

THIRD WORLD

# RESURGENCE

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# GAZA

## Savagery

## versus Solidarity

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Palestinian News & Information Agency (Wafa) in contract with APImages  
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Israel's devastating assault on Gaza has only further laid bare the iniquities inflicted on the Palestinians under its occupation regime. 13

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# ‘Blood carbon’: Why Indigenous peoples are paying the price for false solutions to the climate crisis

Conservation schemes that purport to absorb carbon from the atmosphere not only do little to remedy climate change but also undermine the land rights and livelihoods of Indigenous communities.

Martin Léna

THE solutions we seek to provide to the climate crisis must not and cannot be disconnected from social justice and human rights. Those who are most vulnerable to climate change, and who are also the least responsible for it, are equally threatened by the false solutions put forward which claim to address it.

This is particularly the case for Indigenous peoples. They largely depend on the natural environment for their survival, their health and their livelihoods, in ecosystems that are highly exposed to the effects of climate change. Many factors related to climate change – such as oil, gas, mining and deforestation – are also destroying Indigenous lands.

But it is important to note that the ‘solutions’ put forward by Western countries to deal with this crisis (which are often just a distraction) also constitute a danger for their lands and lives. For many Indigenous peoples, these ‘solutions’ represent the main threat they face, and Survival International has been denouncing this for years.

Protected Areas like National Parks are at the forefront of these false solutions. Despite the terrible human rights violations committed in these areas, and the lack of strong evidence of their effectiveness, large conservation NGOs like the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) continue to present Protected Areas as the solution to



The lands and lives of Indigenous peoples are under threat from the ‘solutions’ put forward by Western countries to deal with the climate crisis.

environmental problems.

Touted as the flagship solution in the fight against biodiversity loss, they are also increasingly presented as carbon sinks, and so helping in the fight against climate change. Included in the concept of ‘nature-based solutions’, they would make it possible to offset greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change by generating carbon credits.

However, many people are unaware that these Protected Areas, particularly in Africa and Asia, are characterised by militarised violence, and are where atrocities are committed against Indigenous peoples. They are expelled from their land and lose access to everything on which their lives depend, and they face, if they try to return, violence from security forces – extending even to torture,

rape and murder.

This fortress conservation model, which has its roots in racism and colonialism, is based on the idea that Indigenous peoples are not capable of managing their own lands. It is still supported today by many Western governments (such as France and Germany) and by large international conservation NGOs (such as WWF and WCS).

The sale of ‘carbon credits’ (or ‘emission rights’) resulting from these spaces of exclusion and violence is disastrous.

First of all, it’s what we’re calling ‘blood carbon’. The carbon credits generated in this context are based on preventing – including through violence – Indigenous peoples from accessing their lands to continue to live, feed themselves, heal themselves, etc; in short, to be able to carry out all

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the activities that are the basis of their way of life. The profits made from the sale of these credits then go largely to the companies that organise these transactions, and to the organisations that manage these Protected Areas, which risks financing ever more human rights violations.

On top of that, broadly speaking, carbon credits do not work. Most nature-based carbon offset programmes are scams and do little, if anything, to prevent carbon emissions or store additional carbon. A recent study, carried out by journalists and researchers, shows that 90% of carbon credits from tropical forests validated by the certifier Verra are ‘worthless’.

Finally, these mechanisms distract from the real causes of the climate crisis (the very activities that generate carbon emissions) and allow the most polluting companies to continue to release carbon into the atmosphere while whitewashing their image by purchasing these credits.

### Pastoral way of life sacrificed

The example of ‘community conservancies’ in Kenya is telling. These Protected Areas, grouped under the control of the conservation organisation Northern Rangelands Trust, were created in line with the fortress conservation model, although their name does not imply it. Testimonies from Indigenous representatives indicate corruption, intimidation and violence during their creation, as well as forced disappearances and extrajudicial executions committed by the militarised security units deployed by the NRT (supposedly to combat poaching).

But the NRT didn’t stop there. It launched a project in some conservancies to generate carbon credits.

Survival International’s investigation (detailed in a recent report<sup>1</sup>) showed that the project is deeply flawed and highly unlikely to permanently store significant



**Carbon-credit-based mechanisms distract from the real causes of the climate crisis and allow the most polluting companies to continue to release carbon into the atmosphere.**

Dori (CC BY-SA 3.0 US)

amounts of additional carbon. Following Survival’s investigation and advocacy, Verra has suspended the sale of carbon credits linked to the project and is currently reviewing it.

Worse still, this project was carried out without the consent and at the expense of the communities concerned. These arid territories of northern Kenya are the ancestral lands of pastoralist Indigenous peoples such as the Borana, Samburu and Rendille. The project, based on the false and racist idea that Indigenous peoples do not know how to manage their own lands and therefore are destroying the environment, then claims to prevent ‘overgrazing’, to allow the absorption of more carbon in the soil.

It is based on the destruction of the traditional systems of pastoralism of Indigenous peoples – even though they are sustainable – and aims to replace them with a centralised system. Indigenous people then lose their livelihoods, while the project is able to generate carbon credits that will not solve the climate crisis.

Carbon credits are then sold for millions of euros to companies like Meta or Netflix, which can then display their ‘carbon neutrality’ and their environmental commitments on their websites, while not changing their polluting activities

in the slightest.

These practices, which are based on the commodification of nature, destroy the lives of the best guardians of the environment and allow those responsible for climate change to continue to pollute. These are ‘solutions’ in name only.

Respecting the land rights of Indigenous peoples must be at the heart of environmental and climate policies. Survival is at the forefront of the fight against false solutions to climate change that violate the rights of Indigenous peoples – whether it’s because of blood carbon, militarised Protected Areas or nickel mining for batteries to be used in electric cars, which right now is threatening the survival of an uncontacted tribe in Indonesia.

Without justice, and without addressing the root causes of environmental and climate destruction, these disastrous ‘solutions’ will remain nothing but hot air. ♦

*Martin Léna is an advocacy officer for Survival International. He primarily works on Survival’s campaign to decolonise conservation and has collected testimonies directly from communities facing violations of their rights in the name of conservation. This article, which was translated from the French, is reproduced from Equal Times (www.equaltimes.org).*

### Notes

1. [https://assets.survivalinternational.org/documents/2466/Blood\\_Carbon\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.survivalinternational.org/documents/2466/Blood_Carbon_Report.pdf)

# The Green Revolution is a warning, not a blueprint for feeding a hungry planet

The Green Revolution of the 1960s and '70s holds lessons for food production today – but not the ones that are commonly heard.

Glenn Davis Stone

FEEDING a growing world population has been a serious concern for decades, but today there are new causes for alarm. Floods, heatwaves and other weather extremes are making agriculture increasingly precarious, especially in the Global South.

The war in Ukraine is also a factor. Russia is blockading Ukrainian grain exports, and fertiliser prices have surged because of trade sanctions on Russia, the world's leading fertiliser exporter.

Amid these challenges, some organisations are renewing calls for a second Green Revolution, echoing the introduction in the 1960s and 1970s of supposedly high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice into developing countries, along with synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. Those efforts centred on India and other Asian countries; today, advocates focus on sub-Saharan Africa, where the original Green Revolution regime never took hold.

But anyone concerned with food production should be careful what they wish for. In recent years, a wave of new analysis has spurred a critical rethinking of what Green Revolution-style farming really means for food supplies and self-sufficiency.

As I explain in my book *The Agricultural Dilemma: How Not to Feed the World*, the Green Revolution does hold lessons for food production today – but not



US plant biologist Norman Borlaug (second from right) on a visit to India. Wheat varieties bred by Borlaug were credited as enabling India to feed itself, but new analysis has spurred a critical rethinking of this Green Revolution strategy.

the ones that are commonly heard. Events in India show why.

## A triumphal narrative

There was a consensus in the 1960s among development officials and the public that an overpopulated Earth was heading towards catastrophe. Paul Ehrlich's 1968 bestseller *The Population Bomb* famously predicted that nothing could stop 'hundreds of millions' from starving in the 1970s.

India was the global poster child for this looming Malthusian disaster: Its population was booming, drought was ravaging its countryside and its imports of American wheat were climbing to levels that alarmed government officials in India and the US.

Then, in 1967, India began distributing new wheat varieties bred by Rockefeller Foundation plant biologist Norman Borlaug, along with high doses of chemical fertiliser. After famine failed to materialise, observers credited the

new farming strategy with enabling India to feed itself.

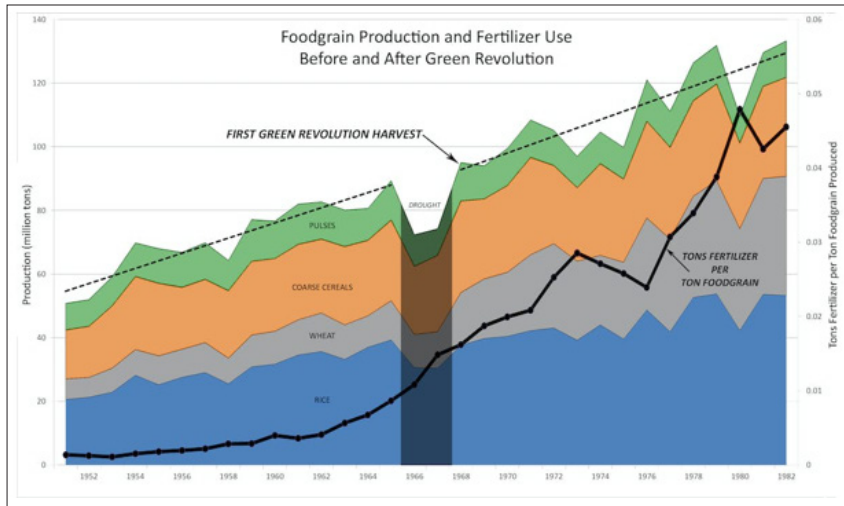
Borlaug received the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize and is still widely credited with 'saving a billion lives.' Indian agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan, who worked with Borlaug to promote the Green Revolution, received the inaugural World Food Prize in 1987. Tributes to Swaminathan, who died on 28 September at age 98, have reiterated the claim that his efforts brought India 'self-sufficiency in food production' and independence from Western powers.

The standard legend of India's Green Revolution centres on two propositions. First, India faced a food crisis, with farms mired in tradition and unable to feed an exploding population; and second, Borlaug's wheat seeds led to record harvests from 1968 on, replacing import dependence with food self-sufficiency.

Recent research shows that both claims are false.

India was importing wheat

CIMMYT (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)



India's Green Revolution wheat boom came at the expense of other crops; the growth rate of overall food grain production did not increase at all. It is doubtful that the 'revolution' produced any more food than would have been produced anyway. What increased dramatically was dependence on imported fertiliser.

**Source:** Glenn Davis Stone; data from India Directorate of Economics and Statistics and Fertiliser Association of India, CC BY-ND

in the 1960s because of policy decisions, not overpopulation. After the nation achieved independence in 1947, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru prioritised developing heavy industry. US advisers encouraged this strategy and offered to provide India with surplus grain, which India accepted as cheap food for urban workers.

Meanwhile, the government urged Indian farmers to grow non-food export crops to earn foreign currency. They switched millions of acres from rice to jute production, and by the mid-1960s India was exporting agricultural products.

Borlaug's miracle seeds were not inherently more productive than many Indian wheat varieties. Rather, they just responded more effectively to high doses of chemical fertiliser. But while India had abundant manure from its cows, it produced almost no chemical fertiliser. It had to start spending heavily to import and subsidise fertiliser.

India did see a wheat boom after 1967, but there is evidence that this expensive new input-intensive approach was not the main cause. Rather, the Indian government established a new policy of paying higher prices for wheat. Unsurprisingly, Indian farmers planted more wheat and less of other crops.

Once India's 1965-67 drought ended and the Green Revolution began, wheat production sped up, while production trends in other crops like rice, maize and pulses slowed down. Net food grain production, which was much more crucial than wheat production alone, actually resumed at the same growth rate as before.

But grain production became more erratic, forcing India to resume importing food by the mid-1970s. India also became dramatically more dependent on chemical fertiliser.

According to data from Indian economic and agricultural organisations, on the eve of the Green Revolution in 1965, Indian farmers needed 17 pounds (8 kilogrammes) of fertiliser to grow an average ton of food. By 1980, it took 96 pounds (44 kilogrammes). So, India replaced imports of wheat, which were virtually free food aid, with imports of fossil-fuel-based fertiliser, paid for with precious international currency.

Today, India remains the world's second-highest fertiliser importer, spending \$17.3 billion in 2022. Perversely, Green Revolution boosters call this extreme and expensive dependence 'self-sufficiency.'

## The toll of 'green' pollution

Recent research shows that the environmental costs of the Green Revolution are as severe as its economic impacts. One reason is that fertiliser use is astonishingly wasteful. Globally, only 17% of what is applied is taken up by plants and ultimately consumed as food. Most of the rest washes into waterways, where it creates algae blooms and dead zones that smother aquatic life. Producing and using fertiliser also generates copious greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

In Punjab, India's top Green Revolution state, heavy use of fertilisers and pesticides has contaminated water, soil and food and endangered human health.

In my view, African countries where the Green Revolution has not made inroads should consider themselves lucky. Ethiopia offers a cautionary case. In recent years, the Ethiopian government has forced farmers to plant increasing amounts of fertiliser-intensive wheat, claiming this will achieve 'self-sufficiency' and even allow it to export wheat worth \$105 million this year. Some African officials hail this strategy as an example for the continent.

But Ethiopia has no fertiliser factories, so it has to import it – at a cost of \$1 billion just in the past year. Even so, many farmers face severe fertiliser shortages.

The Green Revolution still has many boosters today, especially among biotech companies that are eager to draw parallels between genetically engineered crops and Borlaug's seeds. I agree that it offers important lessons about how to move forward with food production, but actual data tells a distinctly different story from the standard narrative. In my view, there are many ways to pursue less input-intensive agriculture that will be more sustainable in a world with an increasingly erratic climate. ♦

*Glenn Davis Stone is Research Professor of Environmental Science at Sweet Briar College in the US. This article was originally published on The Conversation (theconversation.com).*

# How a Big Pharma company stalled a potentially life-saving vaccine in pursuit of bigger profits

Development of a potential breakthrough vaccine against tuberculosis, the world's deadliest infectious disease, has been held up as the company controlling the rights seeks more lucrative business – highlighting the skewed priorities of a corporate-centred pharmaceutical pipeline system.

Anna Maria Barry-Jester

*This story was originally published by ProPublica.*

EVER since he was a medical student, Dr Neil Martinson has confronted the horrors of tuberculosis, the world's oldest and deadliest pandemic. For more than 30 years, patients have streamed into the South African clinics where he has worked – migrant workers, malnourished children and pregnant women with HIV – coughing up blood. Some were so emaciated, he could see their ribs. They'd breathed in the contagious bacteria from a cough on a crowded bus or in the homes of loved ones who didn't know they had TB. Once infected, their best option was to spend months swallowing pills that often carried terrible side-effects. Many died.

So, when Martinson joined a call in April 2018, he was anxious for the verdict about a tuberculosis vaccine he'd helped test on hundreds of people.

The results blew him away: The shot prevented over half of those infected from getting sick; it was the biggest TB vaccine breakthrough in a century. He hung up, excited, and waited for the next step, a trial that would determine whether the shot was safe and effective enough to sell.

Weeks passed. Then months.



Tuberculosis awareness posters at a hospital in Ghana. Though a good TB vaccine would be used by tens of millions of people, it has, in the parlance of industry, 'no market', because those who buy it are mostly nonprofits and countries that can't afford to spend much.

