

Why is the West ignoring the facts?

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Visitors, visitors, Gaza does get visitors, from officials to actors. They are escorted about the worst areas. Let's see, that would be like only being shown the worst parts of Detroit, NY, Boston and Los Angeles. There are even parts of San Francisco that I would not dare walk in but it remains one of my favorite cities.

Rep. Keith Ellison traveled to the Gaza Strip last year: "Ellison said that he found the conditions in Gaza "shocking."¹ No elaboration but a wonderful USA sound bite-he totally ignored the "rest of the story."

If your money stream is dependent upon individuals and governments believing how horrible things are would you have them tour your fine restaurants, swimming pools, clubs or homes?² A human can only formulate points of view based upon information provided and if you only get a slanted portion of data and are not privy to all the information, it is no wonder the West holds its current views. The prevailing belief is that due to Israel's blockade people in Gaza are suffering a horrific existence. I have introduced you to another side of Gaza in the afore-identified story and now let us examine some other numbers that you may find surprising.

What would you say, based upon what you have heard from the likes of MSM, is the nutrition, health care and/or hygiene status in Gaza? Probably it is "horrifically" poor-yes? Try these numbers:

24.84/1000

78.1/1000

17.71/1000

4.17/1000

These represent the number of infant deaths in the following respective areas: Turkey, Sudan, Gaza, and Israel. Yes, at a rate of 4.5 times greater

are the infant death in Sudan-where is the daily outrage in the West? The infant death rate is even 30% greater in Turkey than Gaza. How come there are no flotillas heading to Turkey?

Here are some more numbers: 73.68, 72.23 80.7, 72.4, 72.0, 58.6

These are the average life expectancy rates in the following respective countries: Gaza, Turkey, USA, Brazil, Lebanon, and Sudan. Yes, Gazans live longer than do their new friends and protectors the Turks. The Gazans out live their South American friends in Brazil and their “brothers and sisters” in Lebanon. Once again real tragedy exists in Africa, especially in Sudan.³

A society’s condition is often considered through the lens of its health system, especially its prevention program. An interesting report direct from the Red Crescent Society described said conditions in Gaza. The following are from pages 20 and 21 in the document:

“Immunization programmes are in line with WHO recommendations for protection against Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles and Tuberculosis. **Coverage of the population is about 90%**¹. In addition, immunization is provided for German Measles, hepatitis and mumps. Comprehensive services are operated through the PRCS community health programmes.

School Health is taken seriously with efforts by the MOH, PRCS and UNRWA. Health education, medical and dental examination and registration are provided and there is a link-up with immunization programmes. Psychological services are also provided. PRCS primary care nurses have programme inputs into local schools, which include health education.”

So, they indicate that they are not lacking in health education or prevention programs-hmm, this translates into a humanitarian crisis? The next statement, from the same document, examines illness and death due to diseases seen internationally. Note the following descriptions:

“Morbidity in the West Bank and Gaza

Diphtheria, pertusis, tetanus, polio, pulmonary TB, measles, (increasing control and elimination); gastro-enteritis, parasitic disease, (prevalent in refugee areas)p.20 and 21”

This is the research study: Viability and capability Assessment-Palestine Red Crescent Society-a research study,2001”⁴

How much has changed in Gaza since the 2001 report? UNICEF produced recently a document covering the national immunization coverage 1980-2008. Again the following is not my research or data but it is that of the very organization designed to manage social and health events inside Gaza. Their studies demonstrate that the immunization coverage (nearly 100% of population) had remained constant from mid 2003 until late 2008.⁵

Does this really indicate that a humanitarian crisis is in play? Compare this with the lack of said programs in the Sudan and other African countries. Other than within certain academic circles how often is the following information shared with the public:

“The disease burden on the region's people is onerous, making economic and political progress difficult. "AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria are the three diseases responsible for most of the morbidity and mortality in the region," said Sambo. According to Jack Chow, WHO's special envoy of the director-general, who introduced Sambo's talk, these three diseases are responsible for 6 million deaths per year in Africa.”⁶

Certainly the health systems and health conditions in any one area do not make the case for humanitarian concerns. Multiple other factors contribute to identifying an area in crisis. However, it has been said, “judge a group by how it attends to its peoples’ needs” and with regards to consideration and implementation health is important for the people of Gaza. Perspective is called for and incitement has replaced this across the media and across Western governments.

I find this appalling and galling. Purely for political gain and I also know cases for personal gain the so-called “humanitarian crisis” has been manufactured by Israel’s enemies, e.g., Hamas, Fatah, Hizbollah, Syria, Iran and even the EU and the USA and it is a cruel and inhumane response to the situation north of Egypt. The West has abandoned its

core values and entered a period of untold appeasement. This is perceived as weak and the beginning of the end of the West. Israel's enemies are also the West's enemies and yet distancing one self from us does not change this equation. The war of conflicting ideologies is in play and there is no easy or quick solution. However, our enemy believes we do not have the willingness or ability to persevere and our current behavior confirms this for them. No longer are they shooting across our bow, they are firing directly at our hulls. How long can we sustain such direct hits and remain afloat?

Notes:

1. http://www.minnpost.com/stories/2009/02/19/6835/ellison_to_uring_gaza_conditions_are_shocking
2. <http://www.mererhetic.com/2010/05/26/israel-publishes-gaza-travel-guidebook-for-pro-hamas-freedom-flotilla/>
3. [United Nations World Population Prospects: 2006 revision](#)
4. http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/OCT_00-801.pdf
5. WHO/UNICEF Review of National Immunization Coverage - July, 2009,
<http://www.childinfo.org/search.php?q=gaza&Go.x=0&Go.y=0>
6. African health status explored,
<http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2005/11.17/09-africa.html>