

" The principle of humanitarian intervention in the balance of the Western binary view between the necessity of intervention for Ukraine and silence towards the genocide in Gaza"

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**Abstract:**

*The aim of this study is to illustrate the difference in the Western stance towards the Russian-Ukrainian war on one hand, and the Israeli-Palestinian war on the other.*

*The Western stance differed between the two wars. While there was a surge in calls against Russia and financial and military aid was provided to Ukraine, along with the reception of refugees to help it confront the Russian military machine, the West completely ignored this with Gaza.*

**Keys Words:** war; Western stance; genocide; international complicity.

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### **1-Introduction:**

The year 2023 revealed the wide disparity in the Western stance and its double standards towards the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the massacres in Palestine.

On February 24, 2022, Russian forces invaded Ukrainian territory, and on October 7, 2023, Palestinian resistance carried out military operations in parts of the occupied Palestinian territories. The former occurred in the heart of Europe, while the latter took place in the heart of the Arab world. Does the difference in geographical locations justify double standards in Western positions? Were the same values and principles applied in both cases or were those principles dedicated and demanded respect in the Ukrainian case while ignored, if not buried, in the Palestinian case? Doesn't this difference in the two conflict situations confirm what one Western writer, rightly so, stated, that Third World countries view the European Union as merely a club of colonial empires?

Does the value of the lives of others, whether migrants or victims of armed conflicts, not equal the value of the lives of European individuals?

### **2-The Israeli-Palestinian conflict October 7<sup>th</sup>:**

On the morning of October 7th, the Palestinian resistance launched an unprecedented attack on Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip, naming it "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm."

The attack began with the firing of thousands of rockets into Israel, and the infiltration by land, sea, and air of around a thousand elite fighters from the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), into the settlements. They seized military positions and captured hundreds of Israelis, including dozens of officers and soldiers.

On October 8th, the Israeli Ministerial Security Cabinet approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to declare a state of war against Gaza under Article 40 of the Basic Law of the Government.

On October 11th, official reports announced that the number of Israeli casualties in Operation Al-Aqsa Storm reached 1200, including hundreds of soldiers and officers.

The Israeli Ministry of Health reported that more than 3,000 Israelis were injured, including 28 in critical condition and 345 in serious condition.

During the 200 days of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, the occupation destroyed most of the infrastructure, facilities, and institutions, including health, educational, and administrative facilities. Until April 22, 2024, its

airstrikes and incursions resulted in 34,183 martyrs and 77,143 injuries, the majority of whom were children and women (الجزيرة, 2024).

### 3-The Russian-Ukrainian War:

In January 2022, Ukraine announced its intention to join NATO, a move that unsettled Russia, with the possibility of forces from 28 countries being stationed on its borders. Ukraine was warned against joining NATO, and when it did not comply, Russia launched an attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. In the first ten days of fighting, Russia succeeded in destroying Ukrainian military infrastructure, targeting airports, air bases, radars, command centers, air defense forces, major assemblies, and Ukrainian reserves. They then advanced towards the capital, Kyiv, but Ukrainian forces resorted to urban warfare, causing setbacks for the Russian attacks. Consequently, Russia shifted its focus eastward, seizing 20% of Ukrainian territory within eight months, and capturing four provinces: Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson. Putin later annexed these provinces to Russia following a referendum among the residents of these areas. Russia's main objectives since the start of the conflict were fourfold: to compel Ukraine to become a neutral state, to disarm like Switzerland, to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO or any other alliance, and for Ukraine to pledge not to become a nuclear state. Finally, Ukraine would recognize Russia's right to annex the Crimean Peninsula (فج, 2023).

Since the outbreak of the Ukrainian war on February 24, 2022, the Russian invasion has resulted in massive economic losses, in addition to tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions, causing economic disruptions worldwide over 18 months.

The war has caused casualties on a scale not seen in Europe since World War II. By the end of July, more than 9,000 civilians had been killed and over 16,000 injured, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which believes the actual numbers are much higher.

The conflict has resulted in nearly 500,000 soldiers killed or wounded, according to The New York Times, citing officials from the United States, which supports Ukraine. They stated that up to 120,000 Russian soldiers were killed and between 170,000 and 180,000 were wounded, while the toll for the Ukrainian army reached 70,000 killed and between 100,000 and 120,000 wounded (الاقتصاد الدولي, 2023).

