

# NEVER AGAIN



## Human flesh of different people arrives at the hospital

Mohammed Omer/Rafah Today

On October 1, 1939 the German Wehrmacht's advance reached the city of Warsaw, Poland. Over the following months, the Jewish population of Warsaw and the surrounding areas would be forced into a small section of the city dubbed the "Jüdischer Wohnbezirk" or "the Jewish quarter," the Warsaw ghetto. The situation within the ghetto was unbearable: 30 percent of the population was forced to live in 2.4 percent of the city's area. The Nazi occupiers of the city strictly controlled the movement of goods,

basic utilities and even food. Each person in the ghetto was allotted about 250 calories per day. This meant that the population would slowly starve.

Acts of rebellion within the ghetto were brutally suppressed and German retaliation was often strikingly disproportionate. In December 1939, for example, two German soldiers were killed in a local restaurant and 106 men in the ghetto were shot in reprisal. Sweeping mass arrests and random executions were also commonplace.



In April 1940 the ghetto was walled off on all sides, effectively separating it from the outside world. The population was allowed limited control through an essentially powerless governing committee and a similarly ineffective Jewish police force.

Jews living anywhere in the greater occupied German territories were forced to wear armbands with the Star of David, which signified their position within the Nazi social strata (read subhuman). These armbands effectively determined people's ability to travel, live and work, as well as the manner in which they would be treated by non-Jewish persons.

Leaving the Warsaw ghetto meant risking death or deportation to a concentration camp. Services such as hospitals and schools were often derelict, relying on an ever-decreasing stream of supplies allotted by the Nazis. The low supplies were often supplemented by goods smuggled in through tunnels, but such services were eventually forced to close.

The citizens of Warsaw organized a resistance movement during the Soviet advance. Their valiant attempt to fight the occupation, however, was brutally defeated and the Warsaw ghetto was razed to the ground. The ghetto's remaining residents, those who had managed to evade deportation to concentration camps, were killed.

On September 12, 2005 the final Israeli settlement blocs in the Gaza Strip were dismantled and Israeli troops withdrew from the area after 38 years of military occupation. For Israel, the removal of troops signified an end to their occupation of Gaza. For the citizens of the Gaza Strip, however, the occupation had simply progressed into a new phase: the ghetto. The year 2005 marked the establishment of Gaza as an open-air prison for Palestinians.

The Israeli government controls the movement of all goods, including food, in and out of the Gaza Strip. A study done by Johns Hopkins University in 2002 showed that 17.5 percent of Gaza's children aged 6-59 months suffer from chronic malnutrition and almost half of women and children suffer from anemia. These statistics have no doubt gone up in the wake of recent Israeli embargoes. Israel also controls basic necessities like power and plumbing. And of course it controls Gaza's borders and airspace.

The long ocean border, once an extremely viable source of income for Gazans through trade and fishing, is now strictly controlled by Israel.

For the most part, the movement of Palestinians into Israel is strictly forbidden. Until 2005 and the open revolt of Hamas in Gaza, Palestinians living in the territory were issued identification cards by the Palestinian Authority, with ID numbers given by Israel. These identification cards and their color casings determined what rights people had, where they were allowed to travel and, unofficially, how they were treated. Although they are no longer used in Hamas-controlled Gaza, these identification cards are used extensively in the West Bank, where Israeli checkpoints dot the region and prevent Palestinians from traveling freely within their territory. The situation of Palestinians in Gaza is unique: they have no official state and are thus treated as nonentities.

