

Barbara Kay: Let's have some truth about the situation in Gaza

[National Post](#) - Tuesday July 9th, 2019

In late June, the Globe and Mail published a front-page feature article by former Mideast bureau chief Mark MacKinnon concerning the depressed situation of Palestinians and Gazans under Israeli rule. It was extremely one-sided. Israel was portrayed as the source of all woes. The article was accompanied by seven photos illuminating Palestinians' poor health conditions, lack of city infrastructure and buildings destroyed by Israeli bombs. Unmentioned: the Gazans' wanton destruction of the magnificent, profitable greenhouse system built by Israeli settlers who were forcibly removed in 2005 in order to grant Gaza its quasi-independence; the millions in aid money squandered on attack tunnels and salaries to suicide bombers; the billions of dollars squirrelled away by former and present Hamas leaders, not to mention an estimated \$100 million by West Bank dictator Mahmoud Abbas. It was extremely one-sided. Israel was portrayed as the source of all woes (--image--)

(--image--)

Unexplained: the use of scare quotes around "terrorists" to describe Hamas, officially designated a terrorist organization by our own and many other governments, including the EU. These observations and many more are included in a trenchant response to MacKinnon's article by ever-vigilant Honest Reporting Canada. MacKinnon's research seems to have consisted mainly of interviewing a dozen sad Gazans, for the article did not contain a single statistic. But there are plenty of revealing statistics on Gaza and West Bank Palestinians available in Israeli writer-scholar Ben-Dror Yemini's new book, *Industry of Lies: Media, Academia, and the Israeli-Arab conflict*. Taken together, they portray a radically different picture of Gaza from the one MacKinnon would have us buy. (--image--)

A Palestinian rides a donkey-pulled cart carrying sacks of food aid provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the town of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip on June 25, 2019.

Said Khatib/AFP/Getty Images

Chapter 12 of Yemini's book, for example, debunks "the Auschwitz Myth" (Google "Gaza Auschwitz": over two million citations). One graph shows that in 1967, when Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza began, life expectancy stood at 48. By 2000, it had leapt to 72, higher not only than in most Arab countries, but higher than in South America and some EU countries. In 1967, infant mortality amongst Palestinians was about 157 per thousand births. In 2006 it was 21 per thousand births, significantly lower than in neighbouring Arab and North African countries. Indeed, Palestinian infant mortality rates are now better than in Turkey and Bulgaria, and Gaza ranks third in the world for natural population increase due to high birth rates and low death rates. (Some "Auschwitz"!)

Palestinian infant mortality rates are now better than in Turkey and Bulgaria (--image--)

(--image--)

How about education? According to a World Bank Report that Yemini cites, "Palestinians are the most educated population in the Middle East and North Africa," and "Palestinians' educational achievements extend not only to literacy, but also to a relatively high rate of participation at all levels of education, including higher education." By contrast, statistics show that "Palestinians in Lebanon lag far behind those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip." Before June 5, 1967, no universities existed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Now? According to an official publication of the Palestinian Authority, the West Bank and Gaza have "10 universities and 20 community colleges ... and boast one of the highest per capita rates of university graduates in the Arab world." (--image--)

A Palestinian sits outside a home surrounded by children in Gaza City on June 24, 2019.

Mohammed Abed/AFP/Getty Images

Israel-bashers often point to difficulties Gazans have in accessing clean water, definitely a quality-of-life metric. Yet, pre-1967, under Jordanian rule, only four of 708 Palestinian villages in the West Bank had running water. After five years of Israeli rule, 50 per cent of homes were connected to a freshwater network. By 2004, 641 of 708 Arab communities, representing 96 per cent of the population, had 24/7 running water. Compare Palestinians under Israeli rule to Palestinians in Jordan, who experience continual problems, sometimes getting running water only one day a week. In Gaza, Yemini says, the “ground water has already been compromised by mismanagement and over-drilling by Hamas.” He notes as well that the Palestinians have repeatedly spurned outside offers to build them a desalinization plant. Gaza gets plenty of money (--image--)

(--image--)

As for poverty, a little context is in order. Gaza gets plenty of money. In fact, according to the Washington-based Institute for Near East Policy, “the Palestinians have received — all told — four times the aid per capita allocated in Europe under the post-WWII Marshall Plan.” But it doesn’t go toward infrastructure. It goes to expanding the public sector, rewarding terrorists and paying religious clerics to broadcast hysterical Judeophobia more or less full time. In spite of all this, Gaza’s gross national income per capita (GNI) is \$1,760, which seems nugatory to us, but isn’t for the region, where the average GNI is \$1,593. If you’re tired of slanted news about Israel — and the Globe’s article is a fine illustration — I recommend Yemini’s fine book. He says, “The beginning of Israeli rule over West Bank and Gaza was a turning point when neglect and repression decreased and the circumstances of daily life improved.” Nobody wants to be ruled by another country, and nobody wants to stop ruling the Palestinians more than Israel does. But if the subject of a reportage is life under Israeli rule, it is not so much to ask that the reportage reflect more than superficial knowledge, and provide objectivity and balance. Or is it?• Email: kaybarb@gmail.com | Twitter: [BarbaraRKay](https://twitter.com/BarbaraRKay)

Barbara Kay: Antifa needs to be called out for what it is — a movement of violent totalitarian thugs

Barbara Kay: When gender identity education and theory goes wrong

Barbara Kay: Why Quebec’s immigration and secularism bills get it right