More than five years after the call, he's still waiting, because the company that owns the vaccine decided to prioritise far more lucrative business.

Pharmaceutical giant GSK pulled back on its global public health work and leaned into serving the world's most profitable market, the United States, which CEO Emma Walmsley recently called its 'top priority'. As the London-based company turned away from its vaccine for TB, a disease that kills 1.6 million mostly poor people each year, it went all in on a vaccine against shingles, a viral infection that comes with a painful rash. It

afflicts mostly older people who, in the US, are largely covered by government insurance.

Importantly, the shingles vaccine shared a key ingredient with the TB shot, a component that enhanced the effectiveness of both but was in limited supply.

From a business standpoint, GSK's decision made sense. Shingrix would become what the company calls a 'crown jewel', raking in more than \$14 billion since 2018.

But the ability of a corporation to allow a potentially life-saving vaccine to languish lays bare the distressing reality of public health

Trygve Berge (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

vaccine creation. With limited resources, governments have long seen no other option but to team with Big Pharma to develop vaccines for global scourges. But after the governments pump taxpayer money and resources into the efforts, the companies get control of the products, locking up ownership and prioritising their own gain.

That's what GSK did with the TB vaccine. Decades ago, the US Army brought in GSK to work on a malaria vaccine and helped develop the ingredient that would prove game-changing for the company. It was an adjuvant, a substance that primed the body's immune system to successfully respond to a vaccine for malaria – and, the company would come to learn, a variety of other ailments.

GSK patented the adjuvant and took control of the supply of the ingredients in it. It accepted government and non-profit funding to develop a TB vaccine using the adjuvant. But even though it isn't carrying the vaccine to the finish line, it isn't letting go of it entirely either, keeping a tight grip on that valuable ingredient.

As TB continued to rage around the globe, it took nearly two years for GSK to finalise an agreement with the non-profit Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute, or Gates MRI, to continue to develop the vaccine. While the Gates organisation agreed to pay to keep up the research, GSK reserved the right to sell the shot in wealthy countries.

The trial that will determine whether the vaccine is approved won't begin until 2024, and isn't expected to end until at least 2028. 'We just can't operate like that for a disease that is this urgent,' said Thomas Scriba, a South African scientist and TB expert who also worked on the study.

GSK pushes back against the premise that the company delayed the development of the TB vaccine and says it remains dedicated to researching diseases that plague

underserved communities. 'Any suggestion that our commitment to continued investment in global health has reduced, is fundamentally untrue,' Dr Thomas Breuer, the company's chief global health officer, wrote in a statement.

The company told ProPublica that it cannot do everything, and it now sees its role in global health as doing early development of products and then handing off the final clinical trials and manufacturing to others. It also said that a vaccine for TB is radically different from the company's other vaccines because it can't be sold at scale in wealthy countries.

Though a good TB vaccine would be used by tens of millions of people, it has, in the parlance of industry, 'no market', because those who buy it are mostly nonprofits and countries that can't afford to spend much. It's not that a TB vaccine couldn't be profitable. It's that it would never be as profitable as a product like the shingles vaccine that can be sold in the US or Western Europe.

Experts say the story of GSK's TB vaccine, and its roller-coaster of hope and disappointment, highlights a broken system, which has for too long prioritised the needs of corporations over those of the sick and poor.

'We don't ask for a fair deal from our pharma partners,' said Mike Frick, a director of the tuberculosis programme at Treatment Action Group and a global expert on the TB vaccine pipeline. 'We let them set the terms, but we don't ask them to pick up the cheque. And I just find it frankly a little humiliating.'

Steven Reed, a co-inventor of the TB vaccine, brought his idea to GSK decades ago, believing that working with a pharmaceutical giant was essential to getting the shots to people who desperately needed them. He's disillusioned that this hasn't happened and now says that Big Pharma is not the path to saving lives with vaccines in much of the world. 'You get a big company to

take it forward? Bullshit,' he said. 'That model is gone. It's failed. It's dead. We have to create a new one.'

## Gaining control

In the early 1980s, the US Army was desperate for a way to keep troops safe from the parasite that causes malaria. Military scientists had some promising ideas but wanted to find a company that could help them develop and manufacture the antigen, the piece of a vaccine that triggers an immune response. They called on SmithKline Beckman, now part of GSK, which had a plant outside of Philadelphia committed to the exact type of antigen technology they were researching.

For the company's part, working with the Army gave it access to new science and, importantly, the ability to conduct specialised research. The Army had laboratories for animal testing and ran clinical trial sites around the world. It's also generally easier to get experimental products through regulatory approval when working with the government, and Army scientists were willing to be infected with malaria and run the first tests of the vaccine on themselves.

Col. Carl Alving, then an investigator at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, said he was the first person known to be injected with an ingredient called MPL, an adjuvant added to the vaccine. Today, we know that adjuvants are key to many modern vaccines. But at the time, only one adjuvant, alum, had ever been approved for use. Alving published promising results, showing that MPL boosted the shot's success in the body.

Company scientists took note and began adding MPL to other ingredients. If one adjuvant was good, maybe two adjuvants together, stimulating different parts of the immune system, might be even better.

It was an exciting development,

bringing the multiple adjuvants together, Alving said in an interview. But then he learnt that the company scientists had filed a patent for the combinations in Europe, which put limits on what he and his colleagues could do with MPL. 'The Army felt perhaps a little frustrated by that because we had introduced Glaxo to the field.'

Still, the Army wanted the malaria vaccine. Military personnel started comparing the adjuvant combinations on rhesus monkeys at an Army facility in Thailand and ran clinical trials that tested the most promising pairs in humans and devised dosing strategies.

The Army found that one of the combinations came out on top: MPL and an extract from the bark of a tree that grows in Chile. The bark extract was already used in veterinary vaccines, but a scientist at one of the world's first biotech companies had recently discovered you could purify it into a material that makes it safe enough for use in humans.

Alving said that at the time, he didn't patent the work he and his colleagues were doing or demand an exclusive licence for MPL. 'It's a question of the Army being the Army, which is not a company,' Alving said. [This was actually the second time the government failed to secure its rights over MPL. Decades earlier, the ingredient was discovered and formulated by scientists working for the Department of Veterans Affairs and a National Institutes of Health (NIH) lab in Montana. One of the scientists, frustrated that his bosses in Bethesda, Maryland, wouldn't let him test the product in humans, quit and formed a company, taking the research with him. Though his company initially said it thought MPL was in the public domain and couldn't be patented, he did manage to patent it.]

Experts say drug development in the US is littered with such missed opportunities, which allow private companies to seize control of and

profit off work done by publicly funded researchers. Governments, they say, need to be more aggressive about keeping such work in the public domain. Alving has since done just that, recently receiving his 30th patent owned by the military.

It's an open secret in the pharmaceutical world that companies participate in global health research because it's where they get to try out new technologies that can be applied to other, more lucrative diseases.

At an investor presentation in 2016, a GSK executive used the malaria vaccine example to explain the benefit of such work. 'Of those of you who think this is just philanthropy, it is not,' Luc Debruyne, then president of vaccines at GSK, told the group. He explained that it was through the malaria work that the company invented the adjuvant that is now in its blockbuster shingles vaccine. And, he explained, vaccines are high-volume products that make a steady stream of money over time. 'So doing good business, innovating and doing well for the world absolutely can get married.'

As the Army's research on the combination of MPL and the bark extract evolved – and its market potential became clear – GSK moved to vacuum up the companies that owned the building blocks to the adjuvant.

In 2005, it bought the company that owned the rights to MPL for \$300 million. In 2012, it struck a deal for the rights to a lion's share of the supply of the Chilean tree bark extract.

The company was now in full control of the adjuvant.

### Picking a winner

GSK eagerly began to test its new adjuvant on a number of diseases – hepatitis, Lyme, HIV, influenza.

Steven Reed, a microbiologist and immunologist, had come to the company in 1994 with an idea for a

tuberculosis vaccine. An estimated 2 billion people are infected with TB globally, but it's mainly those with weakened immune systems who fall ill. A century-old vaccine called BCG protects young children, but immunity wanes over time, and that vaccine does little to shield people from the most common type of infection in the lungs.

Reed had just the background and resources to attempt a breakthrough: An adjunct professor at Cornell University's medical school, he also ran a nonprofit research organisation that worked on infectious diseases and had co-founded a biotech company to create and market products.

He and his colleagues were building a library of the proteins that make up the mycobacterium that causes TB. He also had access to a blood bank in Brazil, where TB was more prevalent, that he could screen the proteins against to determine which generated an immune response that prevented people from getting sick.

At the time Reed pitched the vaccine, the company's decision over whether to take him up was made by researchers, said Michel De Wilde, a former vice president of research and development at the company that partnered with Reed and later became part of GSK. Today, across the industry, finance units play a much stronger role in deciding what a company works on, he said.

GSK signed on, asking Reed to add the company's promising new adjuvant to his idea for a TB vaccine.

Reed and his colleagues used more than \$2 million in federal money to conduct trials from 1995 to 2005. GSK also invested, but NIH money and resources were the key, Reed said. As the vaccine progressed into testing, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation pitched in, as did the governments of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia, among others.

Amid all that, in 2003, GSK

started testing the adjuvant in its shingles vaccine, according to annual reports, but at a much faster speed. With TB, it performed a small proof-of-concept study to justify moving to a larger one. There's no evidence it did so with shingles. By 2010, GSK's shingles vaccine was in final trials; in 2017, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved it for use.

To employees and industry insiders, GSK was making its priorities clear. The company built a vaccine research facility in Rockville, Maryland, to be closer to the NIH and the FDA; at the same time, it was retreating from TB and other global public health projects, according to former employees of the vaccine division.

All the while, the adjuvant was limited. GSK struggled to ramp up production of MPL, according to former employees there; it relies on a cumbersome manufacturing process. And it wasn't clear whether there was sufficient supply of the Chilean tree that is essential to both vaccines.

After researchers learnt of the TB vaccine's successful proof-of-concept results in 2018, GSK said nothing about what was next.

'You would have thought people would have said: "Oh shit, this is doable. Let's double down, let's quadruple down",' said Dr Tom Evans, former president and CEO of Aeras, a nonprofit that led and paid for half of the proof-of-concept study. 'But that didn't happen.'

Scriba, who was involved in the study in South Africa, said he never imagined that GSK wouldn't continue the research. 'To be honest it never occurred to us that they wouldn't. The people we worked with at GSK were the TB team. They were passionate about TB,' Scriba said. 'It's extremely frustrating.'

But Reed said that when the shingles vaccine was approved, he had a gut feeling that GSK would abandon the tuberculosis work.

'The company that dropped it used similar technology to make

billions of dollars on shingles, which doesn't kill anyone,' Reed said.

Those in the field grew so concerned about the fate of the TB vaccine that the World Health Organization (WHO) convened a series of meetings in 2019.

Breuer, then chief medical officer for GSK's vaccine division, explained that the pharmaceutical giant was willing to hand off the vaccine to an organisation or company that would cover the cost of future development, licensing, manufacturing and liability. If the next trial went well, they could sell the vaccine in the 'developing world', with GSK retaining the sales rights in wealthier countries.

GSK would, however, retain control of the adjuvant, Breuer said. And the company only had enough for its other vaccines, so whoever took over the TB vaccine's development would need to pay GSK to ramp up production, which Breuer estimated would cost around \$200 million.

Dr Julio Croda was director of communicable diseases for Brazil at the time and attended the meeting. He said he was authorised to spend significant government funds on a tuberculosis vaccine trial but needed assurances that GSK would transfer technology and intellectual property if governments paid for its development. 'But in the end of the meeting, we didn't have an agreement,' he said.

Dr Glenda Gray, a leading HIV vaccine expert who attended the meeting on behalf of South Africa, said she wasn't able to get a straight answer about the availability of the adjuvant.

The year after the WHO meeting, after what a Gates representative described as 'a lot of negotiation', GSK licensed the vaccine to Gates MRI, a nonprofit created by the Gates Foundation to develop drugs and vaccines for global health issues that for-profit companies won't tackle.

GSK told ProPublica that it did

not receive upfront fees or royalties as part of the arrangement, but that Gates MRI paid it a small incentive to invest in the company's global health endeavours. GSK and Gates MRI declined to comment on the amount.

Gates MRI tax documents show a payment designated as 'royalties, license fees, and similar amounts that allow the organization to use intellectual property such as patents and copyrights' the year the agreement was finalised. Among available tax documents, that is the only year the organisation has made a payment in that category.

The amount: \$10 million.

### An uncertain future

In June of this year, the Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust announced they were pledging \$550 million to fund the phase 3 trial that will finally show whether the vaccine works. They've selected trial locations and are currently testing it on a smaller subset of patients, those with HIV.

Jeremy Farrar, chief scientist at WHO, said he's more optimistic than he's ever been in his career that we'll have a new TB vaccine this decade.

Gates MRI and GSK declined to say who had the rights to sell the vaccine in which countries, but Gates MRI said it will 'work with partners to ensure the vaccine is accessible for people living in high TB-burden lower- and middle-income countries', and GSK acknowledged that its rights extend to South America and Eastern Europe, two regions with significant pockets of TB.

As expected, Gates MRI will be reliant on GSK to supply the adjuvant, which concerns vaccine hopefuls because of the lack of transparency surrounding its availability. One of the key ingredients, the bark extract, comes from a tree whose harvest and export has been controlled by the Chilean government since the

1970s because of overexploitation. A megadrought and forest fires continue to threaten native forests today. The main exporter of the bark says it has resolved previous bottlenecks, and GSK said it is working on a synthetic version as part of its long-term plan.

In response to questions about why it retained control of the adjuvant, GSK said it was complicated to make, would not be economical to produce in more than one place, and was a very important component in many of the company's vaccines, so it wasn't willing to share the know-how.

The adjuvant is only growing in value to the company, as it adds yet another lucrative vaccine to its portfolio that requires it. In May, the FDA approved a GSK vaccine for the respiratory virus known as RSV. Analysts project that the shot will bring in \$4 billion annually at its peak. GSK continues to study the adjuvant in additional vaccines.

GSK strongly insists that it has enough of the adjuvant to fulfil its forecasted needs for the RSV, shingles, malaria and TB vaccines through 2035.

The company and Gates MRI said their agreement includes enough adjuvant for research and the initial supply of the TB vaccine, if it is approved. The organisations declined, however, to specify how many people could be vaccinated. GSK also said it was willing to supply more adjuvant after that, but further negotiations would be necessary and Gates MRI would likely need to pay to increase adjuvant manufacturing capacity. For its part, Gates MRI said it is evaluating several strategies to ensure longer-term supply.

Several experts said that Gates MRI should test other adjuvants with the vaccine's antigen. That includes Farrar, who said it would be 'very wise' to start looking for a new adjuvant. He is one of the few people who have seen the agreement between Gates MRI and GSK as a result of his previous role

as director of the Wellcome Trust. Farrar is now helping to lead a new TB Vaccine Accelerator Council at WHO and said he believes one of the group's roles would be to find solutions to any future problems with the adjuvant.

Gates MRI declined to answer when asked if it was considering testing other adjuvants with the vaccine's antigen. GSK, along with several other scientists and regulators that ProPublica spoke with, expressed that using a new adjuvant would require redoing all of the long and expensive clinical trials.

US government officials, meanwhile, are working to identify adjuvants that aren't already tied up by major pharmaceutical companies.

