From Sabra and Shatila to Gaza: Massacres as an Established Feature of the Zionist Project



Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds; and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Mohamed (PBUH), and upon his kinship, and all his companions and followers till the Day of Judgment.

Reflecting on history, its defining days and events, and drawing lessons from them is a Quranic directive inseparable from the mission of the prophets. Allah Amighty says in Surat Ibrahim: ﴿"... and remind them of the days of Allah." Indeed, in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.﴾ (Ibrahim: 5). Its purpose is to help us understand the reality in which we live and enable us to anticipate future developments in light of past experience. Recalling painful events in history is not an invitation to pessimism; rather, it calls on us to discern their lessons and heed their warnings. Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Imran: ﴿Similar situations [as yours] have passed on before you, so proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied.﴾ (Al¯Imran: 137). He also says in Surat Yusuf: ﴿There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur'an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.﴾ (Yusuf: 111).

In Arab and Muslim consciousness, the month of September has become associated with events that must be remembered and reflected upon. Foremost among them is the Sabra and Shatila massacre of 16–18 September 1982, perpetrated against innocent Palestinians by the Lebanese Kataeb (Battalions) Party militia (historically known as the Phalange Party) and allied forces. The killers entered the two refugee camps under the supervision of Israeli forces, commanded by Ariel Sharon, which were occupying West Beirut and exercising military control over the camps' surroundings. Over three days, thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, including women, children, and elderly people, were killed. The perpetrators departed, leaving behind a horrific scene that caused doctors and journalists to break down; some reportedly lost their sanity in the face of the atrocities they had witnessed. In 1983,

Israel's official Kahan Commission found that then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon Ariel Sharon bore personal responsibility for the massacre (...for ignoring the danger of revenge and failing to take adequate preventive measures, leading the commission to recommend his removal).

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council (Resolution 521) described what had occurred (in Beirut on September 19, 1982) as a "criminal massacre" (The Security Council...condemns the criminal massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut...)

That massacre was one episode in a series of Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people. The series began with the arrival of Zionist gangs in Palestine following the infamous Balfour Declaration, by which one who did not possess the land gave it to those who had no right to it. Among the most notorious were the massacres of Deir Yassin, Kafr Qasim, and Tel al-Zaatar, culminating in the genocide in Gaza, where the bloodshed continues. Taken together, these massacres confirm an enduring pattern in the nature of the Zionist project – past, present, and future. This is the central lesson: massacres are a fundamental pillar and a consistent practice of this settler-colonial occupation project.

Confronting this occupation and these massacres by every possible means is an inherent right of the Palestinian people, supported by their brothers and sisters among Arab and Muslim peoples and by all free people around the world. Islam affirms this right, as Allah Almighty says in Surat Al-Hajj: ﴿ Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory. [They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right - only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah." And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.. ﴾ (Al-Hajj: 39-40)

This right is also recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter as the inherent right of self-defense. (Article 51: Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.)

Article 1 of the 1977 Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions (Protocol I) likewise affirms the right of peoples to self-determination in struggles against colonial domination, alien occupation, and racist regimes. (Article 1(4) provides that armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination, alien occupation or racist regimes are to be considered international conflicts.)

The Palestinian cause has always been, and will remain, the central cause of Muslims. Our peoples will find no peace until Palestine is liberated and the Palestinian people enjoy a free and independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. Attaining this right requires preparedness. Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Anfal: ﴿ And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may intimidate the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged. ﴾ (Al-Anfal: 60).

In fact, the Palestinian resistance has striven to build its capabilities, succeeded in acquiring some measure of

strength, and resisted with all the means at its disposal. Yet the failure of fellow Arab and Muslim states to support it left the resistance and the people of Gaza to face the massacres alone. It now leaves the resistance confronting, on its own, an international Zionist scheme aimed at disarming it.

However, we are confident that this legitimate resistance will not surrender to that scheme and will remain steadfast at the negotiating table just as it has remained steadfast in the field. It understands that the enemy seeks not only to eliminate the resistance, but to eliminate the Palestinian cause itself. That will never be.

The Sabra and Shatila massacre sought to drive the Palestinian resistance out of Lebanon and occurred in the context of Israel's occupation of Beirut. The usurping occupier imagined that it could choose for itself whatever it desired and impose upon the Palestinians whatever it wished, deluded by its power and dominance. Yet this did not bring it security, nor did it break the Palestinian people's will to resist. Only a few years later, that resistance erupted in the heart of occupied Palestine and was embraced by peoples across the Muslim world. This is the will of Allah, which aggressors always overlook: Allah wills to bestow His favor upon those who have been oppressed, make them leaders and guides, and grant them inheritance of the blessed land. It is a promise that will not fail, however long the passage of time. Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Qasas: ﴿ And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors. ﴾ (A¯Qasas: 5).

May Allah Almighty have mercy on the martyrs, make mujahideen's foothold firm, and grant victory to the oppressed in Palestine.

Allah is the Greatest, and praise be to Allah,

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