

# Israel is devastating its neighbours on seven fronts Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran

by Karin Leukefeld,\* Germany/Syria



Karin Leukefeld  
(Photo ma)

*(CH-S) Since his inauguration on 20 January 2025, US President Donald Trump's activities in European countries have been observed and commented on with hope, horror or confusion. The development of the Ukrainian drama is currently at the centre of attention: even more war, destruction and death or a ceasefire, talks and peace.*

*The devastating war waged by Israel against the Palestinians in various countries in the region – always with the support of the USA and Germany – must not be overlooked and/or forgotten.*

*Karin Leukefeld, a long-standing freelance journalist specialising in the Middle East, has once again written a report in which she describes current events in Palestine. "Swiss Standpoint" is pleased to be able to document these factual descriptions in three languages.*

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Friedrich Merz is expected to become the next German Chancellor. In an interview with public broadcasters ARD journalist Caren Miosga, the former business lawyer and member of the supervisory board of the German branch of the financial company BlackRock talked about his political plans. Among other things, Merz reiterated his intention to invite Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Germany despite the ar-

rest warrant issued by the *International Criminal Court* (ICC). On the evening of the election, Netanyahu had congratulated Merz and Merz had suggested a meeting after the formation of the government. "In the event that he plans a visit to Germany, I have promised him that we will find ways and means that he can visit Germany and also leave again *without being arrested in Germany*,"<sup>1</sup> said Merz.

According to the "Rome Statute", the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court against Netanyahu and his then defence minister, Yoav Gallant, must be respected by the signatory states – including Germany.

*As a reminder:*

According to the Palestinian health authority on 3 February 2025, 61,709 people in the Gaza Strip have been killed by the Israeli army since 7 October 2023. This figure includes people who are missing and presumably dead under the rubble. 17,492 of the dead are children. 111,588 people were injured.<sup>2</sup>

The medical journal *The Lancet* assumes that many will die from their injuries and the effects of the war. The actual death toll could therefore rise to 186,000 or more.<sup>3</sup>

In February 2025, a new Lancet report stated that the life expectancy of the population of the Gaza Strip had fallen by almost 50 per cent (!). The death toll could therefore be 40 per cent higher,<sup>4</sup> than previously thought.

The disregard for the victims of the Gaza war, for international law and for the International Criminal Court by the likely future Chancellor of Germany is remarkable. Inviting the Israeli Prime Minister to Germany in view of these facts would be illegal under international law.

Would Merz possibly like to turn to one of the numerous smuggling gangs that have been smuggling people out of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine by land and sea for many years, people who are fleeing from Israel's brutal, direct and indirect power-hungry expansionist war? The average price for the often perilous smuggling tour to Europe should not be a problem for Friedrich

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Sufyan Al-Majdalawi inspects the rubble of his home in Jabalia in northern Gaza. (Picture UN Photo)

Merz. He can easily afford the 10–15,000 US dollars.

Or does Merz want to ensure with the invitation that Germany continues to have access to Israeli weapons and drone technology and espionage software? The murderous technology called “Lavender”, an “artificial intelligence” that identifies thousands of targets and releases them for shooting within a very short time, was demonstrated by Israel in Gaza before the eyes of the world.

In the first few weeks of the most recent Gaza war (since 7 October 2023), 37,000 Palestinians were identified as targets by “Lavender” because they were said to have actually or apparently had contact with already identified alleged Hamas fighters. During the liberation of four Israeli prisoners (hostages) in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip in early June 2024, more than 200 people were killed and more than 400 people were injured with the help of “artificial intelligence”. Survivors spoke of “hell on earth”.<sup>5</sup>

Netanyahu explained that for the past year, Israel has been fighting a “war of rebirth”. The “murderous surprise attack by Hamas terrorists” was the “most terrible attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust”, according to Netanyahu. “Unlike in the Holocaust, we rose up and fought a bitter war”. Israel is being attacked on seven fronts and fighting on seven fronts, Netanyahu said. The “security reality in our region” will be changed “for the benefit of our children and for the benefit of our future,”<sup>6</sup> said Netanyahu.

At the beginning of February, the Israeli head of government travelled to the United States to

meet with the new US President *Donald Trump*. When he boarded the official government plane “Wing of Zion”, he told the press about his plan to create a “New Middle East”. “Our decisions in this war have already changed the face of the Middle East,” said Netanyahu. “Our decisions and the courage of our soldiers have changed the map.” *Close cooperation with US President Trump*<sup>7</sup> will help to “change the map even more”, and in Netanyahu’s view, “for the better”.

