

THE FABRICATION OF ISRAEL

About the usurpation and destruction of Palestine through Zionist spatial planning

A UNIQUE PLANNING ISSUE

IV

Further Devastation and Destruction - Judaizing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after the Occupation 1967, an overview

Jad Isaac, Viktoria Waltz

3. Gaza - the 'Hawaii of Israel' – a Short Story

Conclusion from the part before:

Since Oslo of September 1993 to Camp David summit of July 2000, Israel has added more than 17.000 new housing units to the body of the colonies; thus constituting a major blow to the peace process and revealing Israel's intentions toward fulfilling its obligations to carry out any significant withdrawal from the illegal colonies in the occupied territories. Furthermore, Israel confiscated in the following 5 years of the "interim period" more than 36,000 dunam in and around Jerusalem city and even after the Why River Memorandum of 1998 which stressed that neither party takes any measures that might alter the final status negotiations; Israel went and advocated 27 illegal Israeli outposts in that period.

In the year 2007, the number of colonies in the West Bank reached 199 colonies hosting nearly 530000 Israeli settlers, of which 230,000 settlers lived in 14 colonies in the East Jerusalem area. These colonies concentrate on hilltops overlooking and surrounding Palestinian populated areas, areas that block the merging of Palestinian populated areas while facilitating the merging of colonies, areas that may be easily annexed to Israel in the future, or areas that secure economic resources, militarily advantage or negotiating leverage. Furthermore, Israel is using the Wall to usurp nearly 50% of the West Bank.

The systematic long term planning to judaise the West Bank represented in the establishment of colonies, bypass roads, closed military areas, nature reserves and security zones describe this anticipated situation that Israel is trying to impose on Palestinians a final status situation without negotiations or consideration of unalienable Palestinian rights. Consequently, by creating what they believe to be "irreversible facts on the ground" to dictate their own terms to any potential peace agreement with the Palestinians, Israel aims to put an end to any prospect of a viable Palestinian State over occupied territories of 1967.

The result of such plans is the grouping of Palestinian towns and villages into many separate cantons. Indeed, the Israeli intention is to make the contiguity of any Palestinian state in the future practically unattainable and eventually to reach control and even a new Israeli map over 100% of the once promised Palestine of Balfour Declaration.

IV

Jad Isaac, Viktoria Waltz

3. Gaza - the 'Hawaii of Israel' – a Short Story

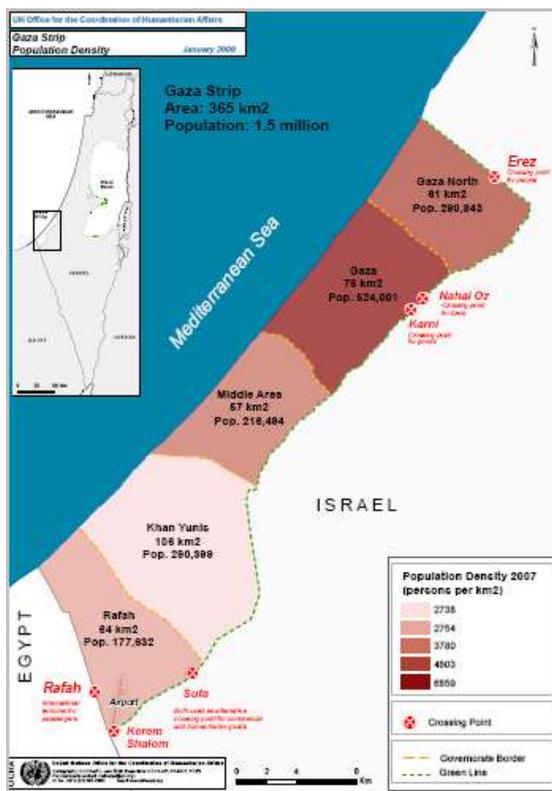
Gaza - a nightmare for Israel rather than 'Hawaii'? Controlling Gaza Region was never easy, over-crowding, poverty, frustration and a highly politicised population made it always difficult. Gaza created the core cell of the liberation movement, the PLO after 1948. From here Yassir Arafat started the armed liberation fight. However Gaza was more to Israel than a left over part of Mandate Palestine, hence a border area to the Sinai, the Suez Canal and an entrance to Africa. Napoleon's army once sacked the area, also looking for a promised land of historical meaning; they came the other way round, however his campaign was a big failure. Thousands of Palestinians were plundered and killed, but also his soldiers went back defeated. Israel tried the same. In the 90th the colonists had to leave Sinai, in the beginning of the 21st century Israel's army and colonists had to leave the Gaza colonies. But does that mean that Gaza is liberated and taken off from Israel's secret map?

