

# A Dictionary of Unnameable Violences – From “Aerocide” to “Zygoticide” in Palestine

BY AZEEZAH KANJI



# Preface

**There are no legal terms or language for many of the forms of violence inflicted by Israel on Palestine.**

There is no specific word for the mass killing of children, for the mass obliteration of an entire society, for the mass toxification of air or of water, for the mass annihilation of trees.

“Genocide,” as legally defined by colonial powers, is confined to a restrictive list of atrocities against humans. Acts of destruction against non-humans, excluded from personhood, are all collapsed together as “ecocide” – not an independent concept or crime under international law. How telling, that terms like “arboricide” and “herbicide” refer not to the killing of trees and other plants, but to the commercially marketed chemicals sold to eradicate them: not a crime, but a profitable product.

The elimination of words is often described as “Orwellian”; but how much more Orwellian to have never had the words at all?

**Here, then, is a compilation of some of these unnameable violences.**

Some, as noted, are concepts developed by Palestinian and other scholars working in settler-colonial contexts, to fill pervasive lexical voids; others are resignifications of existing common terms, beyond the constrictions of their dominant usage (ex. **Gendered Violence** to also center state torture and aggression against Indigenous men and boys); yet others are neologisms coined for this list. Some are easily recognizable as violence; while others are obscured behind walls of secrecy, legality, and banality (ex. **Bureaucratic Ethnic Cleansing, Invisible Violence, Time Theft, X-Ray State**).

## Together, they reflect the capaciousness and multifariousness of colonial practices of domination.

They target the total web of relations upholding Indigenous life (ex. **Environmental Nakba**), from before birth (ex. **Zygoticide**) to after death (ex. **Necropenology**); erasing the colonized's history (ex. **Memoricide**), their present (ex. **Journacide**), their future (ex. **Collective Maiming, Pedocide, Scholasticide**); some operating in defiance of the law (ex. **Medicide**), some through the law (ex. **Humanitarian Camouflage, International Legal Subalternity, Organized Irresponsibility, Reverse Reparations**), some to rewrite the law (ex. **Legal Demoviction**). Many also pertain to settler projects beyond Palestine, from Canada to Kashmir: a reminder that Palestine is not an exception, but an intensive exemplification of the global colonial present and the brutality through which it is sustained.

## Aerocide

### the destruction of air/atmosphere

ex. “The environmental impacts of the war in Gaza are unprecedented [...] exposing the community to rapidly growing soil, water and air pollution and risks of irreversible damage,” ([UN Environment Program](#), 2024); “The planet-warming emissions generated during the first two months of the war in Gaza were greater than the annual carbon footprint of more than 20 of the world’s most climate-vulnerable nations [...] The vast majority (over 99%) [...] can be attributed to Israel’s aerial bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza, according to a first-of-its-kind analysis by researchers in the UK and US,” ([The Guardian](#), 2024).

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## Aquacide

### the destruction of water

ex. “Israeli military attacks have damaged or destroyed five water and sanitation infrastructure sites [in Gaza] every three days since the start of the war [...] reduc[ing] the amount of water available in Gaza by 94%,” ([Oxfam](#), 2024).

# Arboricide

## the destruction of trees

ex. “Satellite analysis [of Gaza] revealed to the Guardian shows farms devastated and nearly half of the territory’s trees razed,” (The Guardian, 2024); “Since 1967, more than eight hundred thousand Palestinian olive trees have been illegally uprooted by Israeli authorities and settlers. Many were centuries old,” (The New Yorker, 2023).



## Biometric Extractivism

turning the bodies of the colonized into a “resource” of data to be mined

ex. “Hundreds of Palestinians have been picked out by a previously undisclosed Israeli facial recognition program that was started in Gaza late last year [2023]. The expansive and experimental effort is being used to [...] collect and catalogue the faces of Palestinians without their knowledge or consent, according to Israeli intelligence officers, military officials and soldiers” ([The New York Times](#), 2024); *see also Exclusionary Surveillance, Laboritization.*

