



المجد للشهداء والنصر للمقاومة والثقافة أعظم

glory to the martyrs, victory to the resistance, what is coming is greater

HALILINTAR

The Manifesto of Elias Rodriguez



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Halilintar is a word that means something like thunder or lightning. In the wake of an act people look for a text to fix its meaning, so here's an attempt. The atrocities committed by Israelis against Palestine defy description and defy quantification. Instead of reading descriptions mostly we watch them unfold on video, sometimes live. After a few months of rapidly mounting death tolls Israel had obliterated the capacity to even continue counting the dead, which has served its genocide well. At time of writing the Gaza health ministry records 53,000 killed by traumatic force, at least ten thousand lie under rubble, and who knows how many thousands more dead of preventable disease, hunger, with tens of thousands now at risk of imminent famine due to Israeli blockade, all enabled by Western and Arab government complicity. The Gaza information office includes the ten thousand under the rubble with the dead in their own count. In news reports there have been those "ten thousand" under the rubble for months now, despite the continual making of more rubble and repeated bombing of rubble again and again and the bombing of tents amid the rubble. Like the Yemen death toll which had been frozen at some few thousand for years under Saudi-UK-US bombardment before being belatedly revealed to stand at 500k dead, all of these figures are almost surely a criminal undercount. I have no trouble believing the estimates that put the toll at 100,000 or more. More have been murdered since March of this year than in "Protective Edge" and "Cast Lead" put together. What more at this point can one say about the proportion of mangled and burned and exploded human beings whom were children. We who let this happen will never deserve the Palestinians' forgiveness. They've let us know as much.

An armed action is not necessarily a military action. It usually is not. Usually it is theater and spectacle, a quality it shares with many unarmed actions. Nonviolent protest in the opening weeks of the genocide seemed to signal some sort of turning point. Never before had so many tens of thousands joined the Palestinians in the streets across the West. Never before had so many American politicians been forced to concede that, rhetorically at least, the Palestinians were human beings, too. But thus far the rhetoric has not amounted to much. The Israelis themselves boast about their own shock at the free hand the Americans have given them to exterminate the Palestinians. Public opinion has shifted against the genocidal apartheid state, and the American government has simply shrugged, they'll do without public opinion then, criminalize it where they can, suffocate it with bland reassurances that they're doing all they can to restrain Israel where it cannot criminalize protest outright. Aaron Bushnell and others sacrificed themselves in the hopes of stopping the massacre and the state works to make us feel their sacrifice was made in vain, that there is no hope in escalating for Gaza and no point in bringing the war home. We can't let them succeed. Their sacrifices were not made in vain.

The impunity that representatives of our government feel at abetting this slaughter should be revealed as an illusion, then. The impunity we see is the worst for those of us in immediate proximity to the genocidaires. A surgeon who treated victims of the Mayan genocide by the Guatemalan state recounts an instance in which he was operating on a patient who'd been critically injured during a massacre when, suddenly, armed gunmen entered the room and shot the patient to death on his operating table, laughing as they killed him. The physician said the worst part was seeing the killers, well known to him, openly swagger down local streets in the years after.

Elsewhere a man of conscience once attempted to throw Robert McNamara off a Martha's Vineyard-bound ferry into the sea, incensed at the same impunity and arrogance he saw in that butcher of Vietnam as he sat in the ferry's lounge laughing with friends. The man took issue with McNamara's "very posture, telling you, 'My history is fine, and I can be slumped over a bar like this with my good friend Ralph here and you'll have to lump it.'" The man did not succeed in heaving McNamara off a catwalk into the water, the former secretary of state managed to cling to the railing and clamber back to his feet, but the assailant explicated the value of the attempt by saying "Well, I got him outside, just the two of us, and suddenly his history wasn't so fine, was it?"

A word about the morality of armed demonstration. Those of us against the genocide take satisfaction in arguing that the perpetrators and abettors have forfeited their humanity. I sympathize with this viewpoint and understand its value in soothing the psyche which cannot bear to accept the atrocities it witnesses, even mediated through the screen. But inhumanity has long since shown itself to be shockingly common, mundane, prosaically human. A perpetrator may then be a loving parent, a filial child, a generous and charitable friend, an amiable stranger, capable of moral strength at times when it suits him and sometimes even when it does not, and yet be a monster all the same. Humanity doesn't exempt one from accountability. The action would have been morally justified taken 11 years ago during Protective Edge, around the time I personally became acutely aware of our brutal conduct in Palestine. But I think to most Americans such an action would have been illegible, would seem insane. I am glad that today at least there are many Americans for which the action will be highly legible and, in some funny way, the only sane thing to do.

I love you Mom, Dad, baby sis, the rest of my familia, including you, O*****

Free Palestine

– Elias Rodriguez