**4-The global stance :** The Western stance differed between the two wars. While calls against Russia escalated and financial and military aid was provided to Ukraine, along with receiving refugees to enable it to confront the Russian military machine, the West completely ignored this concerning Gaza.

At the time Israel began its war against the Gaza Strip in response to the "Operation Flood of Al-Aqsa" on October 7th of last year, the Russian war in Ukraine had been ongoing for nearly 20 months, as Russia initiated its assault, or what it terms "the special military operation in Ukraine," on February 24th, 2022

- **International law :**

From the perspective of international law, Russia invaded Ukraine and occupied parts of its territory. Similarly, Israel did the same and occupied Palestinian territories. With explicit recognition through several international resolutions, the international organization deemed Israel's actions as occupation of Palestinian territories contrary to international law. So why, as one prominent writer pointed out, did the West not respond in the same way to both situations? Instead of standing by the countries that were aggressed upon, the United States and Europe stood alongside the aggressor nations. In the early days of the Ukraine war, Europe opened its borders to welcome millions of Ukrainian refugees, while refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan weren't received with the same warmth and generosity. Could the reason for this difference, as one British journalist wrote, be that Ukrainians resemble us, they watch Netflix like us, have Instagram accounts, and read free newspapers like us?

When Russia invaded Ukraine, Washington and Brussels imposed severe sanctions on Moscow (oil embargo, trade restrictions, banking transactions...), unlike anything similar directed towards Israel. Organizations calling for the boycott of Israel were fought against and accused of anti-Semitism. They were banned from the United States, Canada, and Germany, and faced lawsuits in France! The West supplies Ukraine with weapons while also supplying Israel, which occupies Palestinian territories, with weapons. It warns and threatens retaliation against anyone attempting to militarily support Palestinians (السقاف، 2024، صفحة 03).

- **The Western political and military stance:**

With the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the European Union's stance on Russian intervention was direct engagement in the conflict to assist Ukraine and its people, considering Russia's attack on them "without any justification."

EU heads of states and governments considered Ukraine a candidate country for accession to the Union, as announced during their meeting in June 2022. They provided weapons, financial aid, and urgent humanitarian assistance to Kyiv to defend itself against the "Russian invasion," as termed by the West.

The United States also stood with Ukraine, considering Moscow's actions "aggression." According to the U.S. State Department, American soldiers from Ukraine are considered "brave defenders." Additionally, economic sanctions were

imposed by both Europe and America on Moscow and individuals in the Russian government, along with military support to Ukraine estimated in billions of dollars.

Regarding the Western stance on the Israeli war on Gaza, European leaders unanimously condemned Hamas during their recent meeting near the end of last month. While European countries like France, the Netherlands, and Ireland supported the UN calls for a ceasefire in Gaza for humanitarian reasons, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic rejected these calls, considering them as working to "limit Israel's ability to defend itself," as these are countries supportive of Israel in its war.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz considers Israel a democratic state, and its army respects international law when dealing with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, while French President Emmanuel Macron proposed expanding the international alliance to combat the terrorist organization ISIS to include Hamas (rechouane, 2023).

• **The Arab world is divided between support and rejection :**

-Since February 24th of last year, the Russian intervention in Ukraine has witnessed five diverse official Arab stances ranging from support to rejection and neutrality, The Syrian regime supported the Russian military intervention in Ukraine, while Kuwait, Libya, and Lebanon rejected it.

On the other hand, Palestine, Algeria, and Iraq distanced themselves from the crisis, while Djibouti, Somalia, Comoros, and Yemen settled for condemning the Russian aggression through the UN resolution expressing regret over the "Russian aggression", In addition to the 11 countries that preferred neutrality through various calls, initiatives, and multiple budgets, the most prominent of which are Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Morocco, and Tunisia (2022، الأناضول).

- The Arab stance on the Israeli-Palestinian war was characterized by restraint and weakness, limited to vague condemnations except for Yemen, which banned commercial ships bound for Israel, including those passing through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, despite the American-British attack on it to stop it from attacking commercial ships.

The emergency Arab-Islamic summit on the aggression against Gaza was convened on the thirty-sixth day of the aggression (November 11, 2023), after significant delays and "procrastination," and after the martyrdom of around ten thousand victims, mostly civilians.

