

# Why Israel's War on Gaza Meets Definition of Genocide—Rebuttal to Washington Post Article



Gaza Genocide Protest in Kolkata 22.3.25

**This urgent and unflinching opinion piece titled *"The Crime of Our Time: Why Israel's War on Gaza Meets the Definition of Genocide"* has been written as a direct rebuttal to *The Washington Post's* June 4 edit page article, "Why it's wrong to call Israel's war in Gaza a genocide."—*Proletarian Era* editorial Board**

As the bombs fall and Gaza's civilizational core is razed to dust, legal evasions and rhetorical gymnastics fail to obscure the moral, political, and empirical reality. This is not a "war" — this is destruction with genocidal intent.

In the charred ruins of Gaza's hospitals and schoolyards, the word "genocide" does not appear as hyperbole. It arises from the ashes as a grim description of a reality too cruel for euphemisms. And yet, recent arguments — such as the *Washington Post's* "*Why it's wrong to call Israel's war in Gaza a genocide*" — attempt to smother that term beneath a mountain of legalistic hair-splitting, political misdirection, and cultural gaslighting.

But let us state the case clearly: if Gaza is not a genocide, then the word no longer has meaning. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the world's highest legal authority on such matters, ruled in January 2024 that South Africa's case against Israel under the Genocide Convention was "plausible." That ruling alone demands that every responsible commentator confront — not deflect — the accusation with intellectual seriousness and moral clarity. Instead, we are offered a defence that rests on three primary fallacies: that Hamas is solely to blame for Palestinian suffering, that Israeli intent is military not genocidal, and that genocide accusations are politically motivated or anti-Semitic. Let us dismantle these, one by one.

## " Hamas Defence " Is Morally Bankrupt

Apologists for Israel's actions routinely invoke 7 October 2023, when Hamas, they say, committed "brutal atrocities" against Israeli civilians, as the foundational justification for its subsequent onslaught on Gaza. Let us pose the question straight. Through decades, Zionist Israel with the backing of US imperialism has been oppressing Palestine people in various ways and pounding Palestine with all modern sophisticated weapons including chemical weapons. They are out to ethnically cleanse Palestinians and occupy the territory by sheer force. If they find "justification" of their brutal killing spree, do not the persecuted and lynched Palestinians have right to defence? So, if there is a retaliatory action, on what count that can be pretext of increasing military assault ten times on Palestinian land? How can inhuman act of mercilessly killing children, obliterating entire families, razing hospitals into rubble, stopping all food and medicines sent by other countries as aid and relief material, from reaching the hungry half-dead Palestinian people be called anything other than genocide?

As of May 2025, over 37,000 Palestinians—mostly women and children—are dead, according to reports by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and corroborated by independent assessments by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. When entire families are erased from civil registries, when no schools remain standing in northern Gaza, when food and water are systematically denied to a starving population—what term better captures this war crime than genocide?

## Genocide Is Not Merely a Body Count — It Is Intent

Genocide, as defined in Article II of the UN Genocide Convention (1948), is not simply the mass killing of civilians. It encompasses acts committed “*with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.*”

This includes killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about a group’s destruction.

What more direct evidence of intent is needed than Israel’s own ministers calling for the “erasure” of Gaza? Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich declared in November 2023 that “Gaza must be wiped out.” Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu publicly mused about using a nuclear bomb on Gaza. These statements are not fringe; they reflect the ideological consensus of a Zionist cabinet that has systematically blocked humanitarian aid, decimated civilian infrastructure, and targeted entire families with precision-guided bombs.

The Washington Post’s insistence on a narrow, clinical reading of “intent” ignores how structural genocide operates — not with a singular written order, but with the cumulative machinery of state violence and ideological dehumanization.

## Cultural and Civilizational Erasure Is Genocide, Too

The Washington Post disparages claims of “cultural genocide” as overreach. Yet the systematic targeting of Gaza’s universities, archives, religious institutions, and media outlets — all hallmarks of a people’s cultural identity — is central to the Genocide Convention’s spirit, even if not explicitly codified in its language. The destruction of Al-Azhar University, the flattening of Gaza’s oldest mosques, and the murder of hundreds of artists, journalists, and intellectuals are not incidental.

In the case of civil war in Bosnia, the International Criminal Tribunal ruled that destroying cultural sites and forcibly displacing people to permanently change the ethnic makeup of a region constituted genocide.

## Empirical Evidence Is Overwhelming — And Growing

While the Washington Post questions the reliability of Gaza’s casualty figures, their argument collapses under scrutiny. ‘The Lancet’ journal—widely respected and peer-reviewed— estimated that total deaths, including those unrecorded, may exceed 1,86,000. Even the US State Department, long allied with Israel, acknowledges the catastrophic humanitarian toll. Famine, dehydration, and untreated wounds are now killing more than bombs.

In forensic terms, this is the predictable and intended outcome of policies that deliberately restrict food, water, electricity, and medicine. As the UN’s Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese observed, Israel’s conduct constitutes a textbook case of genocidal practice: “a total siege, displacement of the population, attacks on shelters, and starvation as a weapon of war.”

This is not accidental harm. It is the deliberate *infliction of conditions of life calculated to destroy*.

## The Legal Process Is Underway — And It Matters

The Washington Post elevates the caution of former UN officials like Alice Wairimu Nderitu, who declined to use the term “genocide” in 2023. But legal language evolves — and courts, not journalists, adjudicate genocide. Since then, the International Court of Justice has heard substantial evidence indicating genocidal conduct.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for both Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, alongside Hamas leaders—a symmetrical application of justice that the Post conveniently downplays.

The reality is clear: Israel is on trial at The Hague for genocide. This is not “activism,” as the Post sneers — it is jurisprudence.

## Anti-Semitism Smear Is A Dangerous Diversion

Finally, the Post veers into perilous territory by equating criticism of Israel’s conduct with antisemitism. This is not only intellectually dishonest, but dangerously cynical. To conflate Zionist nationalism with Jewish identity is to weaponize Judaism as a shield for state violence. Many Jews — in Israel, the U.S., and globally — have spoken out against this war. Organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace, B’Tselem, and Breaking the Silence argue vociferously that genocide is being committed in their name, and they reject it.

Real antisemitism exists and must be fought — but not by burying Palestinian lives beneath its accusation. To suggest that calling out genocide is an act of hatred, rather than a cry for justice, is to insult both Holocaust memory and international law.

## The Moral Arc Must Still Bend

There will be no peace in Gaza until the truth is acknowledged — and the truth is harrowing. What began as a response to terror has become state-sanctioned extermination. What is unfolding is not simply a war, but the systematic dismantling of an entire people’s right to exist — physically, culturally, and politically. To those who still equivocate: history will not absolve silence. The charge of genocide is not just plausible; it is pressing. If we refuse to speak its name now, in Gaza’s darkest hour, then we surrender the term to history — and forsake the future of international justice.