For a corporation, the primary concern is 'what is this adjuvant doing for my bottom line', said Wolfgang Leitner, who began his career working at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research on the malaria vaccine as a consultant for GSK. Now the chief of the innate immunity section at the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, his job is to encourage the development of new adjuvants and to make sure that researchers have access to ones that aren't tightly controlled by individual companies.

WHO has also been helping to build a global network of vaccine manufacturers who can develop and supply vaccines to less wealthy countries outside of the shadow of Big Pharma; it is using a technology debuted during the COVID-19 pandemic called mRNA, which deploys snippets of genetic code to trigger an immune response. Reed, an inventor of GSK's TB vaccine, co-founded the company at the centre of that effort, Afrigen, after growing concerned about the fate of the vaccine he made for GSK.

Reed helped create a second TB vaccine, which Afrigen has the rights to manufacture for sale in Africa. But that vaccine has yet to start a proof-of-concept trial.

Over the past five years, an average of just \$120 million a year has been spent on all TB vaccine research globally, including money from governments, pharmaceutical companies and philanthropic organisations, according to annual surveys conducted by the Treatment Action Group. For perspective, the US alone spent more than \$2 billion developing COVID-19 vaccines from 2020 to 2022. At a special UN meeting on tuberculosis in 2018, the nations of the world pledged to ensure \$3 billion was spent on TB vaccine research and development over the next five years. Just 20% of that was handed out.

While that mRNA hub holds promise, it will be years before an mRNA TB vaccine enters a proof-of-concept trial, according to people involved. The pharmaceutical companies that made successful COVID-19 vaccines have refused to share the technology and manufacturing techniques that make mRNA vaccines work. One company, Moderna, has said it won't enforce its patents on mRNA vaccines Afrigen creates for COVID-19, but it's not clear what it'll do if Afrigen applies those techniques to a disease like TB. (Paul Sagan, board chairman of ProPublica, is a member of Moderna's board.)

To date, the GSK tuberculosis vaccine – which does not use mRNA technology – is the only one that meets a set of characteristics WHO believes are necessary for a viable TB vaccine.

The phase 3 trial is set to begin early next year. In the time between the two trials, approximately 9 million people will have died from TB. ◆

*Mollie Simon contributed research for this article.*

*Anna Maria Barry-Jester is a reporter at ProPublica, a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power. This story was originally published by ProPublica (<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-big-pharma-company-stalled-tuberculosis-vaccine-to-pursue-bigger-profits>).*

# Tapping into scandal

## Unravelling the contradictions of water privatisation

Transferring control of water supply services to private hands erodes equitable access to a fundamental human right.

Leonard Shang-Quartey

WATER, the lifeblood of our planet, is an invaluable resource that has witnessed its fair share of conflicts. At the heart of these conflicts lies the highly charged issue of water privatisation, a policy that has sparked passionate discussions, protests, and often outright scandal. As governments around the world seek to offload the management of this vital resource to private entities, a litany of concerns and scandals have emerged – from Cochabamba in Bolivia, where a grassroots movement fought against water privatisation, to countless other instances in Africa of privatisation not delivering as expected. This article delves into the multifaceted landscape of contradictions of this policy.

### The scandal

There is a scandalous atmosphere of blatant human rights abuse surrounding water privatisation. Firstly, access and equity concerns bear testament to this abuse. When private water companies prioritise profitable areas over low-income communities, they surely know the consequences of such decisions on the income-poor, but nevertheless little regard is paid to the health-threatening alternatives privatisation imposes on such families and communities. This reality continuously contributes to perpetuating stark social and economic disparities in countries. Access to clean and safe drinking



Water justice activists reject water privatisation and champion public ownership and democratic control over water resources and their distribution.

Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

based on need but based on one's financial status. The shift from providing affordable and accessible water services to profit generation is a known outcome to policymakers yet they continue to accept and implement this. The scandal lies in governments' acquiescence to this policy despite knowing very well it is detrimental to the interest of their people and basic prudence.

Where is the prudence in forcefully pushing governments to adopt privatised water systems which have little public accountability and transparency? Public water systems typically undergo government regulation and oversight, which provides a level of transparency and accountability. When these systems are privatised, public control diminishes, making it easier for private companies to operate with reduced scrutiny. This lack of transparency leads to

misuse of resources, inefficiencies, and a lack of public input in decision-making.

### Consequences for ordinary people

Water privatisation's consequences significantly impact the lives of ordinary people, particularly those in low-income communities. Limited access to clean and affordable water due to privatisation accentuates financial strains on impoverished

water is a fundamental human right which privatisation's unequal distribution of this resource takes away. Like we have seen in Cochabamba, Cape Town and Accra, the deprivation caused by this policy and the lack of any alternative to water pushes people to risk their lives in protests.

The uncompromising profit motive of private water companies is yet another aspect of this scandalous policy. Because profit is their primary goal, water, a life-sustaining resource, is supplied not

households. With profit-driven priorities, essential water services are directed towards wealthier areas, leading to increased prices that are unaffordable for those already struggling financially. This results in households allocating a significant portion of their income to accessing water, sometimes resorting to unsafe sources, thereby perpetuating health issues and a cycle of poverty as resources must be diverted to address these health problems.

The social disparities and protests arising from water privatisation exacerbate existing economic and social divides. Incidents in places like Cochabamba, Cape Town and Accra illustrate how unequal distribution fuels public outrage, protests, and clashes with governmental bodies. The resultant unrest destabilises communities, deepening the gap between privileged and underserved populations, as basic needs go unmet, leading to social discord and a breakdown in trust.

Moreover, the commodification of water under privatisation presents a moral dilemma by prioritising profit over ensuring access to this fundamental human right. Transforming water from a public good to a profit-oriented commodity has unsettling implications, particularly for vulnerable communities who bear the brunt of these policies. The lack of transparency and accountability in privatised water systems further compounds these issues, reducing public participation in decision-making and enabling potential exploitation by private entities. This lack of oversight can lead to resource mismanagement, inefficiencies, and compromised water quality, significantly impacting ordinary people's access to safe and affordable water.

### Key stakeholders and their roles in the scandal

The challenges surrounding

water privatisation involve many stakeholders holding diverse roles and motivations, contributing to the debate's complexity. International financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which promote privatisation do so by tying their loans and aid to policy reforms, including water privatisation. They claim their interest is driven by economic reform and stability goals to attract private investments and enhance efficiency. However, what they have done is prioritise market-oriented solutions over equitable access, neglecting marginalised communities' needs and livelihoods.

Government entities are also key players in the initiation of privatisation, as they seek financial relief for maintaining water infrastructure and to redirect resources elsewhere. While pursuing restrictive fiscal stability targets, they have shown how prepared they are to relinquish control over fundamental resources along with the human rights of the people they swore to protect.

Private water companies, which are profit-driven by nature, run water systems to boost their coffers. Their practice, following their efficiency mantra, has been the same wherever they operate. They achieve cost control through disconnection of poor households and communities and mass layoffs of workers inherited from the public water service.

These stakeholders' interests clash with those of other stakeholders like citizens and workers. International financial institutions drive economic reforms favouring market-driven approaches over social equity. Governments push for fiscal relief at the expense of oversight and democratic accountability. Private companies seek profits and compromise the public's interest. On their part, citizens struggle against governments and the other stakeholders for equitable access while labour unions fight to protect

workers' rights and job security. This collision of interests lays bare the scandals of water privatisation.

### The demands of water justice activists

Water justice and anti-privatisation activists all over the world stand united in advocacy for equitable and universal access to water services. They reject water privatisation and champion public ownership and democratic control over water resources and their distribution and the principle of water as a fundamental human right. Water justice activists' demands centre on inclusive decision-making processes that involve local communities, addressing the distinct needs of marginalised groups and ensuring fair and affordable access to clean water. They emphasise the critical role of women in water management and advocate for their recognition and active participation in shaping policies.

The activists also promote community-based solutions, stressing the effectiveness of decentralised approaches that cater to local circumstances and include everyone. Most importantly, they challenge the prescriptions of international financial institutions and redirect focus from market-driven models to public and community-led solutions. Just as they counterposed the World Bank-supported World Water Forum in Dakar in 2022 with the Alternative World Water Forum, they will do the same in 2024 in Bali with the People's Water Forum.

Through a multifaceted approach, water justice activists strive to expose the scandal of water privatisation and awaken the collective conscience of humanity to stop privatisation to ensure that all individuals everywhere have access to clean and safe water. ♦

*Leonard Shang-Quartey is the Coordinator of the Africa Water Justice Network and a Blue Planet Project Organiser in Africa.*

# Justice is non-negotiable

## Why Israel cannot destroy Palestinian resistance

As Israel's brutal assault on Gaza rolls on unrelentingly, it is time, asserts *Ramzy Baroud*, to return the discussion to where it should have always been – the priorities of the oppressed, not the oppressor.

**Ramzy Baroud**

GAZA has changed the political equation in Palestine.

Moreover, the repercussions of this devastating war are likely to alter the political equation in the entire Middle East and to re-centre Palestine as the world's most urgent political crisis for years to come.

Since the establishment of Israel, facilitated by Britain and protected by the United States and other Western countries, the priorities have been entirely Israeli. 'Israeli security', Israel's 'military edge', 'Israel's right to defend itself', and much more, have defined the West's political discourse on the Israeli occupation and apartheid in Palestine.

This bizarre US-Western understanding of the so-called conflict, that an oppressor has 'rights' over the oppressed, has enabled Israel to maintain a military occupation over the Palestinian Territories that has lasted for over 56 years. It has also empowered Israel to neglect the roots of this 'conflict', namely, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 and the long-denied Right of Return for Palestinian refugees.

Within this context, every Palestinian-Arab overture for peace was rejected; even the supposed 'peace process', namely the Oslo Accords, turned into an opportunity for Tel Aviv to entrench its military occupation, expand its settlements and to corral Palestinians in Bantustan-like spaces, humiliated and racially segregated.

Some Palestinians, whether



**A wounded man being carried to hospital in Gaza on 9 October. The repercussions of this devastating war are likely to alter the political equation in the entire Middle East.**

enticed by American handouts or shattered by a lingering sense of defeat, lined up to receive the dividends of the US-Israeli peace – pitiful crumbs of false prestige, empty titles and limited power, granted and denied by Israel itself.

However, the Israeli war on Gaza is already changing much of this painful status quo.

Israel's constant emphasis that its deadly war is against Hamas, against 'terror', against Islamic fundamentalism, and all the rest, may have convinced those who are ready to accept the Israeli version of events at face value. But as the bodies of thousands of Palestinian civilians, thousands of whom are children, began piling up at Gaza hospitals' morgues and, tragically, in the streets, the narrative began changing.

The pulverised bodies of Palestinian children, of whole families perished together, stand witness to the brutality of Israel, to the immoral support of its allies, to the inhumanity of an international order that rewards the murderer and reprimands the victim.

Of all the biased statements made by US President Joe Biden, the one where he suggested that Palestinians are lying about counting their own dead was perhaps the most inhumane. Washington may not realise this yet, but the repercussions of its unconditional support for Israel will prove to be disastrous in the future, especially in a region that is fed up with war, hegemony, double standards, sectarian divisions and endless conflict.

But the greatest impact will be

Palestinian News & Information Agency (Wafa) in contract with AP Images (CC BY-SA 3.0)



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**'It is time that we speak about Palestinian rights, Palestinian security and the Palestinian people's right, in fact obligation, to defend themselves.'**

felt in Israel itself.

When the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, gave a powerfully emotional speech on 26 October, he could not hold back tears. International delegations at the UN General Assembly clapped non-stop, reflecting the growing support for Palestine, not only at the UN, but in hundreds of cities and towns and in countless street corners around the world.

When the Israeli ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, who had spearheaded much of the lies communicated by Tel Aviv, especially in the early days of the war, delivered his talk, not a single person clapped.

The Israeli narrative had clearly crumbled, crashing to a thousand pieces. Indeed, Israel has never been so isolated. This is definitely not the 'New Middle East' that Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu had prophesied in his UN General Assembly talk on 22 September.

Unable to fathom how the initial sympathy with Israel quickly turned into outright disdain, Israel resorted to old tactics. On 25 October, Erdan demanded that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres resign for being 'unfit to lead the UN'.

Guterres's supposedly unforgivable crime: suggesting that 'the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum'.

As far as Israel and its American benefactors are concerned, no context is allowed to taint the perfect image that Israel has created for its genocide in Gaza. In this perfect Israeli world, no one is allowed to speak of military occupation, of siege, of the lack of political prospect, of the absence of a just peace for Palestinians.

Even though Amnesty International has said in its statement that both sides had committed 'serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes', Israel still attacked it, accusing the group of being 'anti-Semitic'. Because, in Israel's thinking, even the world's leading international human rights group is not permitted to contextualise the atrocities in Gaza or dare suggest that one of the 'root causes' of the conflict was 'Israel's system of apartheid imposed on all Palestinians'.

Israel is no longer all-powerful, as it wants us to believe. Recent events have proven that its 'invincible army' – a brand that allowed Israel to become, as

of 2022, the world's 10th-largest international military exporter – turned out to be a paper tiger.

This is what is infuriating Israel the most. 'Muslims are not afraid of us anymore,' said former legislator Moshe Feiglin in an interview with Arutz Sheva – Israel National News. To restore this fear, the Israeli extremist politician has called for burning 'Gaza to ashes immediately'.

But nothing will turn Gaza into ashes, even if the over 12,000 tons of explosives dropped on the Strip in the first two weeks of the war already incinerated at least 45% of the housing units in the Strip, according to the UN's humanitarian office.

Gaza will not die because it is a powerful idea that is deeply entrenched within the hearts and minds of every Arab, of every Muslim and millions of people around the world.

This new idea is challenging the long-held belief that the world needs to cater to Israel's priorities, security, selfish definitions of peace and all other illusions. The discussion should now return to where it should have always been – the priorities of the oppressed, not the oppressor.

It is time that we speak about Palestinian rights, Palestinian security and the Palestinian people's right, in fact obligation, to defend themselves.

It is time for us to speak about justice – real justice – the outcome of which is non-negotiable: equality, full political rights, freedom and the right of return.

Gaza has told us all of this, and much more. And it is time for us to listen. ♦

*Ramzy Baroud is a journalist and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle ([www.palestinechronicle.com](http://www.palestinechronicle.com)), from which this article is reproduced. He is the author of six books. His latest book, co-edited with Ilan Pappé, is Our Vision for Liberation: Engaged Palestinian Leaders and Intellectuals Speak Out. Dr Baroud is a Non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA). His website is [www.ramzybaroud.net](http://www.ramzybaroud.net).*

# ‘We will not be silent’

Responding to Israel’s statement at a United Nations meeting in Geneva on 17 November, Palestinian delegate *Nada Tarbush* underlined her people’s ‘will to be free’ in the face of the Israeli attack on Gaza. The following is a transcript of her address.

AT the outset, let us remind Israel that our name is not the Palestinian Authority but the State of Palestine. Sure, your finance minister said at an event in Paris earlier this year there is no such thing as a Palestinian people, and your prime minister [on the 22nd of September] held up a map at the [United Nations] General Assembly entitled ‘The New Middle East’ in which Palestine was deleted and replaced entirely with Israel. But if your government is annexationist and racist, this body is not, and we ask you to kindly adhere to UN protocol and nomenclature and to show respect to all stakeholders in this room. Let us also remind the Israeli delegate that the lack of rules of procedure for this meeting does not give carte blanche to lose all sense of decorum when speaking to interlocutors in this room.