The concluding statement of the conference deviated from the usual classic behavior, as it emphasized the cessation of aggression against Gaza, allowing aid to enter the Gaza Strip, lifting the siege on it, rejecting the

displacement of Palestinians, condemning the double standards of Western criteria, and making "Israel" a state above the law. It affirmed adherence to "peace" as a strategic choice and to the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002. It called for financial support for the Palestinian government (the Authority of Ramallah) and the necessity of mobilizing international partners to rebuild Gaza, but it did not specify any financial contributions from any of the participating countries in the conference.

In short, the conference came within the framework of expressing grievances and absorbing what could be absorbed of Arab and Islamic public anger. There are no practical measures, such as severing or suspending relations with the Israeli entity, nor are there any real pressures or serious threats unless the aggression is halted or the Rafah crossing is opened. There is no support for the resistance or praise for its performance nor the resilience of the popular base in the Gaza Strip. Instead, there is an insistence on the philosophy of helplessness and on the failed settlement track, which Israel has abandoned and disregarded. The decisions do not reflect any serious positions regarding the Judaization of Jerusalem and the dangerous path that the Judaization of Al-Aqsa has entered (صالح, 2023).

5- A comparison between the losses of the two wars: Ukraine and Gaza have become the focus of global discourse and in U.S. politics, as the contradictory reactions have widened the gap between Western democracies and the rest of the world. The mutual accusations of double standards have inflamed emotions.

• **Comparison between the casualty numbers in the two wars:**

Since the start of the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, until October 8, 2023, the Russian attack has resulted in the killing of 9,806 Ukrainians and injuring 17,962 others, according to United Nations data.

Among the killed and injured, 1,196 Ukrainian children were wounded, while another 560 children were killed. Additionally, 3,765 women were confirmed injured, and 2,756 others were killed.

In turn, the Kyiv School of Economics reports that 167,000 homes have been destroyed in Ukraine as a result of the war. Among the most affected areas in this regard are Donetsk, Kyiv, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, and Kherson (Al-Araby, 2023).

As for the Gaza Strip, where the occupation added another siege on top of its blockade, preventing access to water and electricity, the toll of the Israeli aggression, as reported by the Ministry of Health today, Monday, has reached 8,306 martyrs, including 3,457 children and 2,136 women, in addition to more than 21,048 Palestinians injured with various injuries.

According to data released yesterday, Sunday, Israeli bombardment across various areas of the Strip has led to the destruction of 177,000 residential units between October 7 and October 29 (CNN belaraby, 2023).

### **6- After 106 days... what is Algeria's stance on the Gaza war?:**

For many years, the Palestinian issue has been one of the central issues for Algeria, gaining even more significance after the "Tempest of Al-Aqsa" operation on October 7, 2023, due to Israeli occupation plans aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause. This is evidenced by the brutal "genocidal" war targeting civilians in the Gaza Strip, where 24,927 have been martyred and over 62,388 injured, most of whom are innocent women and children. Such actions represent a clear violation of all international laws and treaties prohibiting such crimes, yet they are often obscured by Western media, revealing the double standards criticized by the Algerian people in their supportive marches for the Palestinian people (مجددي) (2024).

#### **• The official stance :**

Algeria has maintained a clear and steadfast official stance towards the Palestinian cause for many years, which has intensified in its support for the Palestinian people following the "Tempest of Al-Aqsa" operation.

Algeria has long-standing support for the Palestinian cause, with a clear and unwavering stance that has strengthened in the wake of events like the "Tempest of Al-Aqsa." In international forums, Algeria advocates for ending aggression in Gaza, lifting the blockade, and ensuring Palestinian rights are fully recognized.

Algeria's support for Palestine intensified after the Israeli attack on Al-Muammarin Hospital in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of over 500 civilians. President Abdelmajid Tebboune ordered urgent humanitarian aid, totaling 104 tons, to be sent to Gaza via El Arish Airport. This aid included food, medical supplies, clothing, and tents, showcasing Algeria's solidarity with the Palestinian people.

