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# TOC Review

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## **How Israeli Society has Accepted the Crime of Genocide**

By:

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### **Israeli Aggression in Gaza: One Year On**

The ongoing genocide of Gaza's Palestinian population by Israel in response to October 7th has exposed the world to untold levels of brutality. Through bombings, shootings, deprivation of medical goods and starvation, Israel has systematically killed large swathes of the population of Gaza. According to a study published in the Lancet medical journal in July 2024, the estimated number of people killed in Gaza could reach upwards of 186,000 people, with the death toll expected to rise in the months since.

These numbers are backed up by a continuous stream of distressful images and videos uploaded online that serve as testimony to the violence subjected to the Gazan population by the Israeli army. This includes not only the testimony of Gazan civilians, but also that of Israeli soldiers who post their actions online. Many of these videos from Israeli soldiers have since been investigated by Al-Jazeera, in which many of them are categorized as violations of international humanitarian law under the Rome Statute.

### **What does the Israeli Public Think?**

As the Israeli military engages in the decimation of Gaza's population, it may seem expected that there would be more outrage coming from Israeli civil society concerned with the humanitarian situation of innocent civilians. However, unlike previous wars, there seems to be no sympathy left in Israel. As footage of the atrocities in Gaza circulated online, a social media trend took off in Israel in which people would mock the suffering of Palestinians to the tune of catchy pop songs. On the ground, Israeli civilians would regularly attempt to block aid trucks from heading to Gaza to bring vital humanitarian aid. Combined with the government's actions, the dehumanization of Palestinians has become national policy and public opinion.

### **How did this Happen?**

One may wonder as to how a population has been able to so thoroughly dehumanize their neighbors and accept their complete annihilation. There are some explanations as to how this process of dehumanization occurred. According to Charles Greenbaum and Yoel Elizur of



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the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the occupation of Palestine has brought with it some psychological and moral consequences for Israeli society. They explain how the cycle of occupation and the subsequent violent resistance results in stress which establishes new norms of behavior. These new norms will then allow higher levels of aggression to be taken on the population of the occupied peoples, while civil society uses psychological defence mechanisms such as justification, rationalization and dissonance reduction to justify the increased aggression. Meanwhile, individuals who disapprove of the increase in aggression are unable to express themselves publicly, as it may result in social isolation. As a result, the increased aggression is left unopposed.

Contextualizing this cycle to the current situation, the societal trauma in Israel as a result of Palestinian resistance actions on October 7th has resulted in the establishment of norms within Israeli society that allow them to go far beyond previously established moral red lines, which goes so far to accept the complete depopulation of Gaza of its Palestinian inhabitants. To cope with the complete erasure of moral red lines, Israeli society can only rely on the dehumanization of Palestinians to justify their actions. Palestinians are no longer people, but “human animals who need to be eradicated,” to quote the former Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. In this context of an Israeli society that dehumanizes Palestinians, only people who are willing to face the social and economic consequences can publicly speak up against injustice.