3.1 Gaza Region under British Mandate until 1948

Gaza Region, before the establishment of the State of Israel was a low populated agricultural and fertile region. At the end of British Mandate there lived nearly 70.000 people, from them around 35.000 living in Gaza City and around 12.000 people in Khan Yunis, beside some 15 small villages, producing vegetables, fruits, especially famous kinds of dates. Strong economic relations existed to the other coastal commercial centres and to Sinai, hence Egypt. At the end of the war 1947- 49 Gaza Region's tranquil life changed dramatically. Since then the 'Gaza Strip' became the synonym of the biggest refugee camp on earth. In the ethnic cleansing program of Ben Gurions military consultancy the Negev and the south coast was not excluded. In the last phase of the butchering end of 1948 Umm Rashrash, now Eilat, Gaza ad Rafah were bombed, thousands of Bedouins from the Negev were expelled to Gaza Region as well as the total population of Isdud (today Ashdod) and Majdal (today Ashkelon) by force (Pappe 2006: 193pp). At the end of 1948 the population of the Gaza Region had doubled. Until the 'Sinai War' in 1956, Gaza Region suffered several Israeli military attacks, people were killed, during the war new refugees came up. In 1956 the population figure increased to 400.000.

In 1967, when Israel occupied the Gaza Region and Sinai, nearly half a million people was recorded, half of them living in camps, in poverty and highly depending on UNWRA support. (Efra 1976, Moeller 1981) Today, Gaza Region hosts nearly 1.5 million people, one third of them still living in camps. Main cities (from north to south) are: Beit Hanun, Beit Lahia, Gaza, Deir el Balah, Khan Yunis and Rafah. With 4.054 persons per sqkm Gaza today is one of the most densely populated small regions in the world. (PACE 1999; see map 1)

Map 1 Gaza Region, Density according to Districts 2009



Source: OCHA Population Density Map 5.1.2009

3.2 Gaza Region after 1967: Destruction, Dividing and Usurping the Fertile Land

Judaizing Gaza Region was a special challenge to the Zionist architects. On a very small area of some 370 sqkm nearly a million people in high density, highly political and under very inhuman living conditions were not at all easy to control and suppress. The social and economic situation of a big majority of the inhabitants presented enough explosive political material and problems to the occupying power. Hence, Gaza Region was suffering the highest pressure and military threat since the occupation.

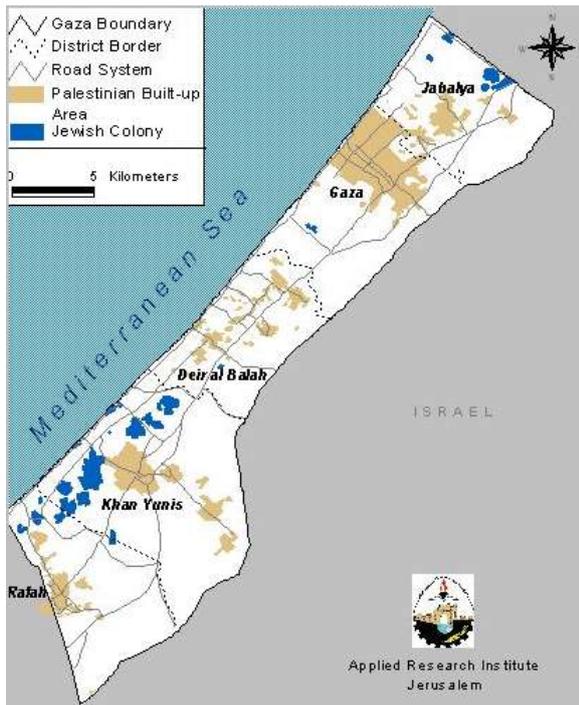
Since 1967 Gaza Region was under strict military rule, Sharon as the military governor until the 70th first of all became famous for his rude 'cleansing' of the refugee camps, bulldozing living quarters and implementing a new kind of 'Hausmanization', pulling down houses for new wide streets, ready for the tanks, controlling the areas day and night.