Netanyahu speaks of “our” region, of “our” children, of “our” future. “Changing the map”, “changing the security reality” means war for the peoples and states of the region.

The “violent reordering” of the region between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf has been planned for a long time, as former Swiss ambassador Kurt O. Wyss describes in his book *“The Violent American-Israeli ‘Reordering’ of the Middle East”*.<sup>8</sup> The war against Palestine has been going on *for more than 100 years*.<sup>9</sup> It began in the 19th century with the Zionist movement and its idea of establishing a “Jewish homeland” in Palestine. A state was to be established on the land of another people, also known as “settler colonialism”. Many states in Africa, Asia, North and South America have experienced what this means. The project first took shape with the British-French *Sykes-Picot Agreement* (1916) and the *Balfour Declaration* (1917).

Today, the State of Israel, founded in 1948, is waging a war on seven fronts: in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran. The territories of the peoples of the region are being devastated and occupied. Wheat fields are becoming battlefields, livelihoods are being

destroyed. Those who resist and defend their rights, their land, their homeland, are branded as “terrorists” and killed. People are being forced to submit, expelled or locked up in refugee camps.

### **The front in the Gaza Strip**

A ceasefire has been in place in the Gaza Strip since 19 January 2025. The first phase of a four-phase agreement between Israel and Hamas ended on 28 February. Both sides began negotiations on the second phase and sent delegations to Cairo. According to the previous agreement, in the second phase, further Israeli prisoners were to be released from the Gaza Strip and Israel was to withdraw its troops. More aid and, above all, provisional shelters for the people were to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. The third phase should be about the issue of reconstruction and political administration, with the fourth phase the Israeli army should have withdrawn completely.

#### *Retrospective:*

“Human Shield”: On 16 February 2025, the Israeli website (“The Hottest Place in Hell”) published a report by *Illy Pe’ery*, a freelance reporter. According to the report, Israeli soldiers “used” an 80-year-old resident of the Gaza Strip as a “human shield”. An officer from the *Nahal Brigade* tied a detonator cord around the old man’s neck, according to soldiers who were present. The old man was forced to walk in front of them through buildings to identify possible booby traps. After eight hours, they let him go and told him to get his wife and leave. The man left, got his wife and they fled. Both were shot by another Israeli army unit. The soldiers who had observed the event reported that it had taken place *in May 2024 in the Zeitoun neighbourhood of Gaza City*.<sup>10</sup>

“Rubble and dust”: During the first phase of the ceasefire, the people of Gaza were able to return to the north from where they had been displaced. The people were *left with nothing*,<sup>11</sup> the massive Israeli bombings over more than a year had left *nothing but “debris and dust”*.<sup>12</sup>

22 February 2025: In the morning, the *Qassam Brigades* handed over six Israeli prisoners to the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC) in a seventh agreed handover in Rafah and the Al Nuseirat refugee camp. Two of the prisoners had been held in Gaza for ten years, but Israel had shown no interest in negotiating for their release, despite pleas from their families. A sixth person, *Hisham al-Sayyid*, was handed over directly to

the ICRC. *Hisham al-Sayyid* is a Palestinian Bedouin who served in the Israeli army, according to Hamas. Out of respect for him and his family, there will be no public handover.

Three prisoners were kidnapped on 7 October 2023 at the music festival near the Gaza Strip border. All three were shown on a stage on 22 February 2025 and given release papers before being handed over to the ICRC. One of them, *Omer Shem Tov*, suddenly turned to the *Qassam* fighter standing next to him and kissed him on the forehead. He repeated the same gesture to another *Qassam* fighter. Both had possibly guarded the prisoners, and they seemed to know each other. *Tov*, who was obviously pleased about his release, waved to the crowd and gave the “thumbs up” sign.<sup>13</sup>

The scene is condemned in Western media, and the images are not shown on Israeli television, or only in excerpts. In Israel, it is said that the prisoners had been drugged with sedatives and did not know what they were doing.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is using the situation to stop the promised release of 602 Palestinian prisoners in return. He says that they will only exchange prisoners again when the public and “degrading display of Israeli hostages” is stopped. Hamas then suspends further negotiations until the prisoners are released as agreed.

26 February 2025: On the night to Wednesday (26 February 2025), Hamas hands over the mortal remains of four Israeli prisoners to the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC), without a public ceremony. After a forensic examination, Israel begins to release the Palestinian prisoners, as agreed.