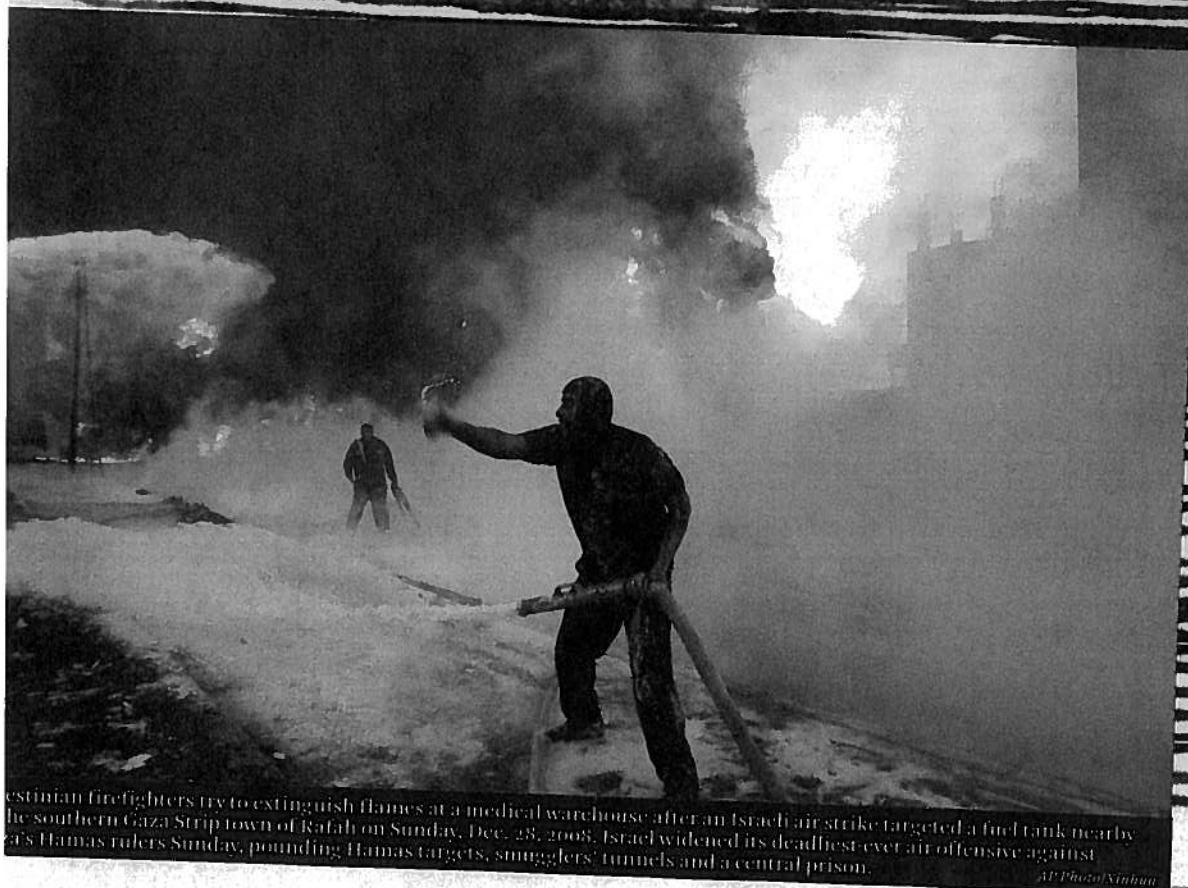
Hospitals and schools in Gaza are rarely, if ever, able to keep up with the demands of the population. Supplies to these institutions are controlled by Israel and during times of war are often cut off. Most recently, the Israeli embargo of Gaza struck a blow to the health care system: many essential drugs are unavailable and ambulances have been grounded due to a lack of spare parts.

Israeli responses to provocation are wildly disproportionate. In the recent resumption of fighting between Hamas and Israel, the Israeli response to the murder of three civilians by Palestinian rockets was the wide-scale destruction of Gaza, which has thus far reportedly claimed the lives of 670 civilians.

Comparing any event with the actions of Nazi Germany during World War II should never be done lightly. When events lend themselves to such comparisons, however, it can almost certainly be said that something is very wrong. Though the stated goal of Israel has never been the complete destruction of the Palestinian people, the tactics and policies supported by the state of Israel paint an extremely grim picture.

*Saeed David Mohammad is a first-generation American born to a Pakistani father and German mother. He is majoring in Middle Eastern Studies at New York University.*

German troops set fire to housing blocks in order to suppress the Warsaw ghetto uprising by smoking members of the Jewish resistance out of hiding. [Photograph #26552]



estonian firefighters try to extinguish flames at a medical warehouse after an Israeli air strike targeted a fuel tank nearby the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah on Sunday, Dec. 28, 2008. Israel widened its deadliest ever air offensive against Gaza's Hamas rulers Sunday, pounding Hamas targets, smugglers' tunnels and a central prison.

AP Photo/Xinhua



Members of the Jewish resistance captured by SS troops during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. [Photograph #26544]



Palestinian militants hold white flags as a signal for Israeli troops after leaving their house near the area where Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants exchange fire outside Jabaliya refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Jan. 5, 2009.

AP Photo/Hatem Moussa





Palestinian rescue workers carry a wounded prisoner past a fire, as another lies under the rubble in the central security headquarters and prison, known as the Saraya, after it was hit in an Israeli missile strike in Gaza City, Sunday, Dec. 28, 2008. *AP Photo/Sajed Hamdan*

Document 358 of 812



The bodies of Jewish resisters lie in front of the ruins of a building where they were shot by the SS during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising.

[Photograph #26547]





Bodies lie outside the Hamas police headquarters following an Israeli air strike on Gaza City on Dec. 27, 2008.

AP Photo/Mohammed Abed

Document 4 of 812

The bodies of Jewish policemen executed by the SS during the Warsaw ghetto uprising. [Photograph #05515]