Besides this brutal policy colonising followed as usual strategic aims, here the dividing into four sectors by excluding military roads between Rafah, Khan Yunis, Deir el Balah and Gaza city (see map 2). These roads were leading to coastal colonies, blocking part of the sea side for the Palestinians. In addition the borders in the north to Israel (Erez) and the south to Egypt (Rafiah) came under control and Erez converted to a commercial area, not only border control. The most fertile southern coast was the main object of colonisation: 11 agricultural colonies were established, the Gush Katif block with huge date palm plantations came under Jewish control. One of the Gush Katif colonies, 'Gadid' had the status of an Israeli city. (Benvenisti 1988: 109pp) The colony of Netzarim, close to the sea side, served as a swimming area for the Jewish colonists and Jewish Israelis. The Gush Katif Bloc

usurped nearly 50sqkm with a length of about 10 km from the Palestinians. This beautiful and fertile area 'promoted' the WZO to Jewish American immigrants in the following outrageous way:

“The sandy, palm-tree beaches of Gaza are the “Hawaii” of Israel. The ten communities stretching from the Erez Checkpoint in the north to Rafiah in the south share the infinitely-stretching view of the Mediterranean. This area, despite its tropical climate and physical beauty, was never heavily populated, and this is what the Gaza Regional Council would like to see changes in the near future...” (IAD WZO 1984: 19).

Map 2 Gaza Region Colonies 2000



Source: Arij.org 2000

3.3 Colonization after Oslo

Before the negotiations started there was no 'border' in the meaning of closed areas; mobility between the Gaza Region, the West Bank and Jerusalem was not limited, economic and social relations existed. After Oslo this changed dramatically, Gaza Region was the first area to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority in May 1994.

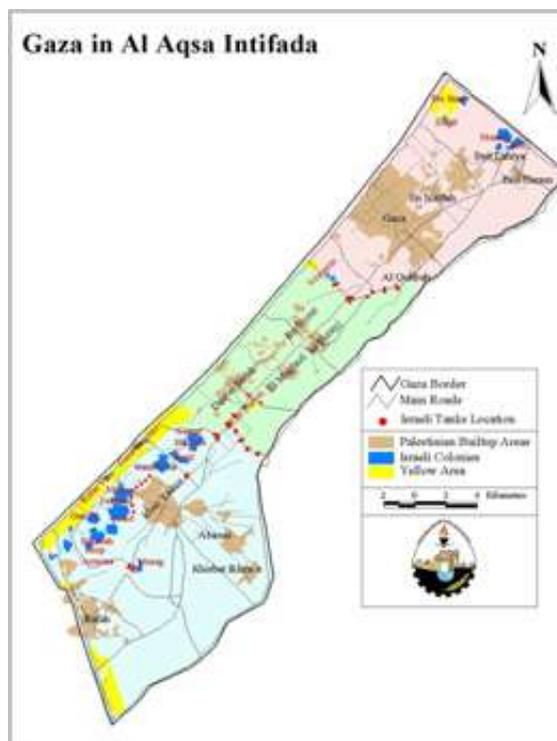
The agreements between the Israeli and the Palestinians gave Israeli the right to remain in special areas within the Gaza Region with special access and entrance on the one hand and also the control over the sea side on the other hand where Palestinian fisherman were restricted to fish in a very small distance of ca. 60 km from the coast only. (see maps 3,4)

colonies, prohibited to Palestinians. The Jews moved between Israel and the colonies only with military patrols. The northern restricted area, Erez, became a special commercial zone along the border and annexed to Israel.

In the Gaza Strip, most Palestinian agricultural lands were located adjacent to colonies or colonies' bypass roads network and were under threat of confiscation by the Israeli Occupation forces. The IOF often alluded to a variety of justifications mainly for security reasons, seeking the protection of colonists in the Israeli colonies in the Gaza Strip like in the West Bank.