27 February 2025: The first released prisoners reach the *Palace of Culture in Ramallah*<sup>14</sup> in the early hours of the morning, where they are greeted by a large crowd.

In the evening, according to the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, 642 Palestinian prisoners have finally been released from various prisons in Israel. 46 women and children and 456 Palestinian prisoners from the Gaza Strip who had been detained in Israel without charge have been released. 97 prisoners have been deported to Egypt, 37 have arrived in the West Bank and the remainder have been brought to occupied East Jerusalem.

Among those released is *Nael Saleh Barghouti* (66), the longest-imprisoned Palestinian political prisoner. He spent 45 years in various prisons<sup>15</sup>



of the occupying power and is now being expelled to Egypt.

As agreed, Hamas handed over 33 Israeli prisoners, eight of whom were dead. In return, Israel released 1,904 Palestinian prisoners. There are now only 59 Israeli prisoners left in Gaza, many of whom are no longer said to be alive. Exact details are not available, but agency reports say that of the 59 people, only 27 may still be alive. Despite the release of 1,904, there are still thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

27 February 2025: The Israeli army admits that it failed on 7 October 2023. An army investigation itself speaks of a “complete failure” to prevent the attack. The commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Lieutenant General *Herzi Halevi*, takes full responsibility. Halevi will *officially resign* on 5 March.<sup>16</sup>

27 February 2025: Under the slogan “Occupation, expulsion and settlement”, hundreds of settlers demonstrate in Jerusalem for the expulsion of Palestinians. Only “resettlement brings peace” can be read on banners, the Gaza Strip must be resettled. A spokesperson for the “Jewish Strength” party (Otzma Yehudit) demands: “The land of Israel is for the people of Israel. Gaza belongs to the Jews. Judea and Samaria (West Bank, kl) belong to the Jews. This country is the heritage of our fathers and our deeds,” said one speaker. Environment Minister *Idit Silman* (Likud Party) said that the only solution for Gaza is to “*empty Gaza of the people of Gaza*”.<sup>17</sup> Jenin and Nablus in the West Bank are also “the heritage” of Israel.

28 February 2025: In the ruins of the Gaza Strip, people are preparing for the month of Ramadan, which begins on 1 March. They cannot give their children any gifts. They have no house to decorate, no blankets to keep their freezing children warm. The mosques where they used to gather for prayer before breaking their fast (in the evening) have been destroyed. Relatives and friends with whom they used to spend the evenings during Ramadan have disappeared, are dead, injured or in prison. Nevertheless, they are still crafting things, painting, baking and singing, and *hoping for help and for reconstruction*.<sup>18</sup>

28 February 2025: While Muslims are preparing for Ramadan, word has it in Washington that a new arms delivery to Israel is on its way. The Pentagon and the State Department agree that this is an “emergency” and therefore does not require congressional approval. The delivery is

worth 3 billion US dollars and includes bombs, various weapons and demolition equipment. The delivery is to take place in three phases and will consist of 35,529 “general purpose bombs”, each weighing 1,000 kilograms, and 4,000 bunker-busting bombs, also weighing 1,000 kilograms each. According to the report, the manufacturer is the arms company *General Dynamics*. The Pentagon says that delivery is not scheduled until 2026, but it could be supplied earlier from US warehouses.

A delivery worth 675 million US dollars of 5,000 bombs, each weighing 500 kilograms, is planned for 2028. In addition, equipment will be provided to upgrade unguided bombs. In a further delivery, bulldozers are to be shipped to Israel, worth a total of 295 million US dollars. According to the US State Department, the Trump administration has approved a second “*emergency delivery of weapons and armaments to Israel*”<sup>19</sup> within a month. Since US President Biden took office, around USD 12 billion in arms deliveries to Israel have been approved. This would enable the country, “a close ally”, to “defend itself on various fronts against Iran’s proxies”.

1 March 2025: In Cairo, Israel declares that it does not want to negotiate a second phase of the ceasefire, but rather to extend the first phase. The US jumps in and proposes extending the first phase by six weeks until mid-April – after the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and the Jewish Passover. The Palestinian Hamas rejects the proposal. For Muslims, the month of Ramadan begins on this day.