## Bionic Genocide

extermination of the “infra”-human colonized by the technologically-enhanced “super”-humanized

ex. “In a first, the [Israeli] army has used an AI-enabled optic sight [...] which is attached to weapons such as rifles and machine guns. ‘It makes every regular soldier – even a blind soldier – a sniper,’ [said a senior defence official],” (France 24, 2024); “Another reason for [...] the extensive harm to civilian life in Gaza is the widespread use of a system called ‘Habsora’ (‘The Gospel’), which is largely built on artificial intelligence [...] This AI system, as described by a former [Israeli] intelligence officer, essentially facilitates a ‘mass assassination factory’” ([+972 Magazine](#), 2023); *see also Laboritization, Techno-Washing.*

# Bureaucratic Ethnic Cleansing

## writing the Indigenous out of legal existence

ex. “Israeli authorities have used their control over the population registry in the West Bank and Gaza [...] to deny residency to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians [...] These restrictions have the effect of limiting the Palestinian population in the West Bank,” ([Human Rights Watch, 2021](#)); see also *Invisible Violence*.



C

# Carceralization

## transforming Indigenous people into prisoners and lands into prisons

ex. “Since 1967, over 800,000 Palestinians, including children as young as 12, have been arrested and detained under authoritarian rules enacted, enforced and adjudicated by the Israeli military [...] While in-prison confinement is the most acute form of deprivation of liberty imposed on Palestinians, physical, bureaucratic and digital ‘architectures’ further restrict them spatially and psychologically [...] transform[ing] the occupied Palestinian territory into a constantly surveilled open-air panopticon,” ([UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine Francesca Albanese, 2023](#)).

## Collective Maiming

societal debilitation through mass infliction of disability

ex. “UNICEF estimates that a thousand children in Gaza have become amputees since the conflict began in October. ‘This is the biggest cohort of pediatric amputees in history,’ [said] Ghassan Abu-Sittah, a London-based plastic-and-reconstructive surgeon who specializes in pediatric trauma,” ([The New Yorker](#), 2024).

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## Colonial Rubbishing

treatment of the colonized as waste to be disposed

“What really got to me in Palestine was the settlers letting their sewage run on Palestinian villages. Twice we were driving through a Palestinian village when suddenly there was an invasion of the smell of the Israeli shit ‘landing’ nearby [...] It then struck me that in fact there was probably a classificatory affinity in the eyes of the Israeli colonists between shit and the Palestinians,” (anthropologist [Ghassan Hage](#), 2013); see also *Wastelanding*.



## Detour Complicity

### redirecting arms and other atrocity-complicit exports to circumvent legal and political restrictions

ex. “The United States government announced this week that a Quebec-based company will be the principal contractor in a ‘possible’ \$61-million US sale of high explosive mortar cartridges and related equipment to Israel [...] The Trudeau government announced in March that it was pausing approvals of new export permits for direct sales of military goods to Israel. However, that measure did not apply to [...] military goods that flow to Israel via the U.S.” ([The Maple](#), 2024); *see also Organized Irresponsibility*.

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## Digital Occupation

### control over occupied territory exercised by remote technology

“Israel’s balancing act ‘of maximum control and minimum responsibility’ has meant that the occupation of Gaza has become increasingly technologized. Unmanned aerial reconnaissance and attack drones, remote-controlled machine guns, closed-circuit television, sonic imagery, gamma-radiation detectors, remote-controlled bulldozers and boats, electrified fences, among many other examples, are increasingly used for control and surveillance,” (Palestinian media and technology scholar [Helga Tawil-Souri](#), 2012); *see also Biometric Extractivism, Exclusionary Surveillance, Vertical Apartheid*.

## Eco-Militarism

### greenwashing military activity as environmentally friendly

ex. “Solar energy is making its way to all bases in the IDF [“Israel Defense Forces”], where it is used for everything from heating water to turning on the lights [...] IDF has used its ability to innovate and its technological brainpower to find solutions to some of the world’s most pressing environmental issues,” ([IDF website](#)); “Sometimes on the battlefields, trapped in the ruins, [Israeli soldiers] also find abandoned animals and try to give them a better future [...] Perhaps the most surprising rescue was that of a parrot in Palestine Square in Gaza. The soldiers noticed a colorful bird trapped in the rubble. They freed the parrot from the rubble, gave it water and set it free,” ([Ynet News](#), 2023).