The Intifada of 2000 was also an answer to the fragmentation of the Gaza Region and the frustration about a peace process that never brought more sovereignty or independence. (see map 5)

Map 5 Fragmentation of Gaza Region into 3 cantons until 2000



Source: Arij 2003

The City of Gaza became the official residence of President Arafat, followed by ministries and the parliament.

However, the same in the West Bank, usurpation did not halt after Oslo, colony activities accelerated. In 2003 some 6.000 Jewish colonists were living in 19 colonies and a built up area of about 26.66 km². Analysis of land use classification in the colonies of the Gaza Region revealed a pattern of colony expansion. These land use classifications included new outposts as well as residential, agricultural, industrial and security areas. The total area controlled by Israel in the Gaza Region until the withdrawal in 2004, was 165.04 km², which is 45.7% of Gaza Region's total area. The land under Israeli control included Israeli colony areas, security zones, military installations, buffer zones and the yellow areas. Along the border to Egypt Israel imposed another 100 m buffer zone, separating again south from north Rafah, the 'Egyptian' Rafah to the 'Palestinian' Rafah. (Arij 2003)

3.4 The 'Disengagement' - The Geopolitical Situation in the Gaza Strip

Contrary to what was promoted systematically in the media, the Israelis did not disengage from Gaza and they never had the intention to do so as it was constantly palpable by their tangible actions; the security belt zone along the Gaza eastern borders and its analogous north of Gaza.

One month following the evacuation of Israeli colonies from the Gaza Strip (August 2005), Israel announced that it has completed the construction of an underwater barrier that starts off at the Gaza' shore north-west of the strip towards the sea. The sea barrier extends for 950 meters; the first 150 meters are visible to the eyes, as for the remaining 800 meters, it went 1.8-meters-deep below the surface with floating fence. ¹

Later in December 2005, the former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the Israeli Army to establish a no-go zone for Palestinians along Gaza's northern border, where Palestinians are not allowed to access without Israeli authorisation. The no-go zone was established across 6 kilometres long stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to Erez Border crossing and a width ranging from 2-3 km. The security zone also included the locations of three of the 21 evacuated Israeli colonies, Dugit, Nisanit and Eli Sinai. By the end of 2005, the Israeli Army secured a security buffer zone around Gaza's northern and eastern borders of 61 square kilometres; some 17% of Gaza area came under full Israeli Control.

On February 14, 2007, the Israeli government declared the four Gaza Terminals (*Karni, Erez, Sufa and Kerm Shalom*) linking the Gaza Strip with the West Bank and Israel as International terminals and that the Gaza Strip is a 'Foreign land'. This Israeli announcement may be interpreted as the Israeli approach to consolidate its occupation over the 17% (61 Km²) of Gaza it still occupies. The Israeli Interior Minister Ofer Pens officially signed the order on February 14, 2007, alleging that the Gaza Strip is no longer under the Israeli occupation since the unilateral Israeli withdrawal (redeployment) in August 2005.

The Israeli decision to turn four of Gaza terminals to international border points serves Israel's scheme to politically detach its responsibility from the Gaza Strip after 40 years of occupation; even though Israel has not totally relinquished its occupation in Gaza as with 17% of the land still under occupation. Upon the new Israeli considerations, citizens of Israel and the foreign nationals will need a passport to enter Gaza from Israel using the four terminals without any obstacles. On the other hand, this is not a vice-versa status where Palestinians may enter Israel using their passports, instead, they have to acquire a special Israeli permits from the 'Israeli Civil Administration', were they most likely will not receive. In other words, the Palestinians will need to get a permit from the Israeli authorities in order to move between the West Bank and Gaza since they will be crossing Israeli controlled territory. ²

Later on June 28, 2007, Israeli sources revealed that the Israeli Army would mark the security zone to 1.5 km width on the Palestinian side along Gaza's northern and eastern borders. The security zone stretches from the Mediterranean Sea shores at Gaza's north-west to Rafah crossing border at the south-east of Gaza. The new adjustment to the security buffer zone would consume yet an additional 26 km² along the northern and eastern border of the Gaza Strip where the entire security buffer

¹ June 17, 2005). Israel to build Gaza sea barrier . from BBC News Web site: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4104774.stm