2 March 2025: The Israeli Prime Minister orders the blockade of all aid to the Gaza Strip. Hamas speaks of blackmail.

### **The front line in the West Bank**

The West Bank has been the front line since 7 October 2023. From day one, the West Bank has been completely closed off internally, making it even more difficult for Palestinians to move around than it already was. As a result, 150,000 people have lost their jobs and their income. The number of dead in the West Bank is around 680 (Al Jazeera, Palestinian health authority) and is rising daily. Since the beginning of 2025, *70 people have been killed* by Israeli police and military forces, including <sup>20</sup> children.

Since the beginning of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military has increased its attacks in the West Bank. Roads and houses are

being destroyed by bulldozers. For the first time in more than 20 years, the Israeli army is re-deploying tanks in the West Bank. The refugee camps of Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams in the north of the West Bank are the focus of the military attacks. In Jenin alone, at least 120 apartments have been completely destroyed. Dozens of people are arrested and more than 40,000 people are displaced. The *UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees* (UNRWA) is banned by Israel from helping people there or in East Jerusalem. The Israeli army is supported by aggressive settlers who attack Palestinian villages and their inhabitants.

17 February 2025: The Israeli organisation “Peace Now” announces that Israel plans to build 1170 apartments for settlers in the occupied West Bank. The housing units are to be approved in four illegal settlements – Gvaot, Itamar, Shaarei Tikva and Givat Zeev. According to a statement by “Peace Now”, the plan is ready and is awaiting approval from the *High Planning Council* (HPC). The Gvaot settlement alone, which is located directly next to the Palestinian village of Nahalin, is to receive 756 new housing units. In addition, 250 residential units have already been approved for construction. This means that the illegal settlement on Palestinian land will expand twentyfold. Fifty Palestinian families currently live in Nahalin.

According to international law, occupying states are not allowed to build in occupied territory. Israel refers to its own laws. In July 2024, the International Court of Justice declared the *Israeli occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and East Jerusalem illegal*<sup>21</sup> and called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and the Gaza Strip “as soon as possible”.

27 February 2025: *Gideon Levy*, the long-standing *Haaretz* correspondent in the occupied Palestinian territories, publishes an opinion article on the situation in the West Bank. If a “third intifada breaks out there, don’t forget that Israel ignited it on purpose,” Levy writes. “One war has not yet ended completely, and Israel is already starting to stir up the next one.” There is no respite, not a shred of hope. Israel’s “diplomatic horizon” extends only from one war to the next. No fewer than three alternatives are on the agenda, writes Levy: “resume the war in Gaza, bomb Iran and start a war in the West Bank.”

The people in the West Bank would – like their fellow citizens in the Gaza Strip – be demonised



The producers of ‘No Other Land’, from left to right: Hamdan Ballal Al-Huraini, Yuval Abraham, Basel Adra and Rachel Szor. (Picture Oren Ziv)

as “human animals”. Israel claims to have “evacuated” 40,000 Palestinians from camps in the West Bank and to want to stay there for a year. The order is “fire at will”. The number of Palestinians killed is increasing. Israel bears sole responsibility for the next war in the West Bank: “Don’t say it took us by surprise. Don’t dare say we didn’t know.” What is happening in the West Bank is not a “war on terror”. You don’t fight terror by destroying the water infrastructure, by destroying power lines, roads and sewers. What Israel is doing in the West Bank is “*systematically destroying refugee camps*”.<sup>22</sup> And to make one thing clear, Levy continues in his inflammatory speech: “What Israel is doing today is clear. A Nakba.”

### “No other Land”

2 March 2025: The film “No other Land” which has already won an award at the Berlin Film Festival (2024), receives an Oscar for best documentary. The two directors, *Yuval Abraham* (Israel) and *Basel Adra* (Palestine), are also journalists and spent five years working on the documentary. It shows how Israeli soldiers destroy houses in the West Bank village of Masafer Yatta and forcibly expel the residents to build a military training ground on their land and expand a Jewish settlement into Palestinian territory. It also shows the different realities in which they live: Abraham has a yellow Israeli licence plate that allows him to drive freely, while Adra is trapped in the shrinking area of his village, where life is increasingly restricted.

He has just become a father and hopes that his daughter will not have to face the same life that he currently must live, says Basel Adra. “Always being afraid of surveillance, the destruction of houses and forced eviction.”

See also article from 4 March 2025 in "Tacheles",<sup>25</sup> the Jewish weekly magazine in Switzerland:

## **"Rubio sends four billion dollars' worth of weapons to Israel"**

**The Secretary of State bypasses the US Congress – just like his predecessor Blinken**

by Andreas Mink

According to the "New York Times", US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has used "emergency powers" to bypass Congress and send four billion dollars' worth of weapons to Israel. This is the second time in five weeks that the Trump administration has delivered war material to the IDF in this extraordinary way. Rubio did not provide any further justification for the action.