#### **• The unofficial stance :**

Supportive Demonstrations: The Algerian people have continued to show their support for the Palestinians. In over fifty provinces, Algerians participated in what was described as a "million-man march" to express solidarity with Gazans. This demonstration came in response to ongoing Israeli airstrikes on Gaza and the forced displacement of civilians. Algerian newspapers have shown unwavering support for Palestine by dedicating their front pages to the issue on October 22, 2023, under the title "Gaza... Media

Assassinating the Truth." This unprecedented move in Algerian journalism history aimed to express solidarity with Palestine, support Palestinian journalists, and condemn the bias of Western media (Kh.Read, 2023).

In conclusion, Algeria's stance on the Palestinian issue has remained steadfast for many years, shaped by its own struggles against French colonialism, which instilled a deep understanding of the importance of sovereignty and freedom. Algeria continues to support the Palestinian people in their quest for their legitimate rights and the establishment of an independent state. It actively advocates for an end to aggression in Gaza through various international platforms, urging the international community to protect Gaza's population. Recently, Algeria, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, successfully persuaded its members to unanimously reject the forced displacement of Palestinians from their lands, demonstrating its diplomatic efforts and commitment to the Palestinian cause.

#### **7- The positions of the heads of international organizations on the genocide war against the Palestinian people:**

**UN Secretary-General António Guterres** issued statements condemning Hamas by name and affirming Israel's right to self-defense. He made a timid reference to adhering to international humanitarian law but faced criticism for not demanding an immediate ceasefire or addressing the broader context of the situation in Gaza and Palestine. Guterres softened his tone after the Al-Muammarin Hospital massacre and met with families of hostages, but not directly with Palestinian families.

**In the current 78th session of the General Assembly**, President Dennis Francis emphasized the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people to live with dignity and freedom, including freedom of movement and access to basic services. He expressed concern over the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and other affected areas, highlighting the unjust deaths of thousands.

**Volker Türk, the Commissioner for Human Rights**, issued statements regarding the events in Gaza. In the first statement, he called for an immediate halt to military operations targeting civilians and condemned attacks causing disproportionate civilian casualties or damaging civilian infrastructure. Türk also criticized the blockade jeopardizing civilian lives by depriving them of essential goods, in violation of international humanitarian law. In a subsequent statement, Türk placed blame on Hamas for its actions. He later condemned the Al-Muammarin Hospital massacre as "unacceptable" and demanded accountability for those responsible. Additionally, on December 19th, Türk urged for a sustainable ceasefire, citing humanitarian concerns and echoing international calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. He highlighted reports of Israeli forces engaging in arbitrary



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detention, torture, and unlawful killings during operations, including within schools and hospitals in Gaza City and northern Gaza.

**Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO**, expressed concern over the killing of nine journalists and highlighted the death toll of 65 individuals in 2023. She urged all parties to respect international law and promptly implement it. A resolution project adopted during UNESCO's General Conference aimed to protect education, cultural heritage, and journalists from Israeli aggression in Gaza. The resolution called for monitoring the situation in Gaza, organizing a media meeting, and strengthening UNESCO's sub-office in Gaza City(2023، صبيام) .

The heads of international organizations expressed different positions on the genocide war against the Palestinian people. Some condemned the violence and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the blockade, emphasizing the need to respect international law and protect civilians and journalists. Others highlighted the severe human and cultural damages inflicted on Palestinians, urging the provision of humanitarian aid and the protection of cultural heritage. Positions varied between calling for immediate de-escalation and achieving international justice for the crimes committed. Ultimately, some international organizations took on the responsibility of monitoring the situation in Gaza and working to provide necessary support to the affected population while protecting human rights.

#### **Conclusion :**

The main issue in the West's approach to Ukraine and Gaza is that the former is a sovereign state recognized by the United Nations, while in Gaza, Hamas is considered a "terrorist" movement. The United States and the West want Israel to remain in the region, hence they agree with its actions to counter threats against it.

Despite the blockade, Hamas managed to carry out the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, indicating that no matter how long the war in Gaza lasts, Israel cannot completely eliminate the movement. This is what the Western powers desire, hence they oppose any humanitarian ceasefire called for through the Security Council.

The West does not rely on anyone in Ukraine, while in Gaza, it expects Arab and Islamic responses and efforts. At the same time, it does not support Gaza as it did with Kyiv, aiming to weaken or eliminate Hamas for years to come.

It can be expected that this war may recur as long as Israel continues its actions toward the Gaza Strip and Hamas remains there.

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