbon offset. Indigenous people from Brazil to Uganda are finding that some of the most aggressive land grabbing is being done by conservation organisations. A forest is suddenly rebranded a carbon offset and is put off-limits to its traditional inhabitants. As a result, the carbon offset market has created a whole new class of “green” human rights abuses, with farmers and Indigenous people being physically attacked by park rangers or private security when they try to access these lands. Said’s comment about tree-huggers should be seen in this context.

And there is more. In the last year of Said’s life, Israel’s so-called “separation barrier” was going up, seizing huge swathes of the West Bank, cutting Palestinian workers off from their jobs, farmers from their fields, patients from hospitals—and brutally dividing families. There was no shortage of reasons to oppose the wall on human rights grounds. Yet at the time, some of the loudest dissenting voices among Israeli Jews were not focused on any of that. Yehudit Naot, Israel’s then environment minister, was more worried about a report informing her that “The separation fence . . . is harmful to the landscape, the flora and fauna, the ecological corridors and the drainage of the creeks.” “I certainly don’t want to stop or delay the building of the fence,” she said, but “I am disturbed by the environmental damage involved.” As the Palestinian activist Omar Barghouti later observed, Naot’s “ministry and the National Parks Protection Authority mounted diligent rescue efforts to save an affected reserve of irises by



moving it to an alternative reserve. They've also created tiny passages [through the wall] for animals.”

Perhaps this puts the cynicism about the green movement in context. People do tend to get cynical when their lives are treated as less important than flowers and reptiles. And yet there is so much of Said's intellectual legacy that both illuminates and clarifies the underlying causes of the global ecological crisis, so much that points to ways we might respond that are far more inclusive than current campaign models: ways that don't ask suffering people to shelve their concerns about war, poverty and systemic racism and first “save the world”—but instead demonstrate how all these crises are interconnected, and how the solutions could be too. In short, Said may have had no time for tree-huggers, but tree-huggers must urgently make time for Said—and for a great many other anti-imperialist, postcolonial thinkers—because without that knowledge, there is no way to understand how we ended up in this dangerous place, or to grasp the transformations required to get us out. So what follows are some thoughts—by no means complete—about what we can learn from reading Said in a warming world.

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He was and remains among our most achingly eloquent theorists of exile and homesickness—but Said's homesickness, he always made clear, was for a home that had been so radically altered that it no longer really existed. His position was complex: he fiercely defended the right to return, but never claimed that home was fixed. What mattered was the principle of respect for all human rights equally and the need for restorative justice to inform our actions and policies. This perspective is deeply relevant in our time of eroding coastlines, of nations disappearing beneath rising seas, of the coral reefs that sustain entire cultures being bleached white, of a balmy Arctic. This is because the state of longing for a radically altered homeland—a home that may not even exist any longer—is something that is being rapidly, and tragically, globalised. [. . .] If we don't demand radical change we are headed for a whole world of people searching for a home that no longer exists.

Said helps us imagine what that might look like as well. He helped to popularise the Arabic word *sumud* (“to stay put, to hold on”): that steadfast refusal to leave one's land despite the most desperate eviction attempts and even when surrounded by continuous danger. It's a word most associated with places like Hebron and Gaza, but it could be applied equally today to residents of coastal Louisiana who have raised their homes up on stilts so that they don't have to evacuate, or to Pacific Islanders whose slogan is “We are not drowning. We are fighting.” [. . .] If there is anything worth celebrating in the Paris Agreement signed in April—and sadly, there isn't enough—it has come about because of this kind of principled action: climate *sumud*.

But this only scratches the surface of what we can learn from reading Said in a warming world. He was, of course, a giant in the study of “othering” —what is described in *Orientalism* as “disregarding, essentialising, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region.” And once the other has been firmly established, the ground is softened for any transgression: violent expulsion, land theft, occupation, invasion. Because the whole point of othering is that the other doesn't have the same rights, the same humanity, as those making the distinction. What does this have to do with climate change? Perhaps everything. [. . .]

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[. . .] The trouble is structural. Fossil fuels, unlike renewable forms of energy such as wind and solar, are not widely distributed but highly concentrated in very specific locations, and those locations have a bad habit of being in other people's countries. Particularly that most potent and precious of fossil fuels: oil. This is why the project of Orientalism, of othering Arab and Muslim people, has been the silent partner of our oil dependence from the start—and inextricable, therefore, from the blowback that is climate change. If nations and peoples are regarded as other—exotic, primitive, bloodthirsty, as Said documented in the 1970s—it is far easier to wage wars and stage coups when they get the crazy idea that they should control their own oil in their own interests. In 1953 it was the British-U.S. collaboration to overthrow the democratically elected government of Muhammad Mossadegh after he nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP). In 2003, exactly fifty years later, it was another UK-U.S. co-production—the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. The reverberations from each intervention continue to jolt our world, as do the reverberations from the successful burning of all that oil. The Middle East is now squeezed in the pincer of violence caused by fossil fuels, on the one hand, and the impact of burning those fossil fuels on the other.

In his latest book, *The Conflict Shoreline*, the Israeli architect Eyal Weizman has a groundbreaking take on how these forces are intersecting. The main way we've understood the border of the desert in the Middle East and North Africa, he explains, is the so-called "aridity line," areas where there is on average 200 millimetres of rainfall a year, which has been considered the minimum for growing cereal crops on a large scale without irrigation. These meteorological boundaries aren't fixed: they have fluctuated for various reasons, whether it was Israel's attempts to "green the desert" pushing them in one direction or cyclical drought expanding the desert in the other. And now, with climate change, intensifying drought can have all kinds of impacts along this line. Weizman points out that the Syrian border city of Daraa falls directly on the aridity line. Daraa is where Syria's deepest drought on record brought huge numbers of displaced farmers in the years leading up to the outbreak of Syria's civil war, and it's where the Syrian uprising broke out in 2011. Drought wasn't the only factor in bringing tensions to a head. But the fact that 1.5 million people were internally displaced in Syria as a result of the drought clearly played a role. The connection between water and heat stress and conflict is a recurring, intensifying pattern all along the aridity line: all along it you see places marked by drought, water scarcity, scorching temperatures and military conflict—from Libya to Palestine, to some of the bloodiest battlefields in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But Weizman also discovered what he calls an "astounding coincidence." When you map the targets of Western drone strikes onto the region, you see that "many of these attacks—from South Waziristan through northern Yemen, Somalia, Mali, Iraq, Gaza and Libya—are directly on or close to the 200 mm aridity line." [. . .] To me this is the most striking attempt yet to visualise the brutal landscape of the climate crisis. All this was foreshadowed a decade ago in a U.S. military report. "The Middle East," it observed, "has always been associated with two natural resources, oil (because of its abundance) and water (because of its scarcity)." True enough. And now certain patterns have become quite clear: first, Western fighter jets followed that abundance of oil; now, Western drones are closely shadowing the lack of water, as drought exacerbates conflict. [. . .]

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