

# Israel's Medical Assistance to the Palestinians Appears to Be Working

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The blogger Elder of Zion [notes](#) that while Palestinians continue to denounce Israel for not doing enough to help Palestinians weather the coronavirus outbreak, the facts say otherwise.

Here's his take:

*A webinar on Thursday is as predictable as it is false. From [The Arab Center Washington DC](#):*

*COVID-19 under Apartheid*

*Speakers*

*Diana Buttu*

*Yara Hawari*

*Yousef Munayyer – Moderator*

*Additional speakers to be announced*

*About the Event*

*Arab Center Washington DC's upcoming webinar focuses on the threat of the coronavirus pandemic in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip as well as for the Palestinian citizens of Israel. As Israel's policies of occupation and settler colonialism continue in the midst of this global health crisis, what additional challenges are Palestinians facing under military occupation, apartheid, siege, and discriminatory policies?*

That was certainly a malevolent mouthful. Every conceivable charge against Israel is made: there are Israel's "policies of occupation" and its "settler colonialism" and its "military occupation." Israeli Jews are not "occupiers" anywhere in the Land of Israel, as was made clear by the provisions of the Mandate for Palestine, especially in its Preamble and Articles 4 and 6, but don't try explaining that to anyone at the Arab Center of Washington.

Nor is there any "apartheid" in Israel, as there is in so many Muslim countries that treat non-Muslims as inferior citizens. Israeli Arabs and Jews study and work together, use the same hospitals, have exactly the same civil rights. Israeli Arabs sit in the Knesset, where the Arab Joint List is the third largest party in that body. They sit on the Supreme Court. They serve as ambassadors. They can even serve in the IDF, though they are not required to.

Elder of Ziyon again:

*Well, let's see.*

*The West Bank has less than 300 COVID-19 cases, two deaths.*

*Gaza has 17 COVID-19 cases, zero deaths.*

*Palestinians in Israeli prisons have zero cases, zero deaths.*

*Israel has over 15,000 cases and 204 deaths with 93 people on ventilators.*

*Where should the bulk of ventilators, PPEs and effort go? What evidence is there that Israel is not doing everything it can to keep the virus from spreading in the territories and prisons?*

Israel was the first country to deliver PPE to the Palestinians. Since March it has donated out of its own stores to Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank more than one thousand test kits, each one capable of being used to test 700-800 people. It has also donated thousands of its own PPE, as well as deliver 50,000 masks donated by others. It has helped to train Palestinian medical personnel, both doctors and nurses, at the Erez Crossing with Gaza, on the Israeli side, and in Ashkelon, too, at the Bezalel Medical Center. How much of this do you learn from the major media?

Now, by late April, the Palestinians in Gaza have begun to produce their own PPE at a terrific rate. Just one factory alone has been turning out 150,000 masks a week. So great is the rate of production that the Gazans have been selling masks, hospital gowns, and gloves to the Israelis. There is no longer a shortage of PPE in either Gaza or the West Bank, though one would hardly know that from the reports in the Western media. The claim by the Palestinian propagandists that Israel is with its blockade “denying” Gaza much-needed medical supplies, is without foundation. Israel has never blocked any medicines or medical equipment from reaching Gaza. The PA has occasionally done so, to score points against its hated rival, Hamas, but that’s got nothing to do with Israel.

The poor shape of Gaza's health facilities reflects two things. The first is the colossal corruption of Hamas leaders, who have helped themselves to much of the aid money that might have gone to improve the health facilities in the Strip. Just two former Hamas leaders, Khaled Meshaal and Mousa Abu Marzouk, have each amassed private fortunes together amounting to between \$5 and \$7.5 billion dollars. And many other Hamas leaders have also helped themselves to tens of millions of dollars, including the current leader of the terror group, Ismail Haniyeh. In Gaza, 600 Hamas millionaires live in villas, oblivious to the poverty around them. The Western media has never reported on this spectacular Grand Theft, which cannot be blamed on Israel.

The second reason for the poor state of health care in Gaza is that Hamas chooses to spend what money remains, after the leaders have helped themselves, on weaponry and terror tunnels. More than half the Hamas-run government's budget for Gaza is spent on war-making. The dozens of terror tunnels running from Gaza into Israel have cost Hamas roughly \$100 million dollars to build; the rockets that Hamas has shot by the hundreds into southern Israel have cost another few hundred million dollars. Like the aid money stolen by Hamas leaders, the money Hamas spends on these weapons and tunnels takes away from what could have been spent on the health care system in Gaza. It was a deliberate choice Hamas made; Israel, again, had nothing to do with it.

*For two months now, Israel haters have been warning about an impending epidemic of the virus in the territories.*

And despite all these hysterical warnings, the level of infection and deaths from coronavirus, in both Gaza and the West Bank, are the lowest in the entire Middle East, and far lower than what the Israelis are enduring.

Yet much of the world insists on berating Israel for "not

doing enough” – though Israel has given more medical and humanitarian aid to Gaza than has any Arab state.

*As is the case with wars, they [ Hamas leaders ] want to see Palestinians die so they can have ammunition to attack Israel.*

Hamas is always eager to put Israel in a bad light; that’s why, during the Great March of Return riots, Hamas has taken care to put children at the head of the group of marchers, hoping the Israelis will wound or kill some of them and Hamas then be able to reap the propaganda benefits. What other group, anywhere in the world, deliberately puts its children in harm’s way?

*As is the case with wars, Israel cares more about the lives of Palestinians than the entire “pro-Palestinian” community in the US and Europe together.*

Let’s just summarize the facts:

The poor state of the health care system in Gaza is the result of two things. First, there has been massive corruption by Hamas leaders, who have stolen collectively a total of about \$8 billion for themselves. Second, Hamas has chosen to spend more than half of its budget on military equipment and on terror tunnels. Israel had nothing to with that choice of priorities, just as it had nothing to do with the theft of \$8 billion in aid by Hamas leaders.

Israel was the first state to offer PPE and other aid to the Palestinians. Israel has since donated more aid to Gaza and the West Bank than any Arab state. This aid includes more than 1,000 testing kits (each capable of testing 700-800 people), and thousands of PPE. Israel has been sending more than 80 tons of medical supplies each week to Gaza. Israel has also delivered PPE components from other donors to Gaza, including

50,000 masks. Now the Gazans are producing huge numbers of masks, gowns, and gloves, so many that they are selling them to Israel. So it hardly makes sense to denounce Israel for not sending enough of these supplies to Gaza.

Finally, and most tellingly of all, let's look again at those figures on infection-and-death from coronavirus, in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel itself:

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Surely Israel, the perennial defendant in the kangaroo court of the world's media, deserves to be set free without further delay.

Case closed.

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