² (August 1, 2007). Monitoring Israeli Colonization Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. from Israel increases the security buffer zone around the Gaza Strip Web site: http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=1022

zone area is to be cleared of any Palestinian structure. Accordingly, the newly defined security buffer zone, occupy an area of 87 Km² (24%) of the Gaza Strip area. (see table 1, map 6)

Table 1 Timeline of Israeli Security Buffer Zone around Gaza's Border

Status in years	Buffer Zone width along 58 km	Area in qkm	Percentage of total Gaza's Area
1994*	500 m	29	8
2005** (Sept.-Dec)	800-1300	61	17
2007** (June)	1500 m	87	24

* Agreed upon in Oslo 1994

** Unilaterally carried out by Israel

Source: ARIJ GIS Database 2007

Map 6 Israeli 'Security Buffer Zone' around Gaza's Border



Source: ARIJ GIS Database 2007

The 'security buffer zone' along Gaza's northern and eastern border came as a part-clause of the 1994 Oslo Accord, under which, the Israelis were to maintain a 0.5 Km wide security zone across the northern and eastern Gaza's 58 Km border. This 0.5 km security zone occupied 29 Km² (8%) of Gaza's area to remain under the Israeli Army's control. When the Palestinian second Intifada broke out in September 2000, the Israeli Army expanded the area of the security zone unilaterally by few hundred meters (width ranges between 0.8 and 1.30 km). The area became off limit to Palestinians to build, cultivate, or just be there. By the time the Israeli Army completed their redeployment in Gaza by the end of 2005, the security buffer zone area stood at 61 Km² (17%) of the Gaza Strip area under the Israeli Army occupation.

3.4.1 Israel still in-control - occupying Gaza

On the ground, Israel is still occupying the Gaza Strip, especially which it remains in control of:

- **Gaza's seashores and territorial water:** the Israeli Army keeps part of its navy fleet on guard along the Gaza shores around the clock and around the year. Palestinian fish boats are almost entirely denied access to the open sea except when they receive a permit from the Israeli authority of concern. Some 3000 Palestinians in the fishing business has their livelihood threaten because of the Israeli practices, many of whom were fired on, on different occasions. In addition to that, Israel still denies Palestinians their right to construct or establish their own seaport under the pretext of security.
- **Gaza's lands:** one of the reasons that the Israeli questionable withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is being identified as redeployment is that Israel maintain what they call a security belt around Gaza's eastern border with Israel, some 87 Km² or 24% of Gaza's district remains under Israeli occupation, where every access in and out of Gaza is controlled by the Israeli Army (IOF Israeli Occupation Army).
- **Gaza's Airspace;** even though at one time the Palestinians had their own airport, the Israelis went on, destroyed the runways of the airport, and restricted all flying activities. Even more than that, Israel still refuse the Palestinian demand to reconstruct the ruined airport runways or that the Palestinian use it at any time, also under the pretext of security.
- **Gaza's Population Records;** Israel still regard the population senses of Gaza its responsibility, as it still pursue any population classification and status and who lives in the Strip and who is not.
- **Gaza's commercial crossings:** like the people, Israel still in control of every and/ or any commodities that enters and leaves Gaza in addition to controlling the customs and taxes.

Furthermore, the construction of the surrounding 'Wall' – before the destruction December 2008/January 2009 - had already demolished of more than 900 houses, 13.000 people were left homeless. As big part of the agricultural land is located adjacent to the western part, hence close to the Israeli border, more than 20% of the agricultural land has been already razed, in order to cleanse areas for the construction of the Wall and for the "buffer zones". The Egyptian border area has a width of 100 meters and was previously constructed by the Israeli forces after expropriation and destruction of land and private properties such as uprooting of 750 thousand of fruitful trees mainly citrus and banana and the destruction of a number of plastic green houses which resulted in complete destruction of the agriculture sector in the Gaza Strip. This Segregation wall will completely separate the northern parts of Rafah city from its southern ones, along the Israeli controlled border; thus dividing Rafah city again into two parts (the Palestinian Rafah and the Egyptian Rafah) (Arij 2005) (see map 7).