To the other states and civil society in the room, let me simplify Israel’s statement for you. Other than throwing insults around and making grave, baseless accusations, Israel said something that should make all of you shudder. It effectively said: I can kill any and every person in Gaza. The 2.3 million people in Gaza are either terrorists or terrorist sympathisers or human shields and are therefore legitimate targets. Every person, according to Israel, falls into one of these three categories – a child, a journalist, a doctor, a UN staff, a newborn baby in an incubator – and so, according to Israel, it can kill them and then have the audacity to come to this room and tell the world with a straight face: We are acting in accordance with international law. The death of each of the over 11,350 people killed over the past month, be it children, journalists,



‘We will continue to call you out on your crimes, to call for accountability for your violations...’ Participants at a 15 October rally in Melbourne, Australia, in support of Palestine.

UN staff, the sick, the elderly, according to Israel, was justified. Think about that for a moment and let it give you pause.

Anyone espousing this warped logic has no shred of humanity, no sense of morality and no knowledge of legality. But guess what – your carpet explanation for carpet bombing will not fly. People are not fools. The people in this room are seasoned diplomats who are well read, have a knowledge of history, and many of whom have seen your government making the same arguments during your six previous military aggressions on Gaza in the past 15 years. They have seen you resort to collective punishment, targeting of Palestinian children, journalists, medical staff, aid workers before. They have seen you forcibly transfer our communities, colonise our lands, demolish our homes and evict families from their own properties, since the 7th of October and for the 75 years that preceded it. They have seen your

state-sponsored disinformation campaign before – again, not fools, don’t insult our intelligence.

By saying that it is acting in accordance with international law, Israel is effectively saying the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, WHO, UNICEF, OCHA, UN Special Rapporteurs, the UN independent commission of inquiry [on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel], human rights organisations worldwide, disarmament NGOs worldwide, humanitarian NGOs worldwide, countless legal experts are all wrong, everyone is lying about Israel violating international law, and we are asked instead to believe Israel, the state that is actually doing the indiscriminate killing.

It is interesting that by saying even wars have rules, Israel quoted the very same UN Secretary-General whose resignation it has called for because he dared to say that Israel

has a history of occupying Palestinian land. The dissonance of hearing the Israeli representative talk about wars having rules, as it commits genocide and breaches every rule in the book live on our TV screens, is quite something. To Israel, we say: We see through your PR and disinformation. The whole world sees through your PR and disinformation, the millions of people filling the streets in every major capital of the world calling you out for genocide see through your PR and disinformation.

Perhaps you think that with your incendiary rhetoric we will all forget the incitement, the declarations and acts of Israeli officials – the people you represent – to wipe out Gaza, to drop a nuclear bomb on the Palestinian people, to destroy the ‘human animals’ and ‘children of darkness’. Perhaps you think that your constant intimidation and threatening language will make everyone overlook the fact that Israel is, as we speak, killing babies, youth, women, men, elderly – no one too small or too old or too sick to be spared its wrath.

Perhaps you think that by cutting off telecommunications and imposing yet another blackout on Gaza, you can continue to commit genocide while avoiding the annoyance of people being able to use their phones and computers to report on it. Perhaps you think that as your trigger-happy soldiers continue to kill journalists – 41 so far, the highest number of journalists killed over a four-week period in any conflict in the last three decades – you think that no one will be left to expose your crimes. Perhaps you think that by trying to silence anyone who tries to speak about your crimes, the international law violations of a state, by calling them either anti-Semites or terror supporters, people will be silent. And your intimidation campaign knows no bounds. They attack Palestinians,



**Nada Tarbush delivering her statement at the UN in Geneva on 17 November.**

Jews, Israelis, UN officials, politicians, parliamentarians, university professors and anyone worldwide who calls you out for your violations of international law.

But guess what – your intimidation and silencing will not work. We, along with all peace-loving nations and along with all people of conscience around the world, will not be silent. We will continue to call you out on your crimes, to call for accountability for your violations, for sanctions as your government continues to reject calls for a ceasefire, to massacre our people and to entrench your colonial occupation and apartheid regime.

Something your country should have learnt over the past 75 years is that the Palestinian people are a people who refuse to disappear, and your nuclear threats and your bombs and your tanks and your bulldozers will never break the Palestinian people's will to be free and to live in the dignity and peace to which all people are entitled. Unlike you, we have consistently stood in this forum calling for respect for international law, for ethical principles to guide state behaviour, for peace over war, for humanity over national interests, for disarmament over destruction. Once again, we stand in this forum to call on all states to respect and ensure respect for international law. Let the law be the measure by which all are judged, not propaganda and hateful, biased spins steeped in racism.

And to Israel's absurd assertion

that Palestinians have a problem with people of Jewish faith, [giving] the impression that this is a religious conflict, let us say loud and clear: This is not and has never been about religion. Had the occupiers of our land or the violators of our rights been Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, atheist or of any other conviction, we would have called them out all the same. Palestine has always been multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

People of Jewish faith have lived in historic Palestine as Palestinians for centuries. We consider them to be our brothers and sisters.

And since the memory of the Holocaust has been invoked, let us also say loud and clear: We have the greatest of solidarity with both the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. It was not Palestinians that committed that horrific genocide but the fascist forces that spawned from Europe, and it is unconscionable that a number of European leaders are again beating the drum as another genocide is now underway in Gaza.

We are united with those hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world, including from organisations like Jewish Voice for Peace, If Not Now, Na'amod UK, who are calling out this genocide and chanting in the streets of New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Sydney, Toronto and all major Western cities so that their governments can hear: Not in our name, end the genocide in Gaza. With them, we stand together to end this pain and suffering. Together we will not allow this to happen. Never again is now. ♦

*Nada Tarbush is a Counsellor at the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in Geneva. The above is a transcript of part of her statement delivered at the 2023 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which was held in Geneva on 15-17 November.*

# With Hamas gone, Gaza still wouldn't be free

Hamas is a symptom of the decades of trauma Palestinians in Gaza have been through, not the cause of that trauma, which is rooted instead in Israel's settler-colonial designs.

**Jonathan Cook**

IT shocks me that in my threads I keep coming across variations of the following tweet:

*The Palestinians have it within them to rise up against Hamas to free themselves. Or Hamas can willingly surrender. Two real choices there.*

This view isn't just being promoted in bad faith by Israeli apologists. It seems to resonate with ordinary people who presumably know very little about the histories either of Palestine or of settler-colonial movements such as the Zionist movement that founded Israel.

So let's delve briefly into both.

First, settler-colonial movements are distinguished from standard colonialism – like British rule in India – by the fact that the settler population wishes not just to steal the native population's resources but to replace the native population itself. There are lots of examples of this: European settlers dispossessed native peoples in what we today call the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for example.

The definition of genocide in international law exactly describes what those Europeans did to the local population: mass killings; inflicting conditions calculated to bring about the physical destruction of all or part of the native community; preventing births within the local population; and forcibly transferring native children to the settler population.

European settlers who today call



Israel's siege-apartheid model effectively turned Gaza into an open-air prison.

themselves Americans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders never had to account for their crimes against those native peoples. Which possibly explains why the tweet above is so commonplace – and why European countries and their settler-colonial outgrowths are today lining up against the rest of the world to support Israel as it intensifies industrial genocide in Gaza.

The truth is the 'western' world order was built on genocide. Israel is just following in a long tradition.

Settler-colonial movements do not always end up committing genocide. In South Africa, a heavily outnumbered settler-colonial population came to an 'accommodation' with the native population: the system was known as apartheid. The white group took

all the resources and privileges. The black group was allowed to live but only in ghettos and squalor.

In such circumstances, peace is possible only when the settler-colonial project is abandoned, power is shared and resources distributed more equitably. This happened, imperfectly, with the fall of apartheid.

The final model for a settler-colonial population is to drive the native population over the border, in an act of ethnic cleansing. This was Israel's preferred option in 1948 and again in 1967, when it decided to expand its borders by occupying the remaining Palestinian lands in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

The Palestinians in Gaza are an object lesson in the various ways a native population can be abused by

Natalia Cieslik/World Bank (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Fred Csznik

Settler colonialists can resort, among others, to driving the native population over the border in an act of ethnic cleansing, as happened during the establishment of the Israeli state. Picture shows Palestinian refugees in 1948.

a settler-colonial movement.

Most are refugees or descended from refugees from Israel's ethnic cleansing operations of 1948. In other words, their family homes are in what we today call Israel. They were driven off their lands into a tiny enclave, to be ruled for the next 19 years by Egypt.

When Israel seized Gaza during the 1967 war, it had to fall back on the second settler-colonising option: apartheid. So it turned the enclave into an open-air prison, or – if we're going to be more honest – a long-term concentration camp. Gaza was a large – and, with Israel's 16-year siege, increasingly much harsher – version of the townships that held the native black populations in apartheid South Africa.

What we are seeing now is Israel finally recognising that the apartheid model has failed to subdue the Palestinians' desire for freedom and dignity. Unlike white South Africa, Israel is not looking for peace and reconciliation. It is revisiting other settler-colonial options.

In the current attack on Gaza, it is implementing a mixed model: genocide for those who remain in Gaza, ethnic cleansing for those who

can get out (assuming Egypt finally relents and opens its borders).

None of that has anything to do with Hamas. The most one can say is that Hamas's resistance has forced Israel's hand. It has had to abandon its siege-apartheid model – the long-term imprisonment of a population with no resources, no freedom of movement, no clean water, no jobs. Instead, it has returned to the tried-and-tested formulas of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Hamas is a symptom of the decades of trauma Palestinians in Gaza have been through, not the cause of that trauma. Palestinians overthrowing Hamas, or Hamas surrendering, would not turn Gaza into a Dubai-on-the-Mediterranean. Palestinians there would still be prisoners, though possibly allowed slightly better conditions.

If you doubt that, look to the West Bank, which is ruled not by Hamas but by the supine Palestinian Authority of Mahmoud Abbas. He calls security cooperation with Israel – suppressing on Israel's behalf the Palestinians' craving for freedom – a 'sacred' duty. His biggest aspiration is a diplomatic solution that creates a severely

circumscribed Palestinian mini-state.

If Israel can't allow freedom to the West Bank under Abbas, how is it ever going to give freedom to tiny Gaza, even without Hamas, especially after the United Nations declared the enclave as fundamentally 'uninhabitable' in 2020?

Israel could never allow the Palestinians out of their Gaza prison because their rapid growth in numbers is seen as a threat to Israel's Jewish majority. Remember: settler-colonial populations are there to replace the native population, not to make peace with them, not to share resources, not to give them their freedom.

Israel is doing the only thing it knows how to do. And as long as the West is cheerleading, that includes genocide. ♦

*Jonathan Cook, a winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism, is the author of three books on the Israel-Palestine conflict: Blood and Religion: The Unmasking of the Jewish State (2006); Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East (2008); and Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair (2008). This article is reproduced from his website [www.jonathan-cook.net](http://www.jonathan-cook.net).*

# The long siege of Gaza

Israel's pummelling of Gaza constitutes the extreme escalation of a suffocating, years-long regime of hunger and deprivation imposed on the territory.

SIEGES are among the oldest and most brutal of military operations, in which hunger, deprivation, disease and desperation are employed to try and force a besieged people to stop resisting, surrender or die. Israel has held Gaza under a state of siege, at various levels of intensity, since 2005. The long-term, systematically planned nature of the siege needs re-emphasising as a fundamental aspect of the causation of the massacres that have taken place on either side of Israel's militarised border.

After Hamas launched Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on 7 October, Israel intensified its offence to an absolute state of siege for the Gaza Strip and its 2.3 million inhabitants, half of whom are children and have never known life outside of siege conditions. The drastic restrictions that Israel placed on the enclave – the total blockading of all food, water, fuel, electricity, medicine and supplies – were presented as a response to Hamas's attack. Yet Israel has long been using manufactured hunger and deprivation as a weapon.

## Fetters on food

As long ago as 2008, Israel put together a military committee to calibrate exactly how many calories would be needed to permit each Gazan to barely survive, thereby allowing it to calculate and regulate the absolute minimum amount of food that could be allowed to enter the besieged enclave. Working from the scientific calculation that an average person requires a bare minimum of 2,300 calories a day to survive without starvation, Israel settled on 2,279 calories per person. This regime has been actively enforced for 15 years. Now, with the

**Timothy Erik Ström**

cutting off of all food to a population already purposely held on the edge of starvation, the prospects are grim, and doubly so considering the total assault on the fabric of life in Gaza. On 18 October Israel bombed five bakeries in Gaza City, killing their staff and people waiting in line for this vital staple, bread.

As I write, the Western world is still taking credit for helping to get a measly 20 trucks carrying supplies into Gaza through the Rafah crossing. The World Health Organization estimates that what is in fact needed to meet minimum requirements is approximately 500 trucks a day, which says nothing of the added difficulties associated with the logistical systems for distribution of food, fuel and other resources which are under constant bombardment. Once one large shipment of flour from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) had reached a bakery in the Nuseirat refugee camp, the Israeli military waited for it to be unloaded, the bread to be baked, and for long lines of hungry people to gather, before they bombed the bakery, killing and mutilating as part of a calculated extermination programme.

It is worth recalling that almost exactly a year ago, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said on Twitter: 'Russia's attacks against civilian infrastructure, especially electricity, are war crimes. Cutting off men, women, children of water, electricity and heating with winter coming – these are acts of pure terror. And we have to call it as such.' Yet when Israel does a more

extreme version of exactly this, von der Leyen takes the opposite approach, hardening her support of 'Israel's right to defend itself'.

Since the siege began, Israel has also used access to water, and the quality of water, as a weapon against Gazans. The Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health and the Human Rights Monitor have said in a joint statement delivered to the UN Human Rights Council that the 'long-term Israeli blockade has caused a serious deterioration of water security in Gaza, making 97% of the water contaminated ... The residents of the besieged enclave are forced to witness the slow poisoning of their children and loved ones'. Again, this is a long-term, calculated strategy of siege warfare. Now, with even the contaminated water cut off, all manner of diseases are coming for the Gazans. Cholera, dysentery and other such easily preventable diseases will begin to spread, starting in the overcrowded and bombed hospitals, which now operate in the dark due to lack of power. This is part of the history of siege strategy: to use disease as a biological weapon to spread suffering and death.

In 2012, the United Nations released a thorough and dispassionate report titled 'Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?', which concluded that the future was bleak. It noted: 'There will be virtually no reliable access to sources of safe drinking water, standards of healthcare and education will have continued to decline, and the vision of affordable and reliable electricity for all will have become a distant memory for most. The already high number of poor, marginalised and food-insecure people depending on assistance will not have changed,

and in all likelihood will have increased.'

What actually unfolded was significantly worse than its authors' bleakest predictions, owing significantly to the repeated wars visited upon the enclave. In the aftermath of the 2014 massacre of Gazans, which Israel called Operation Protective Edge, the distinguished human rights lawyer Raji Sourani gave an interview in his Gazan home. Describing life under the siege, this exemplary, peaceful man told an interviewer: '[E]verybody says it's better for all of us to die and not go back to the situation we used to have before this war. We don't want that again. We have no dignity, no pride; we are just soft targets, and we are very cheap. Either this situation really improves or it is better to just die. I am talking about intellectuals, academics, ordinary people: everybody is saying that.'

That was almost 10 years ago. In October, Sourani's house was destroyed by airstrikes. He is not alone. According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs press statement of 22 October, about '15,100 housing units were destroyed, and 10,656 housing units were rendered uninhabitable'. That represents 42% of all houses in the entire Gaza Strip.

