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Ongoing War on Gaza: A Palestinian Perspective

By Hanan Sahmoud

SYNOPSIS

Recent events in the Middle East underscore the enduring impact of European colonialism on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Former European colonial powers continue to shape narratives on events in the region. Through an analysis of historical context and contemporary developments, there is a spotlight on Palestinian resilience in the face of stigmatisation and their persistent advocacy for rights.

COMMENTARY

For several centuries, Europe extensively colonised other regions of the world. This left many legacies and dilemmas. Former colonial powers like Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom have consistently posed political, economic and socio-cultural challenges for their former colonies, following the end of the Second World War. Scholars have pointed out a pattern of abluition through counter-narratives and denials of the extreme forms of European cultural, mercantilist and territorial domination.

In trying to cover up their troubled past, various European accounts have labelled colonised populations as violent, radical and antisemitic. This manipulation and its repercussions are notably apparent in the context of the ongoing war on Gaza.

Falsehoods and Scapegoating

For example, a study of the Palestinian people would reveal how historical occurrences, such as the ethnic cleansing of indigenous Palestinians and the transfer of their land to European Zionist militias with support from colonial European powers, notably the United Kingdom after World War II, have contributed to the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

For a long time, Europe had consistently denied Palestinians their right to exist as a state, and although not averse to a two-state solution now, utilises Palestine as a convenient scapegoat to sanitise the injustice committed by European Zionists by falsely characterising Palestinians as violent, radical, and antisemitic.

However, this does not obscure the fact that Zionist Israel, despite claiming indigenous roots in the Middle East, was originally comprised of European Jewish settlers who only arrived from Europe in the early 1920s. To Israelis, the war on Gaza is not only one between Israel and Hamas, but a war intended to save Western civilisation. To Palestinians in Gaza, it is a desperate attempt to break out of their Israeli shackles and to assert their right to self-determination.

Ironically, Palestinians bear the weight of Europe's shift of allegiance to the Jewish people. Europe seeks absolution for its history of antisemitism by subjecting Palestinians to a new form of persecution, reflecting a mindset ingrained with racism, white supremacy, and Islamophobia.

Europe's media have depicted Palestinians as savages and radical jihadis, and by deeming them as subhuman, make their destruction appear less reprehensible. Israel's siege of Gaza and description of its population as "human animals" illustrate this dehumanising approach.

Coexistence and Humanity

Throughout history, Palestinians have not harboured animosity towards Jews, or engaged in violence, radicalisation, or racism. Notably, Palestine has been home to Samaritan Jews in Nablus city for ages, and Palestinians consider them an integral part of their society, participating in their celebrations and defending them against Israeli military occupation.

The negative labelling of Palestinians was perpetrated by European colonisers. Palestinians have steadfastly opposed them, from the British to Israeli Zionists, both physically and morally, standing united against their discriminatory ideologies and efforts to criminalise them. Palestinians affirm daily their resistance to the imposition of European labels, standing firm as their lands are seized and children killed by Zionist Jews.

Palestinians actively fight antisemitism, clarifying the distinction between Jewish people and the Zionists. Despite there being no obligation to defend Judaism, they do so to prevent succumbing to hatred. Drawing from firsthand experiences, Palestinians comprehend how religions can be manipulated for political gain.

Palestinians emphasise humanity and compassion even in challenging times, rejecting dehumanising labels from white racist Europeans. They steadfastly opposed being depicted by Israeli leaders as "Human Animals" and "Sons of Darkness". They reject the harming of innocents based on perceived differences, resisting racism and safeguarding their free human spirits amid attempts at their obliteration.

Much like the struggles of other free indigenous nations in similar straits, Palestinians are resolute in their fight against colonisers in order to secure their independence or

liberation. It is noteworthy that the colonisers of Palestinian land, in a departure from the usual European colonisation patterns, employed the Jewish religion for the first time to advance their political agenda.

However, this deviation does not alter the fundamental truth that all forms of colonisation will come to an end eventually, the case of Palestine included. The irresistible driving force behind the Palestinian cause is liberation. This quest for freedom is not confined to specific colonisers but extends to others, including Jewish, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim colonisers. Colonisation, by nature, is destined to be overcome by indigenous peoples, and making use of the antisemitic card against Semite Palestinians lacks coherence in this context.

Beyond Skewed Narratives

In conclusion, Europe's increasing tendency to stigmatise Palestinian voices reveals a troubling inclination to put down Arab Palestinians as if they are the instigators of racism and cruelty against their occupiers. Paradoxically, Palestinians are expected to be kind towards Zionist Jews as Europe grapples with its historical guilt.

This demand for kindness is part of a skewed narrative asking Palestinians to extend benevolence to a group essentially constituting a violent occupying force. This serves as a means for Europe to absolve itself of guilt related to the Holocaust, emphasising a crucial lesson about the roots of racism and the unjust burden imposed on innocent individuals.

Historical echoes expose Europe's avoidance of reckoning with its transgressions, professing victimhood and imposing stigmatisation on indigenous populations. Regardless of this, resilient indigenous people, whether in Palestine, Algeria, or South Africa, have resisted succumbing to the traps of racism and the obliteration of their peaceful, free human spirits.

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