

Curetted with sorrow
by Dr. Harold
Gunatillake OAM.

Comments from
readers are warmly
welcomed.



Does the Gaza Strip have a flag?

The image is purportedly the flag of the self-declared Islamic State of Palestine in the Gaza Strip. It is identical to the flag/logo of al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI)/Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, which has been adopted by the umbrella organisation, the Islamic State of Iraq, and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).



gettyimages
Credit: Ahmad Hasaballah

Palestinians understood from day one that this was about ethnic cleansing. Israelis were clear about their genocidal intent. Yet most of the political and media establishment kept their silence. What did you think it was about when Gaza was wiped off the map? - **Samah Sabawi**

<https://youtu.be/btDn5cl8t5E?si=hBWo4y>

The Tale of the People of Gaza

A Tale of Resilience and Endurance

On 7 October 2023, Palestinian
militants attacked Israel, killing



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Credit: WAHAJ BANI MOUFLEH

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1,143 people (mostly civilians) and beginning the Gaza war. Israel responded by bombing the Gaza Strip and launching an invasion that has killed more than 43,000 Gazans as of November 2024.

Introduction

The Gaza Strip, a narrow stretch of land along the Mediterranean Sea, has been home to a resilient population that has encountered numerous challenges throughout history. This narrative is one of perseverance, hope, and the indomitable spirit of the people of Gaza.

Historical Background

Gaza's history stretches back to ancient times, with evidence of habitation as early as the Bronze Age. Gaza has been a focal point for various civilisations, including the Egyptians, Philistines, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines. The Islamic Caliphates, Crusaders, Ottomans, and British Empires governed it.

In 1948, the establishment of the State of Israel and the ensuing Arab-Israeli War resulted in the displacement of many Palestinians, including those in Gaza. The region remained under Egyptian control until 1967 when Israel occupied Gaza following the Six-Day War. The Oslo Accords of the 1990s inspired hope for peace and the creation of the Palestinian Authority, but the situation stayed volatile.

Life Under Blockade Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has been under a blockade



imposed by Israel and Egypt following Hamas's takeover of the territory. This blockade has profoundly impacted the daily lives of Gaza's residents, restricting the movement of people and goods and leading to severe economic hardships.

Despite these challenges, the people of Gaza have demonstrated remarkable resilience. Many have turned to agriculture, fishing, and small businesses to support their families. Education is highly valued, and numerous universities and schools continue to operate, offering a beacon of hope for the younger generation.



Culture and Identity

The people of Gaza possess a rich cultural heritage that reflects their diverse history. Traditional music, dance, and art are integral to their identity. The dabke, a traditional Palestinian dance, is performed at weddings and celebrations, symbolising unity and joy.



Gaza's cuisine is also a testament to its cultural diversity. Dishes such as musakhan, maqluba, and various seafood delicacies showcase the region's flavours. The food is often prepared and enjoyed during large family gatherings, reinforcing the strong—sense of community.



Challenges and Hope

The ongoing conflict and blockade have created significant challenges for the people of Gaza. Access to clean water, electricity, and healthcare is limited, and many families live in poverty. The psychological impact of residing in a conflict zone cannot be understated, with many experiencing trauma and uncertainty about the future.

Nevertheless, the people of Gaza remain hopeful. Local and international organisations work tirelessly to provide humanitarian aid and support. Initiatives in education, healthcare, and mental health aim to enhance the quality of life for residents and offer a glimmer of hope.



The Role of Women

Women in Gaza play a crucial role in maintaining the social fabric of their communities. Despite cultural and societal challenges, numerous women have emerged as education, healthcare, and social services leaders. They stand at the forefront of efforts to support and stabilise their families and communities.



Youth and the Future

The youth of Gaza epitomise the future of the region. Despite their challenges, many young individuals are resolutely committed to pursuing their dreams and contributing to their community.



Educational institutions and youth organisations offer opportunities for personal and professional development, nurturing a sense of hope and determination.