Even in their insufferable situation, in 2018-19 Gazans attempted a major, peaceful protest strategy, the Great March of Return. It began as a non-violent act of resistance firmly in the Gandhian tradition, and it was met with brutality. Amnesty International found evidence that 'Israeli soldiers shot unarmed protesters, bystanders, journalists and medical staff approximately 150-400m from the fence, where they did not pose any threat'. Israeli snipers shot 5,814 people, with many of the injuries from their high-calibre weapons causing permanent disabilities, amputated limbs and other mutilations. One Israeli sniper

later bragged about shooting out 42 protesters' knees in a single day: he kept the empty cartridges as souvenirs. As Gandhi himself acknowledged, peaceful protest cannot work against a coloniser prepared to resort to atrocity.

Jump forward through five more years of edge-of-starvation rations, poisoned water and calculated collective punishment to October 2023 and Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. One crucial aspect of the attack – systematically under-reported by Western media – was its focus on destroying the siege machinery that surrounds Gaza. After blasting their way through the reinforced concrete and steel walls that entomb Gaza, some Hamas fighters proceeded to attack and capture civilians, while others, as reported in *The Nation*, 'systematically stormed and destroyed a string of Israeli fortifications, checkpoints, machine-gun and snipers' nests, watchtowers, barracks, and other military emplacements – including the dreaded Erez crossing point – that have been Israel's primary tools in imposing a withering siege on Gaza's population since 2005. They inflicted stinging losses on heavily armed Israeli soldiers and border guards and destroyed or disabled armored personnel carriers, bulldozers, and the supposedly impregnable Merkava IV tanks that are the pride and joy of the Israeli army and have been used for years to terrorize Palestinians lacking the kind of anti-armor weapons that Western countries have unquestioningly rushed to Ukraine in the name of resisting invasion, occupation and annexation'.

### Profound asymmetry

The depth and depravity of the long siege of Gaza shows a profound asymmetry in the power of the two parties on either side of the militarised border. The above paragraphs focus on the human consequences on the Gazan side, as that is rarely discussed

in mainstream circles and never admitted by our politicians, yet is fundamental to any understanding of current developments. On the other side of the border, Israel has methodically designed and inflicted upon the Gazans a long-term strategy that has learnt from the history of siege and blockade, and sees its actions as being simply 'normal', justified war.

Another important asymmetry is that while Gazans live in enforced poverty, if also with the dignity afforded by their strong family relationships, Israel has fully embraced a 'free-market', high-tech developmental path championed by Silicon Valley. To give just one measure of the disparity, employees in Israel's high-tech sector doubled between 2012 and 2022. A significant part of this booming sector is oriented towards military and security concerns, with Israel becoming a major exporter of high-tech tools of war and domestic 'securitisation' – commodities tested in 'The Palestine Laboratory', to use the title of Antony Loewenstein's recent book.

In 2010, UK Tory prime minister David Cameron famously described Gaza as a 'prison camp', which captures something of the dynamic of the besieged enclave but also suggests that there is some judicially applied legal punishment being delivered. Rather, a colonial power and its military have permanently interned the people of Gaza, who have committed no crime other than to be the Indigenous people of a stolen country and refugee reminders of the initial ethnic cleansing that gave birth to Israel in 1948.

In 2003, critical Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling more aptly described Gaza as the 'largest concentration camp ever to exist'. This was not hyperbole: he used the concept precisely. But we can go further. Israel now seems set to expel the inhabitants of the Gazan concentration camp, if they

can. Raz Segal, an Israeli historian who directs the Holocaust and Genocide Studies programme at Stockton University, offers the still more chilling description of Israel's siege and massacres it has carried out in Gaza as 'a textbook case of genocide'. Again, this commentator is not treating the matter lightly. Rather, he draws on the definition established in Article II of the Genocide Convention and applies it fairly. He notes that 'Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza is quite explicit, open, and unashamed', with this being distinct in the history of genocide, though not unique.

The closest historical parallel, in terms of both spark and explicitly stated response, may be found in what was in 1904 called German South West Africa – today's Namibia. There, Indigenous Herero and Namaqua people engaged in a violent uprising against German colonial occupation, killing over a hundred settlers in a raid. German military commander Lothar von Trotha, who had cut his teeth with another brutal imperialist action in the quashing of the Boxer Rebellion in China, was the serving governor of the African colony. He responded to the raid by giving an explicit 'extermination order' in what he described as a 'race war', his forces proceeding to systematically massacre, starve and kill in concentration camps up to 100,000 native Namibians over four gruelling years. This was the first genocide of the 20th century. One can well imagine then UK prime minister Arthur Balfour and US president Theodore Roosevelt extending their support to Imperial Germany after the anti-colonial uprising, saying 'You are not alone', and sending weapons. The parallels here are worth considering. ♦

*Timothy Erik Ström is the editor of Arena Online (arena.org.au), in which this article first appeared. He is the author of the forthcoming book Cybernetic Capitalism (Verso), and his collected writings can be found on his website The Sorcerer's Apparatus (www.sorapp.net).*

## Climate Change Series No. 7

### Addressing Climate Change in Malaysia: A Critical Perspective on Carbon Pricing

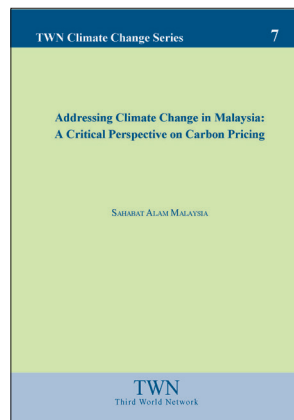
Sahabat Alam Malaysia

In order to lower the carbon emissions that lead to global warming, Malaysia is considering the deployment of market-based carbon pricing policies such as carbon trading and a carbon tax. This paper, which is based on a memorandum submitted to the Malaysian government, presents a critical assessment of these policies from a climate justice perspective.

The very basis of the carbon offsets traded in carbon markets – that a reduction or removal of emissions in one place balances out emissions elsewhere – is scientifically unsound and allows for continuing emissions that the planet can ill afford. Offsetting projects can also displace indigenous peoples and local communities, while the carbon markets themselves are vulnerable to financial instability and even criminal activity. A carbon tax meanwhile will likely have only limited impact in cutting emissions, due to a myriad of loopholes, exemptions and political constraints in determining the tax rate.

Instead of these flawed market-based approaches, Malaysia – and other developing countries – is urged to optimise the use of regulatory policies that set product, performance and technology standards for emission reduction. Given the important role they play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, the conservation of forests and biodiversity should be prioritised as well, with financing for these efforts sourced from international climate funds and other non-market approaches.

The underlying need, therefore, is to steer the climate policy discourse away from false solutions towards real action centred on equity and sustainability.



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# ‘I live in Gaza. Israel’s horrific bombing campaign is like nothing I’ve ever seen before’

In a harrowing dispatch from Gaza, Palestinian human rights activist and Gaza City resident *Raji Sourani* gives an account of daily life amid Israeli airstrikes that are killing entire families. Despite it all, Palestinians in Gaza are clinging to hope.

ONCE again, I found myself being rescued from a destroyed house. The first time this happened was when a bomb struck my family home in Tel al Hawa, a middle-class neighbourhood in Gaza City. I was with my wife Amal and my adult son. In response to the nearby bombings that were violently shaking our house, Basal asked us to stay hidden in a corridor, ensuring that we would remain together in the event of a direct hit. A bomb struck nearby, destroying much of my family home and the small but beautiful garden I cherished outside. After that, we moved to another home, closer to the heart of Gaza City, only for it to succumb to the relentless bombing as well.

I have never experienced anything like this bombing. They are using airstrikes from F-16s, gunboats, Apache helicopters and F-35s to instil terror in the minds and hearts of the people, leaving us with the sense that our only remaining option is to lose our lives and the lives of our dear ones. I am especially concerned for my family because I fear that human rights defenders will be a target just as journalists have been a target.

For the past three hours, the house has been shaking incessantly, and I can’t help but imagine the next bomb hitting this house. We have not slept for five days because of the bombing. During the day I try to walk around the city. The destruction is incredible.



**Palestinians inspect the ruins of a building destroyed in Israeli airstrikes in Gaza on 8 October.**

I cannot believe my eyes: entire families dead, shelters reduced to rubble, once towering residential buildings erased from existence, and the destruction of mosques, churches, ambulances, journalists, bakeries, marketplaces, and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools.

We have tried to move south to the so-called safety zone. In a convoy, we drove along the coastal road, waving white flags. The road was lined with many dead bodies and burned-out vehicles. After just five minutes on the road, we came under fire.

Israel’s bombings are targeting bakeries, which are the main source of food for people here. Many of the supermarkets, restaurants and bakeries rely on solar panels, which are also being targeted and destroyed. As a result, restaurants that prepare premade meals have no electricity, ensuring that they will not be able to prepare or sell food. Our limited food supplies, such as canned tuna, will soon be gone.

In the hospital and throughout the area, many people are experiencing heart attacks, and kidney patients are unable to access dialysis so they are dying at home.

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The premises of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Palestinian civil society has dedicated many years advocating for the court to take action against Israel.

The Turkish Cancer Hospital (the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital) was targeted and bombed.

The bombs are striking locations that are heavily populated by civilians. We know that 70% of the dead are women and children. Neighbourhoods and camps such as Jabaliya, Shujaiya, Nuseirat and Bureij are all civilian areas.

It is incredible that the mightiest power in the Middle East, armed with the most high-tech weapons, is deliberately targeting civilians, and yet no one is speaking up. The world is tolerating a state of lawlessness when what we truly desire is the rule of law.

As Palestinian civilians, we rely on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to protect us. Palestinian civil society has dedicated many years advocating for the court to take action against Israel. Despite enduring the longest occupation in recorded history, justice at the court has remained elusive. Even

after more than 10 years of petitions to the court, it was not until 2021 that the ICC prosecutor decided to investigate war crimes committed by Israel post-2014. Prior to October of this year, not one indictment has been issued nor one individual faced trial despite the loss of thousands of lives and destruction of civilian properties.

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Today, more than ever we are relying on the court to ensure that Israel's war crimes against Palestinian civilians do not go unpunished. At a speech in Cairo in late October, the ICC prosecutor

promised that the children of Gaza would not be forgotten. We civilians urgently need him to fulfil this promise.

We also are relying on Western countries to support the norms that they established after World War II to protect civilians. Their complicity in creating a culture of impunity for Israel is shameful. The United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany are setting aside the rules of international humanitarian law. After 30 years of the Oslo Accords, there is virtually no talk of peace, a two-state solution, or an end to the occupation and blockade. Instead, the international narrative appears to condone all of Israel's actions involving apartheid, siege and war crimes.

It feels like the Israeli strategy is to push 2.4 million of us out of Gaza and into Sinai. If that happens, then the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem may be next, and the Zionist project will be complete.

But we are human beings – we are the people of Palestine. We deserve dignity. We deserve justice and we deserve freedom. We believe we are on the right side of history and that we are the stones of the valley. Despite the immensity of the challenges we face, people here do not give up.

As hopeful revolutionaries, we are committed to preserving our strategic optimism. The support of millions who uphold the values of the rule of law and the dignity of all people strengthens us. I ask all of you to keep on working to break the conspiracy of silence. We shall overcome. ◆

*Raji Sourani is the executive director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR). He is a former Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience due to his critique of the human rights practices of the Palestinian National Authority and an RFK Human Rights Center 'Ripple of Hope' Laureate. This article is reproduced from the Jacobin website (jacobin.com/2023/11/gaza-bombing-dispatch-israeli-war-crimes-palestine-hope).*

# A paradigm shift in the hundred years' war on Palestine?

Since 7 October, there have been five elements that indicate we may be seeing a paradigm shift in the hundred years' war waged against the Palestinian people, contends *Rashid Khalidi* in the following piece, which is based on a talk delivered on 16 November at Columbia University in the US.

SIX weeks ago, this talk would have had a different title and offered somewhat different content. I would then have given the historical background to the present moment via the framework laid out in my book, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance*. This book explains events in Palestine since 1917 as resulting from a war waged on the indigenous Palestinian population over different stages by a variety of great powers that were allied with the Zionist movement – a movement that was both settler-colonialist and nationalist. These powers were later allied with the Israeli nation-state that grew out of that movement.

I still see that framework as the best way to explain the history of the past century and more. Thus, this is not an age-old conflict between Arabs and Jews, and it has not been going on since time immemorial. It is an entirely recent product of the irruption of imperialism into the Middle East and of the rise of modern nation-state nationalisms, both Arab and Jewish. Moreover, this war was not just one between Zionism and Israel on one side and the Palestinians on the other, with the latter occasionally supported by Arab and other actors. It always involved the massive intervention of the great powers on the side of the Zionist movement and Israel: Britain until World War II, and the US and other powers since then. These great powers were never neutral, were never honest brokers, but were and are active parties to



**A man surrounded by bodybags in Jabalia, Gaza. The long-term political impact of the enormous number of Palestinian deaths in Gaza over a short period, not only on the Palestinians, but also on the Arab world and perhaps farther afield, is incalculable.**

this war on the side of Israel. Given these facts, far from there being an equivalence between the two sides, this has been a war between coloniser and colonised, between oppressor and oppressed, and there has always been a vast imbalance between the two sides in Palestine in favour of Zionism and Israel.

However, while I think that framework has been reinforced over the past six weeks by the muscular level of US participation and the relatively limited nature of that of Iran and the Arab states, we may be seeing a paradigm shift because of new elements that have appeared since 7 October. What I am about to put forward is highly tentative. As a historian, I am reluctant to predict

how events might develop. But, in light of the course of this war over more than a century, it is clear that new elements have appeared that may possibly indicate that this war is entering a new phase. I want to single out five of these elements.

I. The first is the Israel death toll of over 1,200, the third highest in the country's history. Over 800 Israeli civilians were killed, as well as over 350 army and police personnel, all in the space of little more than a single day. Sixty-four Israeli soldiers have been killed since then. This is probably the highest Israeli civilian death toll ever [719 civilians were killed in the second intifada over four years; most of Israel's 6,000 killed in

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1948, its highest death toll in any war, were soldiers]. Israeli military and police casualties, combined with those incurred since the ground invasion started several weeks ago, have already gone well over 400. This will soon approach the number of Israeli soldiers killed during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon [when over 450 were killed].

The current Palestinian death toll of over 11,500, like that of Israel, is not yet a final one, and will be increased by high rates of preventable death from disease, infant mortality and other causes, as well as the probable addition of most of the 2,700 people who are missing. This already makes it the second highest Palestinian death toll since 1948, when about 20,000 were killed, mostly civilians, and it is probably higher than the Palestinian death toll during the 1982 Israeli war on Lebanon, when 20,000 people were killed, more than half of them Palestinians and the rest Lebanese [during the second intifada about 5,000 Palestinians were killed].

I recite these grisly statistics as evidence of one element of what may be a paradigm shift. The Israeli casualty tolls, particularly the number of civilians killed, have created a traumatic shock that has reverberated in Israel, in Jewish communities around the world, and throughout the West. Its long-term political effects are impossible to predict, but they have already significantly affected both Israeli and American government decision-making, making both countries more aggressive and intransigent. Meanwhile, the long-term political impact of such an enormous number of Palestinian deaths over a short period, not only on the Palestinians, but also on the Arab world, and perhaps farther afield, is also incalculable and may well affect the internal politics of several Arab states, as well as the future of Israel in the region.