## Environmental Nakba

### the continuation of anti-Indigenous extirpation (Nakba) by ecocidal means

“[Israel’s use of] ordnance with depleted uranium, high impact explosives, and incendiary bombs including white phosphorous leaves significant environmental degradation and impacts soil, air, and water [...] The status of the Palestinian environment is catastrophic and this is directly related to decades of occupation and colonisation,” (Palestinian scientist [Mazin Qumsiyeh](#), 2024); *see also Aerocide, Aquacide, Arboricide.*



## Exclusionary Surveillance

Surveillance inducting the colonized not into new forms of life and consumption, but subjection to new forms of death and extrusion

“The surveillance carried out [by Israel] in the OPT [Occupied Palestinian Territory] differs from the surveillance dealt with in most surveillance studies, which have a Western (liberal/democratic) bias [...] When the Israeli population registry surveys the East Jerusalem Palestinian inhabitants who ‘move their life center’ to another location for a certain time, its aim is not to embrace them but to deprive them of rights,” (political geographer Ariel Handel, 2011); *see also Biometric Extractivism.*

## Fragmentation

**dismantlement of Indigenous peoplehood via spatial and legal dismemberment of communities and territories**

“Fragmentation is instilled by exclusion and structured by law: drawing and enforcing boundaries – visible and invisible, material and legal – between territories and people. In Palestine, this structure has developed into a sophisticated legal regime that stratifies and classifies Palestinians under Israeli rule into different legal statuses, subjecting each subgroup to distinctive types of violence and differential access to fundamental rights,” (Palestinian legal scholar Rabea Eghbariah, 2024); *see also Carceralization, Invisible Violence.*

## Gendered Violence (Androcidal)

### violence targeted against racialized and colonized men and boys

ex. “In most cases, men and adolescent boys were detained [...] Detainees have been subjected to prolonged blindfolding, the prolonged deprivation of food, sleep deprivation, water and medical attention, prolonged exposure to the cold, being forced to kneel on gravel, deliberate humiliation, blackmailing, electric shocks, being burnt with cigarettes, and given hallucinogenic pills [...] In one instance at least, there is video evidence of blindfolded and handcuffed male Palestinian detainees being transported entirely naked. OHCHR has also received consistent reports of ISF personnel inserting objects into detainees’ anuses,” ([Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2024](#)); “One detail about the dead is repeated often in Western-based mass media: the vast majority of murdered Palestinians in Gaza are civilians – and sources say that a “disproportionate” number are women and children. The killing of women and children is horrific – but in the reiteration of these disturbing facts there is something missing: the public mourning of Palestinian men killed by Israel’s war machine [...] This trope accomplishes [...] the reproduction of the male Palestinian body (and the male Arab body more generally) as always already dangerous,” (women’s and gender studies scholar [Maya Mikdashi, 2014](#)); see also *Carceralization*.

## Holocide

total (Greek, *holo-*) societal obliteration

ex. “Since Israel declared war following Hamas’s deadly attacks in October, more than 70 per cent of all housing stock in Gaza [...] have been damaged or destroyed [...] ‘Access to services, jobs, culture, schools, religious places, universities, hospitals have all been levelled,’ the Special Rapporteur [on Housing] said, adding that the scale and intensity of destruction in Gaza is ‘far worse’ than in Aleppo, Mariupol or even Dresden and Rotterdam during the Second World War,” (UN Special Rapporteur on Housing [Balakrishnan Rajagopal](#), 2024); *see also Environmental Nakba, Medicide, Memoricide, Scholasticide, Wastelanding.*

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## Humanitarian Camouflage

swathing state violence in the sanctifying shroud of  
“humanitarianism” and “international humanitarian law”  
(the laws of war)

“Israel has used IHL [international humanitarian law] terminology to justify its systematic use of lethal violence against Palestinian civilians as a group and the extensive destruction of life-sustaining infrastructures. Israel has done this by deploying IHL concepts such as human shields, collateral damage, safe zones, evacuations and medical protection in such a permissive manner so as to gut these concepts of their normative content, subverting their protective purpose and ultimately eroding the distinction between civilians and combatants in Israeli actions in Gaza,” (UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine [Francesca Albanese](#), 2024); *see also Techno-Washing.*

## International Legal Subalternity

relegation of the colonized to persistent sovereign inequality behind the facade of “post”-coloniality

“Through the actions of the [United Nations], Palestine and its people have been committed to a condition that I shall call ‘international legal subalternity’, the defining feature of which is that the promise of justice through international law is repeatedly proffered under a cloak of political legitimacy furnished by the international community, but its realization is interminably withheld” (Palestinian legal scholar [Ardi Imseis](#), 2023).