Conclusion

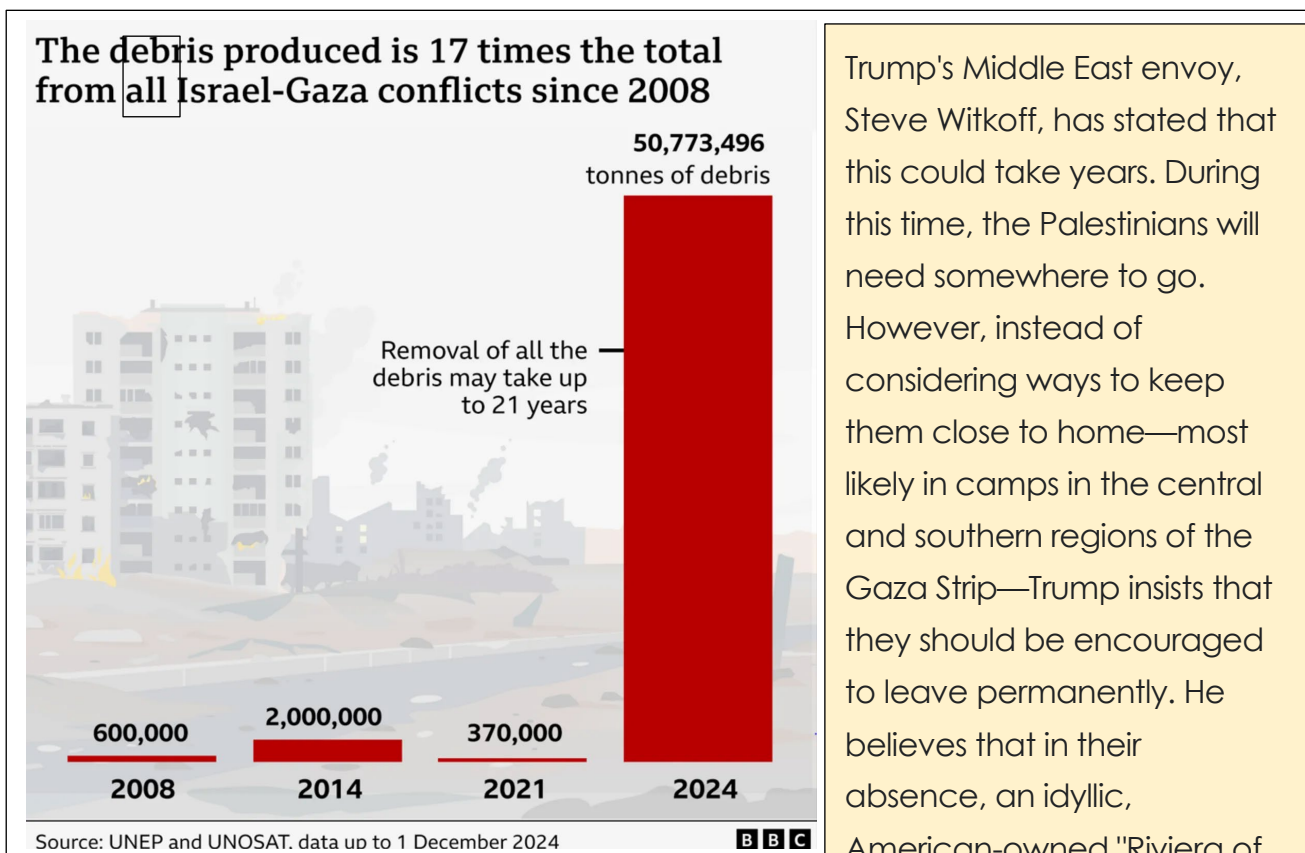
The tale of the people of Gaza is one of resilience, endurance, and hope. Despite facing immense challenges, they strive for a brighter future, holding on to their cultural heritage and a strong sense of community. Their unwavering spirit is a powerful reminder of the human capacity for perseverance and the enduring quest for peace and prosperity.

More than 700,000 Palestinians either fled or were forcibly removed from their homes by Israeli forces. All but a few were

never allowed to return, and Israel enacted laws that it still employs to confiscate their property.

Now, the concern is that it is happening once more. Many Palestinians already believed that Israel was using the war against Hamas to devastate Gaza and expel the population.

This forms part of their allegation that Israel is committing genocide – and now they may believe that Donald Trump is lending his support to Israel's plans.



Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, has stated that this could take years. During this time, the Palestinians will need somewhere to go. However, instead of considering ways to keep them close to home—most likely in camps in the central and southern regions of the Gaza Strip—Trump insists that they should be encouraged to leave permanently. He believes that in their absence, an idyllic, American-owned "Riviera of the Middle East" will emerge from the rubble, providing thousands of jobs, investment opportunities, and, ultimately, a place for "the world's people to live."

Rebuilding lives in Gaza | United Nations

<https://youtu.be/cequ0k6QUnw?si=f a1vl9DQP3BmcTIT>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/ oJYA1kJTys?si=A4EyqCFBm-toheyA>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/ UJWTFjLS 0?si=H b7l5xCSRw bR19L>