Map 7 'Security Buffer Zone' between Gaza/Rafah and Egypt



Source: Human Right Watch 2007

In military operations carried out by the IOF October 2006 and under the pretext of searching for and shutting down what Israelis refer to as “arms-smuggling tunnels”, claiming the existence of 13 secret tunnels along the Egyptian border area, the IOF incurred into the Palestinian areas of Rafah city from several directions, mainly through Rafah crossing point and Moraj colony to reach Tal Al Sultan and Zourob areas in the west. The IOF based in Tal Zourob military base shelled with tanks Palestinian houses in both areas. The house of Shede Zourob for example was completely burnt due to the shelling and all his properties were destroyed. In addition, the IOF (Israeli Occupation Forces) razed 160 dunam, of which 100 dunam of green houses planted with vegetables, citrus, Palm and fruit trees and destroyed a water well and a number of irrigation networks and agricultural pools in the area.

The IOF then spread through different parts of Rafah city escalating their violations against Palestinians living in the neighbourhoods of Al Barazil, Tal Al Sultan and Yebna refugee camp. Twenty Palestinian homes were hit by tank shells and heavy machine gunfire on the first day of the military operation and were completely destroyed. About 50 families who lived in the houses were left homeless. In addition, the Israeli army destroyed the infrastructure of the city including sewage pipes, electric and telephone lines, and razed vast areas of agricultural lands estimated at 400 dunam. (Arij 2003)

These were again reasons for the uprising and especially the frustration of the people of the Gaza region and first of all of Rafah area.

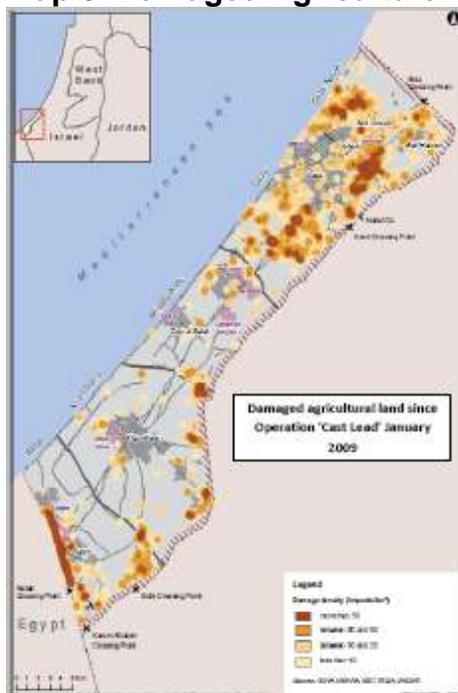
3.4.2 The Military Offensive “Cast Lead” 27. December 2008 to 18. January 2009

When Israel started its military offensive at 28.12.2008 the Gaza population suffered already since 18 months from a strict blockade imposed on them. The blockade comprised restrictions on goods imported to Gaza, closure of border crossing between the different cities in the Gaza Strip for people, goods and services, sometimes for days, including cuts in the provision of fuel and electricity. Goldstone reported to the UN Human Rights Council (Goldstone 2009): “The economy, employment opportunities and family livelihoods were already severely affected by the blockade when the Israeli offensive began. Insufficient supply of fuel for electricity generation had a negative impact on industrial activity, on the operation of hospitals, on water supply to households and on sewage treatment. Import restrictions and the ban on all exports from Gaza affected the industrial sector and agricultural production. Unemployment levels and the percentage of the population living in poverty and deep poverty were rising.” (§ 65)

Furthermore, Israel’s military operation destroyed a substantial part of the industrial infrastructure, food production, water installations such as the Namar wells, sewage treatment and housing. Israeli forces also carried out a strike against a wall of one of the raw sewage lagoons of the Gaza Waste Water Treatment Plant, which caused the outflow of more than 200,000 cubic meters of raw sewage into neighboring farmland (§§ 50/52). Already before the military operations, 80 percent of the water supplied in Gaza did not meet the WHO’s standards for drinking water. The discharge of untreated or partially treated waste water into the sea was a further health hazard worsened by the military operations. (§ 67)

Food insecurity followed as a result of razing farmland and destruction of greenhouses. (see map 8)