The package includes bombs of the heaviest calibre, including more than 35,000 weighing almost a ton. Israel has used these bombs frequently against Gaza. The Times quotes American officers as saying that the bombs are not suitable for urban warfare. The weapons had become one of the few outstanding controversies between the Biden administration and Israel in connection with short-term "red lines" during the bombing of Rafah, on the

Gaza-Egypt border. The IDF largely destroyed the place and Trump released blocked deliveries shortly after taking office in January.

In addition, Rubio is releasing the sending of bulldozers, more bombs and GPS guidance systems to be attached to unguided or "dumb" bombs. The package is the second part of deliveries that Rubio's predecessor Blinken had announced to Congress in the last days of the Biden era. Meanwhile, Rubio has said the Trump administration approved the arms shipments for Israel. The secretary of state also falsely claimed that by bypassing Congress, he was "overriding a partial arms embargo on Israel imposed by the Biden administration," according to The Times. In fact, Biden and Blinken had approved almost all of Israel's arms orders. (Source: *The New York Times*)<sup>26</sup>

The film shows *what Palestinians have had to endure for decades*,<sup>23</sup> Adra continues: "We call on the world to seriously stop this injustice and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people."

Yuval Abraham adds that they made the film together because "together, our voices are louder". His colleague Basel is his "brother", but they are not the same. "We live under a regime where I am free and have civil rights, and Basel lives under a military law that destroys his life and that he cannot control."

Israel's culture minister, *Miki Zohar*, condemned the award. He said the directors had followed a narrative "that distorts Israel's image in the world". He said that while freedom of expression was important, using it to defame Israel internationally was "not creativity, but sabotage of the State of Israel".<sup>24</sup>

Source: <https://globalbridge.ch/israel-verwuestet-seine-nachbarn-an-sieben-fronten-gaza-westjordanland-libanon-syrien-irak-jemen-iran/>, 4 March 2025

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/merz-taurus-miosga-100.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02810-1/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02810-1/abstract)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.jns.org/israel-fighting-existential-war-on->

[seven-fronts-netanyahu-says/](https://www.972mag.com/gaza-human-shield-mosquito/)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-heads-to-washington-to-meet-trump-hoping-to-redraw-middle-east/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://leryverlag.wixsite.com/website>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.unionsverlag.com/info/title.asp?title\\_id=8545](https://www.unionsverlag.com/info/title.asp?title_id=8545)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.972mag.com/gaza-human-shield-mosquito/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1160661>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.news.com.au/world/palestinian-journalist-bisan-owda-returns-home-to-northern-gaza-after-15-months-of-war/video/9fbee8ff042af500e380600312bb70c5>

<sup>13</sup> <https://x.com/tamerqdh/status/1893250208240123920>

<sup>14</sup> <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/palestinians-gather-in-ramallah-awaiting-prisoners-release>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/a-lifetime-of-resistance-who-is-palestinian-prisoner-nael-barghouti-profile/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-oct-7-probes-show-it-misread-hamas-for-years-left-southern-israel-utterly-vulnerable/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/occupy-expel-settle-minister-mks-at-far-right-rally-call-to-empty-gaza-of-gazans>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2025/2/27/video-ramadan-in-gaza-after-more-than-a-year-of-war#flips-6369389407112:0>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.state.gov/military-assistance-to-israel>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/3/israel-kills-70-in-west-bank-this-year-pa-condemns-ethnic-cleansing>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/17/israel-plans-1000-unit-expansion-for-occupied-west-bank-settlement-ngo>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2025-02-27/ty-article-opinion/.premium/when-the-third-intifada-breaks-out-dont-forget-that-israel-instigated-it-deliberately/00000195-4324-de32-ad9d-73b71f450000>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nme.com/news/film/best-documentary-oscar-winner-no-other-land-praised-for-moving-speech-on-palestine-3842824>

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/culture-minister-decries-oscar-win-for-palestinian-israeli-documentary-on-israeli-demolitions-in-palestinian-village/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/culture-minister-decries-oscar-win-for-palestinian-israeli-documentary-on-israeli-demolitions-in-palestinian-village/)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.tachles.ch/artikel/news/rubio-schickt-waffen-im-wert-von-vier-milliarden-dollar-israel>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/02/us/politics/rubio-arms-israel.html>