II. These figures have to be seen in the context of two other features.

The first is that the surprise attack by Hamas, its overwhelming of Israel's defences, including the defeat of an entire division of the Israeli army (the Gaza division), the complete failure of Israeli intelligence and surveillance technology, and the slaughter of so many Israeli civilians, represent the first time that war has been waged with this ferocity on Israeli soil since 1948. Israel has suffered severe attacks on its civilian population before, from rockets and suicide bombers, but since 1948, all major Israeli wars – 1956, 1967, the 1968-70 War of Attrition, 1973, 1982, the second intifada, and all the wars on Gaza – were essentially fought on Arab soil. Nothing like this has happened to Israel in 75 years.

III. Another feature is that this war represents the temporary collapse of Israel's security doctrine. This is often misnamed 'deterrence', but it is, in fact, derived from the aggressive doctrine first taught to the founders of Israeli armed forces by British counter-insurgency experts like Orde Wingate. This doctrine holds that by attacking preemptively or in a retaliatory fashion with overwhelming force, the enemy can be decisively defeated, permanently intimidated and forced to accept Israeli terms. Where Gaza was concerned, this meant periodically pounding Gazans and killing large numbers of them to force them to accept a siege and blockade that have lasted for 16 years.

I say the temporary collapse of this doctrine because while what happened on 7 October should have shown its utter bankruptcy, the Israeli security establishment has clearly learnt nothing and has doubled down on it. They seem to have forgotten the Clausewitzian dictum that war is a continuation of politics by other means. It is apparent that the Israeli leadership has no clear political objective in waging this war, beyond revenge for the civilian casualty toll and the humiliating military defeat of

7 October, which is presented as restoring 'deterrence'. Instead of having a precise political aim for this war, the Israeli government and military have posited the impossible aim of the destruction of Hamas, a political-military-ideological entity that can perhaps be defeated militarily but cannot thereby be destroyed. Whether Hamas is weakened or strengthened in the end, something that we will only know well after this war is over, it will not be destroyed as a political force and an ideology as long as occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people continue.

IV. Another new element that may be part of a paradigm shift is that after broad initial sympathy for Israel globally at the outset, there have been intense negative reactions to Israel's war on Gaza. This has been the case across the Arab world, in most Muslim countries, and in most of the rest of the world (or rather the real world, excluding the US and a few Western countries). There has been a similarly intense negative reaction even among broad segments of the American and European populations. It is impossible to say whether this reaction will have a lasting effect. It has certainly had almost no discernible effect on the Biden administration's policy of blanket support for Israel that rises to the level of active participation in its war on Gaza, and which may lead to the commitment of US forces to combat if, heaven forbid, this conflict develops into a wider war.

The reaction in Arab countries at least proves the utter ignorance of Western and Israeli policymakers and pundits who airily claimed that 'the Arabs do not care about Palestine'. In confidently asserting this, they mistook the autocrats and kleptocrats who rule most Arab countries for their peoples, who very clearly do care a good deal about Palestine, launching the largest demonstrations seen across most Arab capitals in a dozen years.

As any serious historian could have told them, for well over a century, the Arab peoples have shown a deep concern for Palestine. It is impossible to say whether this strong negative reaction to Israel will be lasting, and whether and when the anti-democratic regimes that blight the region will succeed in cracking down on the expression of these sentiments. What is clear is that in their future policies towards Israel, they will have to be much more careful than they were previously in taking into account the passionate support of their peoples for the Palestinian cause.

V. There is a fifth and last element to this possible paradigm shift. The unequal measures whereby Western elites and politicians value brown or Arab lives on the one hand, and white or Israeli lives on the other, have engendered a toxic atmosphere in the spaces dominated by these elites, like the political arena, corporations, the media and universities like Columbia. These elites, and many others, regard massacres of Israeli civilians as being fundamentally different from the massacres of over a dozen times as many Palestinian civilians. The suffering of Israeli civilians, and of them alone, was expressly cited yet again by President Biden as recently as 15 November, while he simultaneously whitewashed the Israeli bombing of Gaza and, in his characteristically incoherent way, repeated rote Israeli talking points.

This blatantly unequal approach is a double-edged sword: while it may serve Israel in the short run, the bias and double standards inherent in it are naked to the world, and to growing segments of opinion in the West, especially younger people. This is generally true of all those who are not intoxicated by the heavily slanted offerings of the mainstream corporate media, which generally present all the news Israel sees fit to print. The support of 68% of Americans, including a large majority of Democrats, for a ceasefire in Gaza, a measure fiercely



**US Secretary of State Antony Blinken meeting Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan in Riyadh on 14 October. During his earliest visits to the region after the Gaza war erupted, Blinken exerted pressure on Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to accept the removal of part or all of the Palestinian population from the occupied territories, but was rebuffed.**

opposed by the Israeli government and its enabler in the White House, is an indicator of significance, if not a harbinger of a paradigm change.

Nevertheless, in spite of the crude political exploitation of Israeli civilian deaths and the kidnapping of civilian hostages, it is vital to recognise that these issues present a grave moral problem, as well as legal and political ones, for supporters of Palestinian rights. The moral element is obvious: women, children, the aged and all unarmed non-combatants should unquestionably be protected in wartime. The legal one should be obvious as well. One may choose not to apply the standards of international humanitarian law (IHL). However, if one does want to employ them, they must apply to all. Israel falsely claims to adhere to IHL, although it has explicitly admitted, via its 'Dahiya doctrine' enunciated in 2007 by a former general, Gadi Eizenkot, who is now a member of the Israeli war cabinet, that it does not do so. Israel's leaders have repeatedly and openly stated that it does not obey at least two of the key elements of IHL: proportionality, which requires that the loss of human life or property should not be excessive in relation to the advantage expected from the destruction of a military

objective, and distinction, which requires distinction between the civilian population and combatants. In its daily attacks on Gaza, as many times in the past, Israel has shown its utter disregard for these principles by obliterating the lives of untold numbers of civilians in purportedly seeking to kill a militant or militants.

It is true that under international law, peoples under occupation have the right to resist, and this is true, of course, of the Palestinians. However, if one wants to demand the application of IHL to Israel, it must be applied equally to Palestinian actors, and one must admit that notwithstanding Israel's egregious violations of these laws, the violations of Hamas and others must be subject to the same standards.

The political problem is that while Israel violates IHL with complete impunity and with blanket approval from the US and some Western governments, Palestinian violations of morality and of IHL involved in the killing and kidnapping of civilians, which flout these moral and legal principles, are exploited to smear and delegitimise the entire Palestinian cause, and not just the perpetrators. As is evident from the political, media and institutional blowback in the US

and Europe since 7 October that is entirely keyed to these violations, such as we have seen at Columbia and on other campuses, it is the struggle for Palestinian rights that is thereby targeted.

What happens in the hostile political, media and institutional space in the US and the West that many of us occupy matters enormously. If we accept that Israel is a settler-colonial (as well as a national) project, then the US and the West are its metropole. As the Irish, Algerian, Vietnamese and South African liberation movements understood, it was not sufficient to resist colonialism in the colony. It was also necessary to win over opinion in the metropole, which often involved limitations on the use of violence, as well as the use of non-violent means (difficult as that is to do in the face of the massive violence of the coloniser). That is how the Irish won their War of Independence from 1916 until 1921, how the Algerians won in 1962, and how the Vietnamese and the South Africans won as well. In the hostile political and media spaces in which those who support Palestinian rights operate in the US and Europe, absolute clarity on these matters is essential, not just for moral and legal reasons, but for political ones as well.

### Major questions

Although the outcome of this war is obviously impossible to predict at this stage, it has at least led to the changes I have outlined. Will it lead to profound humanitarian and political paradigm shifts? I see three major questions:

1) Will the expulsion of a million and a half people from the northern part of the Gaza Strip, including Gaza City, which is already a new Nakba of sorts, lead to the permanent ethnic cleansing of this northern region?

2) Will the international community, or the US (which often acts as if it alone constitutes the

international community), present an original and novel political resolution to the conflict based on equality and justice?

3) Or, as is more likely, will it simply reestablish some form of the previous oppressive status quo of occupation and enclosure of Palestinians in smaller and smaller spaces, while pumping more formaldehyde into the mouldering corpse of the long-dead 'two-state solution'?

It is impossible to answer these questions today, although my guess is that the answers respectively might be yes to the first, no to the second, and yes to the third.

However, one can hope that one outcome may be excluded: this is the ethnic cleansing of part or all of the population of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank by driving them out of historic Palestine and into Egyptian Sinai and Jordan. During his earliest visits to the region after the outbreak of the war, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, apparently acting as an errand boy for Israel, exerted pressure on the rulers of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to accept this outcome. All of them decisively rebuffed him. In so doing, these governments were acting on the basis of their states' national interest and in the interest of the preservation of their regimes, but also in the interest of the Palestinians, who know from 75 years of bitter experience that Israel has never allowed anyone it expelled from Palestine to return.

The smoking gun proving the malign intentions of the Biden White House can be found in the Office of Management and Budget's budget request of 20 October to the US Congress for billions of dollars for military aid for Ukraine and Israel. This includes a request for funding under the heading of 'Migration and Refugee Assistance' for 'potential needs of Gazans fleeing to neighboring countries', for 'displacement across border[s]' and for 'programming requirements outside of Gaza'.

To the short-sightedness of the Biden administration in slavishly aligning with an Israeli war effort involving multiple probable war crimes, and that has no discernible or achievable political outcome, must be added its domestic political folly. It has resolutely ignored the growing opposition to its unlimited support for Israel's war on Gaza from many of its own officials, as well as key elements of the Democratic party base. This is largely made up of youthful voters, liberal and progressive elements in the Jewish and Christian communities, Arabs, Muslims, and leading elements of Black and other minority communities. As Israel's assault on Gaza continues with the administration's full support, it is increasingly hard to see how large numbers of these groups, notably those located in crucial swing states, will bring themselves to vote for Joseph Biden in 2024.

Beyond American support for Israel in forcing over a million people out of the north of the Gaza Strip, were it not for the resolute opposition (thus far) of a few Arab governments, there would have been added the disgraceful participation of the United States in a new phase of the 75-year process of Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their homeland. We have not reached that point, and hopefully never will. However, while it has so far been prevented from complicity in that specific atrocity, the Biden administration has already plunged headlong into an abyss of moral depravity by supporting Israel materially in massacring thousands of Palestinians and rendering Gaza uninhabitable, and in condoning its ethnic cleansing within Gaza. ♦

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# International reaction to Gaza siege exposes growing global rift

Diverging from the West, developing countries' positions on the Gaza conflict reflect a Global South that is coming into its own.



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

The results of the 27 October vote on a resolution calling for a 'humanitarian truce' in Gaza displayed at the UN General Assembly. Most Western countries either abstained or voted against the resolution, which was overwhelmingly supported by developing countries.

## Jorge Heine

THE lopsidedness was stark: 120 countries voted in favour of a resolution before the United Nations on 27 October calling for a 'humanitarian truce' in the war in Gaza. A mere 14 countries voted against it.

But the numbers tell only half the story; equally significant was the way the votes fell. Those voting against the resolution included the United States and four members of the European Union. Meanwhile, about 45 members abstained – including 15 members of the EU, plus the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Japan.

Seldom has the isolation of the West been so apparent.

As a scholar who has

written on the rise of the Global South – countries mainly, but not exclusively, in the Southern Hemisphere that are sometimes described as 'developing', 'less developed' or 'underdeveloped' – what strikes me is the degree to which this major faultline between the political North and South has risen again to the fore. It reflects long-in-the-making forces in world affairs.

While the leaders of countries like the US, the UK and Germany have been among the most strident supporters of Israel during the crisis, the same is not true for non-Western nations.

Key rising powers from the Global South have been among the most adamant nations outside the Arab world in their criticism of this unwavering Western support

of Israel. Indonesia and Turkey – both with large Muslim populations – have both been heavily critical of Israel's bombing campaign in Gaza, a response to 1,400 Israelis being killed by Hamas militants on 7 October.

But they have been joined by the leaders of Brazil, South Africa and other Global South nations in taking a firm stand. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil went as far as to label the campaign in Gaza a 'genocide' – a comment echoed by South Africa's government when, on 6 November, it recalled its ambassador to Israel in protest. While the US has used the word genocide in relation to Russia's action in Ukraine, the Biden administration has pointedly said the term doesn't apply to current events in Gaza.

## The Global South's coming of age

The international reaction to the war in Gaza reflects a deeper, longstanding trend in world politics that has seen the fracturing of the established US-dominated, rules-based order. The growing influence of China and the fallout of the war in Ukraine – in which many Global South countries have remained neutral – have upended international relations.

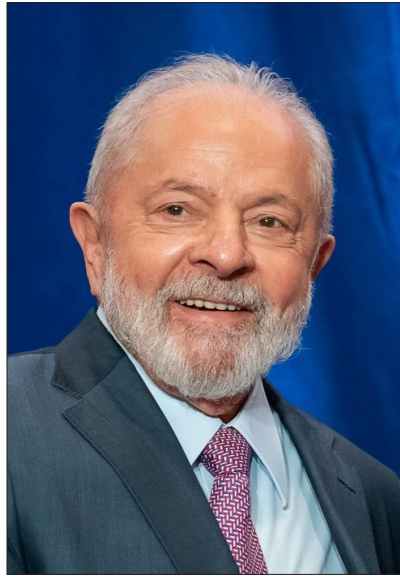
Many analysts point to an emerging multipolar world in which members of the Global South have, as I have written, forged a new active non-alignment path. And 2023 has been the year that has seen the coming of age of this more assertive Global South.

Some of this is structural. In August, Johannesburg hosted a summit of the BRICS group – a bloc that consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – during which 21 countries from across the Global South applied to join. Six were invited to do so – Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – and they will formally join in January 2024.

This 11-strong BRICS+ group will represent 46% of the world's population and 38% of the world's gross domestic product. In contrast, the Group of Seven leading economies, or G7, represents less than 10% of the world's population and 30% of the global economy.

On 7 November, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with his G7 counterparts in an attempt to forge a consensus on how to deal with the crisis in the Middle East. Speaking in Japan, he urged that the Western-dominated G7 speak with 'one clear voice' on the crisis. The question is, can the BRICS+ – and more generally the Global South – do likewise given that it includes an array of countries with very different political and economic systems?

The reaction to the Israel-



**President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil labelled the campaign in Gaza a 'genocide'.**

Hamas violence suggests to me that the Global South is able to speak with, if not one voice, at least a chorus that is not discordant.

Historically, many African and Asian nations have tended to support the Palestinian cause – Indonesia does not even recognise the state of Israel. But perhaps more surprising has been the strong reaction in Latin America to Israel's actions in Gaza.

In short order, Bolivia broke diplomatic relations with Israel, and Chile and Colombia called their ambassadors from Jerusalem for consultations – an established diplomatic tool to indicate disapproval of a country's conduct.

Brazil, in its capacity as then chair of the United Nations Security Council, introduced the resolution supporting a ceasefire in Gaza. Mexico's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro, called for the 'occupying power' of Israel to cease its claim to the Palestinian territories.

### Western denialism

The question is: If the Global South is speaking this way on

the issue, is the West listening? The voting patterns of Western representatives at the UN suggest the answer is 'no'.

In turn, this only adds to the general discontent across the developing world with the current structure of the UN Security Council and its lack of representativeness. The fact that no country from Africa or Latin America is among the permanent members that enjoy veto power – compared with Western Europe, which is represented by both France and the UK – has long been a source of irritation in the Global South.