## Invisible Violence

violence constructed and conducted in ways that evade detection

“The violence of Israel’s rule over the West Bank and Gaza Strip owes much of its impact to its invisibility. This is invisibility in the literal (or visual) sense, created by a state apparatus that keeps Israel’s violence toward Palestinians out of public sight and knowledge. It is also invisibility in the figurative sense, relating to phenomena or forces that are not easily identified as violence,” (legal scholar [Hedi Viterbo](#), 2018); ex. “Even if the conflict ends immediately, there will continue to be many indirect deaths in the coming months and years from causes such as reproductive, communicable, and non-communicable diseases [...] Applying a conservative estimate of four indirect deaths per one direct death [...] it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza,” ([The Lancet](#), 2024).

# J

## Journacide

assault on journalists and journalism to insulate the colonial present from scrutiny

ex. “As of August 16, 2024 [...] at least 113 journalists and media workers were among the more than 41,000 killed since the war [on Gaza] began, making it the deadliest period for journalists since CPJ began gathering data in 1992,” (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2024); “[Israeli] High Court says Israel can keep barring foreign reporters from Gaza,” (Times of Israel, 2024); “An investigation by the Guardian suggests that amid a loosening of the Israel Defense Force’s interpretation of the laws of war [...] some within the IDF appear to have viewed journalists working in Gaza for outlets controlled by or affiliated with Hamas to be legitimate military targets [...] a sweeping statement legal experts described as alarming,” ([The Guardian](#), 2024); *see also Invisible Violence, Legal Demoviction, X-Ray State.*





## Klepto-Colonialism

### settler theft as an embedded structure, not an isolated event

ex. “Since the start of Israel’s ground invasion in late October, soldiers have been taking whatever they can get their hands on from the homes of Palestinians who have been forced to flee. More than an open secret, the phenomenon has been widely – and uncritically – reported in the Israeli media,” ([+972 Magazine](#), 2024); “On 29 October 2023, amidst Israel’s brutal military offensive against Gaza [...] the Israeli Ministry of Energy announced that it has awarded licenses to six Israeli and international companies to explore for natural gas in areas that are considered Palestinian maritime areas under international law,” (Palestinian human rights NGO [Adalah](#), 2024); *see also Terra Nullification.*

## Laboritization

**instrumentalization of the colony as a testing-ground for developing new technologies of subjugation**

ex. “Israel’s army has deployed some AI-enabled military technology in combat for the first time in Gaza, raising fears about the use of autonomous weapons in modern warfare [...] ‘In general the war in Gaza presents threats, but also opportunities to test emerging technologies in the field,’ said Avi Hasson, chief executive of Startup Nation Central, an Israeli tech incubator,” ([France 24](#), 2024); see also *Biometric Extractivism, Bionic Genocide, Techno-Washing*.

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## Legal Demo-viction

**deliberate violation, demolition, and reconstruction of international legal norms to evict the colonized from protection**

“The whole of international law is now based on the notion that an act that is forbidden today becomes permissible if executed by enough countries [...] International law progresses through violations [...] If you do something for long enough, the world will accept it,” (former Israeli military International Law Division head [Daniel Reisner](#), 2009).