Map 8 Damaged Agricultural Land after Israeli Military Operation 2008/09



Source: UNOCHA May 2010: 4

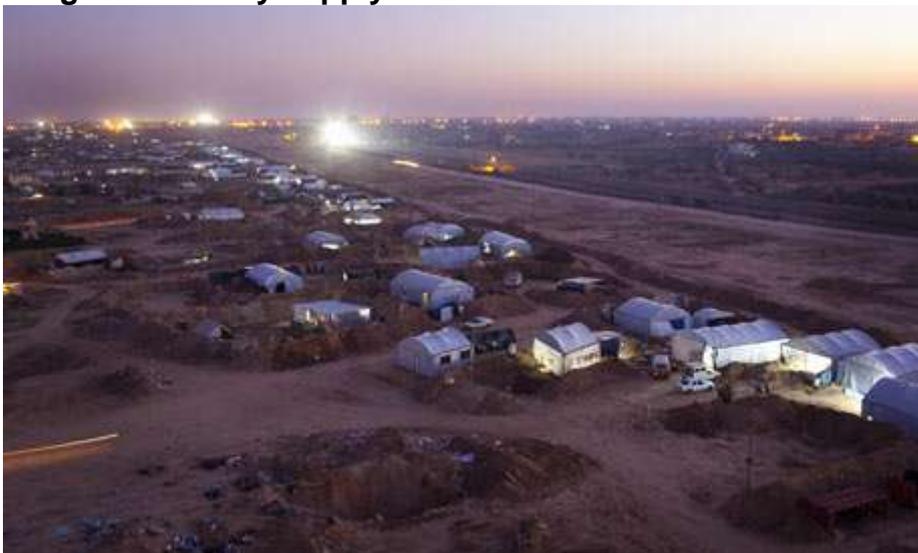
In addition UNDP reported 3.354 houses completely destroyed and 11.112 houses partially damaged displacing thousands of people, mainly civilians, particularly women and children. Moreover, more than 1.000 people, again nearly half of them

children and women, lost their life. Statistics about Palestinians who lost their life during the military operations vary. Based on extensive field research, non-governmental organizations place the overall number of persons killed between 1,387 and 1,417. The Gaza authorities report 1,444 fatal casualties. The Government of Israel provides a figure of 1,166. (§ 18)

This was due to a massive use of bombing in urban areas and wide spreading life ammunitions and of certain weapons such as white phosphorous and flechette missiles. The Goldstone mission was not in a position to state with certainty that so-called dense inert metal explosive (DIME) munitions were used by the Israeli armed forces, however reports from Palestinian and foreign doctors who operated in Gaza during the military operations proved a high percentage of patients with injuries compatible with their impact. (§§ 48/49)

The Goldstone report claimed that “ ... that Israel continues to be duty-bound under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to the full extent of the means available to it to ensure the supply of foodstuff, medical and hospital items and others to meet the humanitarian needs of the population of the Gaza Strip without qualification (§.28). The Mission concluded: “The conditions of life in Gaza, resulting from deliberate actions of the Israeli forces and the declared policies of the Government of Israel – as they were presented by its authorized and legitimate representatives - with regard to the Gaza Strip before, during and after the military operation, cumulatively indicate the intention to inflict collective punishment on the people of the Gaza Strip in violation of international humanitarian law”. (§ 74)

Image 1 The only supply: more than 5.000 tunnels



Source: The Guardians 2009

Conclusion

It is obvious, that Israel's last attack on Gaza is not the end. The 'disengagement' was an interim step and one has to realise, that the 'settlers' of Gaza were only transferred to the West Bank in order to fill in the Jerusalem illegal colonies.

Moreover, Gaza is not at all a 'liberated' area from occupation. Still parts of the region in north, west and south Gaza the 'buffer zones' are occupied and grabbed land. The Israeli military is entering the region from where and when ever wanting: by planes, helicopters, bulldozers, tanks and even with missiles from the sea side. The seldom

rackets from the Palestinian side are always a reason for military attacks. Illegal killing of supposedly terrorists with civil 'casualties' is part of a still ongoing threat, pressure.

We have to conclude that the question of Gaza Region is not finished. Will it be part of a future 'Palestinian State'? Will the total usurpation of 'Israel's Hawaii' only be postponed?

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