So, too, is the perceived 'double standard' being applied by the West to conflicts around the world. Whereas much is made of the humanitarian suffering being inflicted on the Ukrainian people, the same does not seem to apply to what is happening in Gaza, where Palestinian health authorities report more than 10,000 people have been killed in less than a month, 40% of them children.

More generally, there appears to be a degree of denial in the West over the tectonic shift in world order towards a more assertive Global South. Western commentators and analysts from think-tanks in London and Washington even contend that the very term 'Global South' should not be used – with much of the criticism against the term directed at its alleged imprecision, but also because it would contribute to greater international polarisation.

Yet, the term was never meant to be geographical. Rather, it is a geopolitical and geohistorical one – and one that is coming into its own with great verve as the Global South provides an alternative voice to the West, first over the conflict in Ukraine and now over Gaza. And no amount of Western denialism will be able to block it. ♦

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# A revolution remembered in Grenada

In the throes of the Cold War, a tiny Caribbean island nation dared to wage a revolutionary experiment. As the Revo imploded, the United States invaded.



A banner in the Grenada National Museum commemorating Maurice Bishop, who headed the People's Revolutionary Government.

Amy Li Baksh

Dear Comrades  
if it must be  
you speak no more with me  
nor smile no more with me  
nor march no more with me  
then let me take  
a patience and a calm  
for even now the greener leaf  
explodes  
sun brightens stone  
and all the river burns.  
Now from the mourning vanguard  
moving on  
dear Comrades I salute you and I  
say  
Death will not find us thinking that  
we die.

— Martin Carter

WITH this poem, George Lamming, Barbadian novelist and poet, ended his address at a December 1983 memorial service in Trinidad for Maurice Bishop, Jacqueline Creft, Norris Bain, Vincent Noel, Unison Whiteman and all who had been killed during the abrupt end to the Grenada Revolution.

‘It is the tragedy of a whole region which has brought us here,’ said Lamming during his address. ‘The landscape of Grenada and its people are the immediate victims ... But all of us are now the casualties of the American invasion.’

When an intra-party conflict broke out, leading to the killing of revolutionary leader Bishop and other victims on 19 October 1983, the Ronald Reagan administration

seized the pretext to invade. On 25 October 1983, thousands of US troops landed on the island.

This year, Grenada commemorates both 50 years as an independent nation and 40 years since the violent implosion of the People's Revolutionary Government and subsequent US invasion. For the first time, the government of Grenada has recognised 19 October as a national holiday, designated as ‘National Heroes Day’. Decades on, reckoning with the events of 1983 continues.

Writer Marise La Grenade-Lashley spoke at the inaugural National Heroes Day gathering, where she echoed sentiments expressed in her article in *Now Grenada* a year prior. ‘The shocking events of 19 October 1983, whose effects reverberated across the Caribbean and beyond, created deep psychological wounds that have never really healed. One coping mechanism adopted by some persons directly affected by the events of that fateful day has been to retreat in silence,’ she wrote.

‘While silence is a common reaction to trauma, it has, in the case of Grenada, created a void in our society that needs to be filled with factual and unbiased information related to those four and a half years during which Grenada embarked on an alternative path to development that crumbled so abruptly, so brutally, so tragically,’ La Grenade-Lashley added.

The designation of National Heroes Day includes a mandate to bring the history of Grenada's revolution to civics classes in Grenadian schools.

David Stanley (CC BY 2.0)

## A revolutionary movement provokes US ire

In 1979, Maurice Bishop and his New Jewel Movement (NJM) took control from the increasingly authoritarian regime of Sir Eric Gairy, Grenada's first prime minister. Gairy, an ally of Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet and creator of the notorious Mongoose Gang private militia, modelled after the Haitian Tonton Macoutes, had lost public support and remained in power through rigged elections.

The insurrection installed the NJM as the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), suspended the 1974 Constitution, and declared Bishop prime minister. The government's first steps were to encourage trade union representation, introduce free medical services, and to prioritise education and adult literacy programmes as well as projects benefitting small farmers and farmworkers.

One month into the PRG's rule, Bishop gave a national broadcast after a visit from US Ambassador Frank Ortiz. 'The ambassador pointed out that his country was the richest, freest, and most generous country in the world, but as he put it, "We have two sides",' said Bishop. 'We understood that to mean that the other side he was referring to was the side which stamped on freedom and democracy when the American government felt that their interests were being threatened.'

Over the next four years, Bishop spoke often of the US pressure on the PRG. He felt that the Reagan administration was seeking to destabilise the revolution through the media and through economic trade disruptions. The Monroe Doctrine had given way to the Reagan Doctrine, and closer Cold War ties from Grenada to Cuba and the USSR could not be tolerated. As Hugh O'Shaughnessy, a British journalist who was on the ground in Grenada when the invasion



US troops on patrol in Grenada in October 1983. The Reagan administration ordered the invasion of the country, using as pretext the killing of revolutionary leader Maurice Bishop.

finally happened, put it: 'The State Department and the Pentagon in Washington ... had been seeking ways of putting an end to the left-wing government of Grenada.'

Meanwhile, the PRG was putting in place a variety of projects, one of which was a programme – the National Cooperative Development Agency (NACDA) – to deal with the joblessness and landlessness faced by the country's youth. Trinidadian-born Regina Dumas moved to Grenada in March 1980 to take up a role as registrar of cooperatives within NACDA. 'It was like all my dreams had come true,' Dumas said when we spoke on 17 October, a few days before the National Heroes Day celebrations. 'Here I am, working with rural people, farmers, and listening to them talk, and realising – these people know what they want.'

In her book *Memoir of a Cocoa Farmer's Daughter*, Dumas describes her work at NACDA, which involved helping to get privately held, uncultivated land into the hands of young prospective farmers tasked with reviving the local and export agriculture markets.

In those days, Dumas often

took Sunday afternoon drives to visit the construction site of the new international airport. Supported by Cuba and other countries, the airport was one of the PRG's flagship projects. 'That the government of Cuba chose to support this initiative by providing a skilled work force ... was the cause of much rancour with the United States which stridently opposed it,' Dumas writes in her memoir.

During a nationally televised address in March 1983, Reagan displayed a picture of the airport runway under construction. 'The Cubans with Soviet financing and backing are in the process of building an airfield with a 10,000-foot runway,' he said. 'Grenada doesn't even have an air force. Who is it intended for?' The implication was clear. During the invasion later that year, the airport would be one of the locations bombed by the US military.

## The revolutionary government implodes

Months away from the revolution's fifth anniversary, divisions within the PRG between Bishop and his deputy prime

minister, Bernard Coard, began to come to a head. 'Why, when they knew that the Reagan administration was poised to pounce at the slightest error made, would they play into their hands so easily?' said Dumas. 'I dismissed, completely out of hand, the rumours that I heard as counter-revolutionary propaganda. What an error on my part!'

The rumours were becoming reality. Disagreements between Bishop and Coard over a plan for shared leadership turned sour, and Bishop was deposed and placed under house arrest in early October 1983. On 19 October, six days after Bishop had been placed under house arrest, Dumas recalls hearing the chanting of hundreds of Grenadians marching the streets in support of Bishop. 'The plan, apparently, was to march to the residence of Maurice Bishop, where he was being held, confront the members of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA), who were holding him hostage, and forcibly, if necessary, free him from his temporary prison and reinstate him as prime minister,' she said.

After gathering her two children from school and returning home, Dumas watched in horror from her veranda as the march, which had successfully liberated Bishop, went to Fort Rupert (originally called Fort George, but renamed after Bishop's father Rupert, who had been killed by Gairy's Mongoose Gang in 1974). Once at Fort Rupert, they were faced with a hail of bullets. 'Armoured personnel carriers began to shoot directly into the crowd of people who were climbing the fort, singing and dancing with Maurice on their shoulders,' Dumas writes in her book. 'With no other point of exit ... I watched as people leaped over the edge of that fort, quite substantial in height, and into the crashing waves and rocks below.'

Within hours, Bishop had been executed alongside 10 others at Fort Rupert. General Hudson Austin issued a national announcement:

'With immediate effect, and until further notice, anyone caught on the streets of St. George's and environs will be shot on sight.'

### The invasion strikes

For Dumas, the events were both political and personal. 'They had killed the prime minister of the country and others of their own group and party. They had killed my friend Jacqui, thus leaving her young son an orphan,' she said. 'They had decidedly opened up the gates to those who had always opposed the revolution.'

President Reagan ordered troops to invade Grenada on 25 October. As O'Shaughnessy wrote: 'At 6:40 on the morning on Thursday 27 October 1983 a platoon of US marines edged nervously past the main branch of Barclay's Bank in St. George's, the capital of Grenada, towards Fort Rupert. They need not have worried. No resistance awaited them there.'

The arrival of the US military brought a rain of bombings across the forts and levelled a mental health hospital, killing 30 patients and wounding many more.

Neville Warner, a Tobago-born son of a Grenadian family, recalls to me how the PRG had built a factory in St. George's to begin producing mango nectar on a large scale for local consumption and export, as part of the government's push to localise food production and reduce dependence on imports. The factory was one of the locations bombed as the US troops landed. The space where it stood now hosts a factory producing Coca-Cola.

During the invasion, Cubans were rounded up from the Cuban embassy and sent back to their homeland. In November, Fidel Castro would pay tribute to the Cubans killed in Grenada during the destruction of the airport. 'The US government looked down on Grenada and hated Bishop. It wanted to destroy Grenada's

process and obliterate its example. It had even prepared military plans for invading the island – as Bishop had charged nearly two years ago – but it lacked pretext,' Castro said in a speech in Havana. He lauded Grenada's social and economic advances despite the US hostility.

'Bishop was not an extremist,' Castro continued. 'Rather, he was a true revolutionary – conscientious and honest ... Grenada had become a true symbol of independence and progress in the Caribbean.'

The events that unfolded in Grenada would echo throughout the Caribbean and the world. With a quick military victory secured, the emboldened Reagan administration doubled down on counterinsurgency in Central America, supporting ruthless regimes in Guatemala and El Salvador and backing the Contras in Nicaragua. Six years after landing in Grenada, US troops invaded Panama.

For La Grenade-Lashley, there's more to be done in the work of remembering 1983 and the revolution that preceded it. 'Rather than lament the irretrievable, we can look to the future with optimism,' she writes. 'To teach and enlighten our youth, accurate and unbiased information can be culled from the many books, articles and papers written on the Grenada Revolution.'

'We have heard of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions around the world,' she continues. 'In Grenada, although we have had our own Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it remains vital that we pay closer attention to the ordering of these three words. Truth and reconciliation. Truth precedes reconciliation.' ♦

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# Fast fashion is antithetical to workers' rights

Even as fast fashion's fortunes rise, the Bangladeshi workers who make the clothes hawked by leading brands are struggling to earn a living, writes *Sonali Kolhatkar* from the US, a major market for the industry.

'TIS the season for holiday shopping, and as American consumers ready their spending dollars, few of us are likely to link our gift buying to the high cost of low prices on the other side of the planet. This is especially true for what has come to be known as 'fast fashion', the clothing equivalent of a Big Mac: attractive, affordable and throwaway.

But the Bangladeshi women who toil as underpaid garment workers so we can wear disposable outfits, are making their voices heard loudly enough to reverberate across oceans and continents. Mass protests for higher wages have roiled the nation, at least three workers have been killed, and there is no end in sight.

Bangladesh is the second-largest exporter of apparel in the world, after China. It is the South Asian nation's largest industry, employing more than four million workers, a majority of them women. The largest share of Bangladesh-made garments is bought and sold by United States retailers, which include recognisable name brands such as H&M, Zara, Calvin Klein, American Eagle and Tommy Hilfiger.

Garment workers had been taking home a meagre pay of about \$75 a month, and have demanded a nearly threefold increase to about \$205 a month. When the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) initially set new wages at \$90 a month, the mass protests began. When the BGMEA then responded by raising wages to \$112 a month, the protests actually intensified.



Workers at a garment factory in Bangladesh, the second-largest exporter of apparel in the world.

Tareq Salahuddin (CC BY 2.0)

According to Al Jazeera, 'more than 10,000 workers staged protests in factories and along highways to reject the panel's offer'.

Headlines touted the offer as a 56% increase in wages, while Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, long hailed as a liberal leader, patronisingly told workers to put up or shut up. She said, 'They have to work with whatever their salary is increased, they should continue their work.' She roundly condemned workers' attacks on factories, saying she was worried that 'if these factories are closed, if production is disrupted, where will their jobs be? They have to understand that'.

Hasina's government has unleashed security forces that have intimidated and attacked union organisers. Police recently fatally shot a 23-year-old mother and sewing machine operator named

Anjuara Khatun after firing at protesters.

To understand why protests intensified after wages were dramatically increased, it's worth examining the context of garment workers' livelihoods. By one estimate, the cost of living for a single person in Bangladesh is about \$360 a month, not including rent. Garment workers' wages have not risen since 2019 and since that time inflation has hit Bangladesh just as it has hit most of the world.

Even the demand for \$205 a month will not allow most to make ends meet. The factories' offer of about half that number was insultingly low. Abiramy Sivaloganathan, the South Asia coordinator for the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, told *Vogue*, '[The] increase that unions are asking for is not even enough, technically speaking, [given] inflation and the



**The fast fashion industry is expected to more than double its market size over six years.**

crisis the country's going through.'

On the surface, US brands, who purchase their inventories from Bangladesh's factories, appear to be on the right side of the fight. The American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA), an industry trade group, wrote a joint letter to Hasina's administration urging her to 'raise the minimum wage to a level that corresponds with a wage level and benefits that are sufficient to cover workers' basic needs and some discretionary income and takes into account inflationary pressures'.

The AAFA even went as far as asking the government to avoid retaliating against unions and to respect 'collective bargaining rights'. The US State Department issued a statement saying, 'We commend the members of the private sector who have endorsed union proposals for a reasonable wage increase.'

Further, global retailers are offering to eat into their profits by increasing the price they pay factories to help them offset increased wages. Currently, the cost of the labour to produce garments is a mere 10-13% of a product's total manufacturing cost. The industry would have to increase that number by about 5-6 percent.

But are companies really committed to raising garment workers' wages? A spokesperson for the Clean Clothes Campaign,

a rights group based in The Netherlands, said, 'The living wage commitments of brands are nothing but empty promises as long as they refuse to explicitly support the workers' demand for a bare minimum, let alone a living wage.'

A survey of about 1,000 factories in Bangladesh, published in early 2023, revealed that companies like Zara and H&M underpaid factories for garment purchases, making it harder for them to pay their workers. When the COVID-19 pandemic led to global shutdowns, large retailers cancelled orders and delayed payments. One industry expert told *The Guardian*, 'Only when suppliers are able to plan ahead, with confidence that they will earn as expected, can they deliver good working conditions for their workers.' Rather than dip into their profits to compensate for the market slowdown in 2020, many global brands simply refused to keep their financial commitments to Bangladesh's factories, leading to downward pressure on wages.

Given this context, fast fashion's stated support for a living wage increase and a commitment to swallow the resulting increased labour costs sound disingenuous.

It has been more than 10 years since the deadly collapse of Bangladesh's Rana Plaza, the world's worst garment industry disaster. The eight-storey compound of factories in Dhaka was filled

with thousands of workers when it crumbled under the weight of government neglect and worker exploitation in April 2013. More than 1,100 workers, most of them women, were killed.

The Rana Plaza disaster was a turning point for Bangladesh's garment industry as workers were seen as dispensable pawns by governments and industries alike. In the wake of the disaster, North American brands refused to join other global companies in signing on to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. Citing high costs, they chose instead to form their own alliance for inspecting factories, one that applied lower safety standards. It was a stark indicator of where these companies' priorities lay, one that frames their current lip service to higher wages for garment workers.

Fast fashion's outlook is rosy. The industry has been steadily growing and, thanks to the cooperation of government heads such as Sheikh Hasina – who has been fixated on 'growth' at all costs – it is expected to more than double its market size over six years, growing from \$91 billion in 2021 to a projected \$185 billion by 2027. Meanwhile, the workers who fuel the profits behind that expansion are facing starvation. This holiday season, perhaps the best gift we can give is a commitment to force the industry to pay up. ♦

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# Amidst tears and grief, Afghan women call out to the world

Sharifa's painful story – 'I only breathe, but I don't feel alive' – underscores the plight of women in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

'WHEN the sun rises in the morning, I see the light, but I don't feel like I'm having a bright day. I think about how different these days are from our past days.'

These were the words of Sharifa, a 48-year-old Afghan mother of five, as she recounted her life story wrought by the Taliban when they regained power two years ago. Tears streamed down her face as she narrated her story in her two-room family house in the Dasht e Barchi Qala area, far from the capital city Kabul.

Sharifa lost her job as a cleaner because Afghan women were no longer allowed to work under the Taliban. Her two young girls had to stop school for the same reason.

'Will we have a future?' she asked. 'We live in a country where all women and girls are deprived of all their legal rights, and we don't know what will happen tomorrow.' Her final concern is, 'we are worried about the future of our children'.

To Sharifa and millions of Afghan women, the return of the Taliban, the extremist Islamic group that took over power in August 2021, portended nothing but misery for them.

'I think about the future, on the outside I may seem alive, but inside I feel dead,' she said.

For the past five years, the family led a quite peaceful and happy life without worries. Sharifa described her husband as a kind and compassionate person.

After she lost her job, her husband became the sole breadwinner for the family of seven. It became necessary therefore for their eldest son, who had dropped

out of school due to lack of money, to work and bring in supplementary income.

Sharifa's own education was cut short at the tenth grade due to the demands of raising a family. Given that situation, she was determined to do all in her power to provide adequate education to her five children – two boys and three daughters. 'I was a mother who, with all the problems and challenges in life, wanted all my children to have a higher education so that they could serve their country and family in the future.'

## Deep loss

But all her hopes came crashing down when the Taliban took power. It became clear that female students above the sixth grade could no longer continue their education. Women were also asked to stay home and cease working. Only the university was not banned.

But the saddest part for Sharifa was the loss of her daughter, the eldest of her children. At 24, she had completed 12th grade and, despite the restrictions placed on girls' education, was still ploughing ahead with great determination to go to university.

Little did she know that the enemies of girls' education were lurking around the corner. A bomb blast hit the Kaj educational centre in Kabul at precisely the time she was busy taking the university entrance examination. The centre held 500 students, 320 of them girls.

The blast had devastating consequences. Fifty female students were killed and 130 injured. Among

the dead was Sharifa's daughter.

'When I heard that the educational centre was attacked, I was shocked and rushed to the scene barefooted to look for my daughter,' she said.

Dozens of families lost their loved ones that day but to their consternation, when they arrived at the scene, the Taliban barred people from entering the centre except for ambulances. The dead and the wounded had already been transferred to hospitals.

ISIS took responsibility for the attack, which was widely condemned around the world. Taliban officials also strongly condemned it and promised that the perpetrators would be punished, but nothing has been done since.

Sharifa says that the day she received her daughter's body for burial was the bitterest and most painful day because all her wishes were also buried with her daughter.

'From that day until today, I only breathe, but I don't feel alive,' she says.

In the midst of the grief, however, Sharifa continues to demand for women's rights and calls for support from the international community and the UN to stop the Taliban from oppressing Afghan women.

'The women of Afghanistan have the right to play an active role in their society, in all different sectors, social, cultural, economic, and political fields,' Sharifa demands. – IPS

*The author is an Afghanistan-based female journalist trained with Finnish support before the Taliban takeover. Her identity is withheld for security reasons.*

# A language to call their own

*Sarita Santoshini* highlights a pioneering initiative in India's Odisha state to promote the use of Indigenous languages in its schools.

ON a warm April morning, in the minutes after roll call ends and before lessons begin, the classroom is buzzing with energy. It's one of two classrooms in a primary school surrounded by sal trees deep in the interior of Mayurbhanj district in Odisha, a state in the eastern corner of India. About 30 children, aged roughly 4 to 8, sit in rows on a large, faded red mat that covers the entire perimeter of the room.

A short while later, Sasmita Sing Banara, a multilingual education (MLE) teacher, gathers some of the students in a circle and begins to read aloud in the Ho language from a second-grade textbook. 'It dances when it sees the dark clouds. What is it called?' she asks, pointing at a picture of a peacock. 'Mara,' the children sing back. 'Yes, that's the word in Ho. And what is it called in Odiya?' she asks. 'Mayuro,' the children respond.

Odisha is the state with the second-highest Indigenous population in India, home to as many as 62 Indigenous communities, including the Ho. But the sounds of their languages don't often reverberate through the classrooms this way.

India is among the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, but its constitution officially recognises only 22 of the hundreds of existing languages, and these are the ones taught or used in schools. India's census dismisses altogether languages spoken by fewer than 10,000 people. Since independent India's state borders were first redrawn along linguistic lines in 1956, certain languages with territorial majorities and scripts have gained social and political power. Indigenous languages, in contrast, have been marginalised, along with those who speak them.



**Multilingual education teacher Sasmita Sing Banara teaches Indigenous students from a textbook that is written in the Odiya script but uses the Indigenous Ho language.**

This has led to the fact that at least 400 of the 780 languages currently spoken in India are at risk of extinction in the next 50 years. The ones most at risk are those used by Indigenous communities, and the consequences of their loss will be grave, experts warn. These languages hold the knowledge of the communities' ecological surroundings, agricultural activities and social relations – and also encapsulate some of the oldest historical memories, says Ganesh Devy, a literary scholar who, starting in 2010, led a project called the People's Linguistic Survey of India. Over a span of three years, he and a team of 3,500 volunteers aimed to document India's linguistic diversity. With the help of an 80-person editorial team, the survey's findings were published in 50 academic volumes.

'In oral traditions, these memories continue to go to the next generation, keeping the communities intact,' he says. When the languages are lost, so too are the

communities often lost.

For decades, a growing number of studies and policy recommendations in India have noted that the language gap in classrooms serves as a major cause of poor learning, retention and self-esteem for Indigenous students.

On paper, Odisha has taken these concerns seriously. Banara was one of about 3,400 language teachers appointed after 2014 when Odisha formalised a mother-tongue-based multilingual education programme focused on Indigenous communities. Through an official policy, the state mandated that lessons in early grades be imparted in a child's own language, and became the first – and currently only – state in India to do so.

In the face of crippling poverty at home, Banara managed to complete her secondary schooling before getting married. She says her family practised subsistence farming and she did not know of anything else she could do for work. But in 2011, when she was about

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21, an opportunity came up.

Sikshasandhan, a local non-profit working on education, was hiring volunteers from Indigenous communities to assist government school teachers, who usually did not belong to the local communities themselves or speak the children's languages. The organisation ensured that the government was on board, and also provided training and salaries to the MLE volunteers. District officials eventually supported and expanded the programme to 176 schools.

The programme was born out of Sikshasandhan's decade-long experience of running alternative education centres whose teachers, curriculum and functioning were all rooted in the Indigenous communities that the students belonged to. The idea was to transfer the same learning and format to government-funded public schools.

Banara began work as an MLE volunteer. And in 2014, when the state government advertised for the recruitment of language teachers, Sikshasandhan encouraged and trained Banara and other volunteers to apply so they could effect change within the government system. Following a language test and interview, Banara was hired as an MLE teacher.

At first, the job simply felt like a noble way to supplement the family income, but with time, it became a source of profound interest and joy to her. She saw that the students were able to understand and get along with her better than with the other teachers, which, in turn, led to better learning. She now has the assistance of an MLE volunteer herself, which helps distribute the task of managing the class and liaising with the community. 'The language is ours. The children are ours. It feels good to be teaching like this,' Banara says.

Banara isn't alone in her observations. Studies that evaluated Sikshasandhan's efforts as well as those of the state's MLE programme found increased Indigenous student



**This government primary school located deep in the interiors of Mayurbhanj district is one of about 1,500 schools in Odisha where the MLE programme is being implemented.**

enrolment and lower dropout rates in schools. Research conducted over a period of three years and published in 2011 found significantly better academic comprehension and performance (in language proficiency, mathematics and environmental studies) as well as more active classroom participation by Indigenous students (with the classrooms being 'noisy, lively, and engaging' instead of 'teacher-centric' and silent) in schools that followed the MLE programme compared with those that did not.

### **The issue of implementation**

Since the policy first came into place in 2014, Odisha has developed more than 300 textbooks and 2,500 supplementary materials in 21 Indigenous languages. Still, government officials confirm that there have been no further MLE teacher appointments, research or revision of the curriculum framework since the initial push. Teachers interviewed for this piece say they require more programme-specific training, resources and support – and in some districts, the lack of these things leads to

the underutilisation of Indigenous teachers.

The multilingual education programme is active in only about 1,500 of the estimated 14,000 primary-level government day-schools that have at least 50% Indigenous students, which experts say exemplifies insufficient effort. There was also a widespread notion among interviewed teachers and officials that the programme simply served as a way to 'switch over' to Odiya or English instead of Indigenous languages being used simultaneously (and arguably meaningfully) as students progressed through the grades. Besides, thousands of Indigenous children continue to be enrolled in the more than 1,700 government-run residential institutions across the state that teach primarily in Odiya and are yet to implement the policy.

On the nonprofit side, while Sikshasandhan's programme includes providing MLE volunteers, training and resource support to better implement the policy, their work, too, is currently limited to a handful of schools in Mayurbhanj due to lack of funding. In the past



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MLE volunteer Jana Gadasara teaches Indigenous students using both the Ho and Odiya languages.

few years, India has increased the restrictions on how nonprofit organisations can receive and spend foreign funds, placing limits on administrative spending, requiring that foreign donation be received only through a specific bank branch in the capital New Delhi, and restricting subgranting. The work of thousands of nonprofits large and small has been severely impacted.

And so efforts to centre students' Indigenous languages are getting stymied even as the country's constitution guarantees them on paper.

'It's not a question of whether this is important or not. This is the child's constitutional right,' says Sapan Kumar Prusty, the district coordinator for tribal education in Mayurbhanj. But even he admits that the policy hasn't been effectively implemented because the state government has failed to give it the due attention or priority. 'It is a problem.'

Still, the programmes that exist are better than nothing, or outright discouragement, which has long been the case with Indigenous languages, experts say. Just as residential schools in the United

States and Canada aimed to forcibly remove Native children from their homes and communities in order to 'civilise' them in residential schools that were often violent and dangerous, such facilities are still operating in India. There has been a continued emphasis on residential schools in India as the means to 'mainstream' Indigenous children without making space for Indigenous language, culture or knowledge systems in the curriculum while simultaneously failing to account for adequate facilities and safety.

Jema Gadsara is a sixth-grade student in Dillisore village in the district who has been enrolled in a residential school more than 40 miles from her home since first grade. She says that staff actively encourage Indigenous students to 'forget their mother tongue' and speak only in Odiya, so much so that Jema actually began to jumble up and forget certain Ho words when she came home and spoke the language with her parents. Understandably, she says she came to enjoy speaking Odiya more.

Many Indigenous parents feel the need for their children to speak

and learn in the dominant language, Odiya, if they are to secure a future for themselves in the face of widespread displacement and loss of traditional livelihood in a state where their language isn't widely respected or acknowledged.

Students, at an early age, often come to agree. In Banara's class, for instance, Damodar Purty and Manai Sing, both in the third grade, say they prefer Odiya to Ho even as they speak to each other in the latter, because it means being able to communicate with the other, non-Indigenous teachers and understanding the lessons quicker. So the teaching of Indigenous languages faces institutional barriers as well as cultural ones.

## Lessons learnt

In recent years, there has been some renewed focus on the issue. India's New Education Policy, released in 2019, emphasised the use of the student's mother tongue as the medium of instruction at least until grade five. A number of Indian states have announced efforts to teach Indigenous students in their own languages, and some have developed textbooks, teacher-training materials and digital lessons to that effect.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2022-32 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and formed a global task force under UNESCO (the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Anabel Benjamin Bara, assistant professor at the Delhi-based Faculty of Management Studies, is the co-chair of the task force, and says it is 'vital to focus more on the children and the youth in order to preserve Indigenous languages.' They are, after all, the future of every community.

In his advocacy for the use of Indigenous languages in schools in India, one of the major issues Bara encountered was the lack of Indigenous teachers who are well-versed and trained in teaching such



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**MLE teacher Goura Barda says his classroom experience has helped him feel like teaching in Ho is 'a matter of pride'.**

languages. The efforts in Odisha show that a first step could be to work with volunteers from the community.

Growing up, 23-year-old Jana Gadasara was acutely aware of the lack of Indigenous teachers in her schools, and with time, her own circumstances explained the reasons for it: systemic barriers, lack of guidance, and a feeling of shame brought on by the language gap. Gadasara is now using her salary as an MLE volunteer with Sikshasandhan to pay for her college degree so she can meet the qualifications required for government recruitment. 'It's very important to have teachers like me in the classroom. I can't express in words how much I want to be one myself,' she says.

In the absence of widespread state intervention, scattered efforts have shown the continued importance of alternative forms of education to fill the gaps. Bhopal-based nonprofit Muskaan runs an experimental school and several community learning centres for marginalised children, including those from Indigenous communities, which incorporate the children's local context, languages and community in their teachings.

Similarly, the Adharshila Learning Centre in the Badwani district of Madhya Pradesh is a village-based school for Indigenous children that was built along with the community. They teach in the Bareli language in the initial years, and encourage the continuation of traditional knowledge systems through activities like farming.

Bara says India can draw lessons from the efforts in other countries where community participation has led to the prioritisation of the use of Indigenous languages. In Canada, for instance, the Maskwacis Cree Nation and the Alberta government signed a historic education agreement in 2018 which ensured that more than 2,300 children are taught under a Cree-based curriculum. This curriculum was devised in consultation with the community and brought the schools under the administrative control of the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission. Similarly, representatives of the Sami Parliament in Norway, Finland and Sweden have been working on a project that incorporates Sami languages and traditions into the early education system for Indigenous children. It is being piloted in kindergartens in Norway.

## Linguistic pride

The biggest lesson from the MLE programme has been that the investment of time – which also requires sustained funding – is key, according to Anil Pradhan, member-secretary of Sikshasandhan and part of the MLE policy drafting committee in Odisha. He says this will require several years of uninterrupted work with and by the government, alongside constant engagement with the teachers and the community to help children build confidence and self-esteem in and through their languages in the long term.

For 30-year-old MLE teacher Goura Barda, his classroom experience has helped him feel like teaching in Ho is 'a matter of pride.' He vividly recalls his own schooling experience where this was not the case. He struggled with Odiya in the initial years and did not perform well academically as a result. There was no one to turn to for help. 'There were 10 to 15 of us from this area in our class,' he says, referring to other Indigenous children, but only two of them, including him, managed to reach college.

As Barda communicates in Ho in his classroom today, it makes him wonder: 'If a programme like this existed during my time, maybe I would have flourished.' That, he says, is the hope with which he teaches his students. ♦

*Interviews that took place in Odisha were conducted in the Odiya language and translated by the author.*

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