## Memoricide

expunging Indigenous histories and overwriting them with the colonizers' own

ex. “A recent survey by the group Heritage for Peace details the damage done so far to more than 100 landmarks in Gaza since the start of the present conflict [...] The casualties include the Great Omari Mosque, one of the most important and ancient mosques in historical Palestine; the Church of Saint Porphyrius, thought to be the third oldest church in the entire world; and the Rafah Museum, a space in southern Gaza which was dedicated to teaching about the territory's long and multi-layered heritage – until it was hammered by airstrikes early on in the conflict,” (NPR, 2023); *see also Scholasticide, Starting With Secondly.*

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## Medicide

the elimination of medical infrastructure and workers

ex. “The death of a renowned Palestinian orthopedic surgeon after nearly four months in detention was ‘horrifying,’ a UN expert said [...] Before his death, Dr. Al Bursh had reportedly been beaten in prison, with his body showing signs of torture [...] The Ministry of Health in Gaza has reported that at least 493 healthcare workers from Gaza have been killed since 7 October 2023,” (UN Special Rapporteur on Health, 2024); “In the last seven months the healthcare system in Gaza has been systematically dismantled [...] Each medical centre or humanitarian delivery system has been or is being destroyed [...] includ[ing] airstrikes damaging hospitals, tanks being fired at agreed deconflicted shelters, ground offensives into medical centres, and convoys fired upon,” (Doctors Without Borders, 2024).

## Misogery

systemic antipathy and violence against elders (Greek, geri-);  
also a form of Memoricide

ex. “The [Gaza] Strip’s elderly are targeted in numerous ways, including deadly house bombings and even extrajudicial executions – either by sniper fire or quadcopter aircraft [...] Euro-Med Monitor stated that its field team is recording nearly daily deaths among the elderly due to Israel’s systematic and pervasive crimes of starvation and treatment deprivation in the Gaza Strip,” (Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 2024).

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## Misopedy

systemic antipathy and violence against children (Greek, ped-)

ex. “Israeli-made weapons designed to spray high levels of shrapnel are causing horrific injuries to civilians in Gaza and disproportionately harming children,” (The Guardian, 2024); “The conflict has filled hospital wards with patients classified by the abbreviation ‘WCNSF’ – ‘wounded child, no surviving family’ [...] a chilling acronym [that] reflects the reality of a conflict in which 40% of casualties are believed to be minors,” (The Guardian, 2023); *see also Pedocide, Unchilding.*

## Necropenology

### regimes of posthumous punishment enacted against the dead

“Colonisers maintain a necropenological regime of dispossession that marks the colonised as non-human, even when dead,” (Palestinian feminist academic [Nadera Shalhoub-Kervorkian](#), 2020); ex. “Al-Haq condemns the recent decision reached by the Israeli Supreme Court [...] reviewing with approval Israel’s policy of withholding the bodies of killed Palestinians [...] It should be noted that the Israeli occupying authorities have a long history of such, and similar practices, including the use of enforced disappearances and ‘cemeteries of numbers,’ wherein Palestinians are buried in secret to be solely identified, and dehumanised, by numbers,” (Palestinian human rights NGO [Al-Haq](#), 2019); “At least 16 cemeteries in Gaza have been desecrated by Israeli forces, satellite imagery and videos reveal,” ([CNN](#), 2024); *see also Memoricide*



## Nonperformative Speech

“institutional speech acts that do not bring into effect what they name” ([Sara Ahmed, 2021](#))

ex. “The investigations that [Israel’s] military conducted in relation to the Gaza protests were never intended to ensure justice for the victims or to deter troops from similar action. Their sole purpose was to silence international criticism so that Israel could continue to implement its policy unchanged, and to avert the ICC’s [international Criminal Court’s] intervention by producing a paper trail ostensibly showing Israel is investigating,” (Israeli human rights NGO [B’Tselem](#), 2021); “Israel’s legal system also ensures accountability. The IDF [Israeli military] has a robust law enforcement system. It also maintains an independent mechanism for examining and investigating alleged violations of international humanitarian law [...] The rule of law remains a foundational pillar of the State of Israel,” ([Israel’s representatives](#) at the International Court of Justice in the [Gaza Genocide Case](#), 2024, arguing that the ICJ should not have jurisdiction since Israel’s own domestic legal mechanisms suffice); *see also Humanitarian Camouflage, Organized Irresponsibility.*

## Obstetric Violence

### violence against pregnant and birthing women

“The scale of civilian harm, and its consequences for pregnant, nursing, and new mothers is of an unprecedented scale in Gaza [...] [It is also notable that we see little or no sustained emphasis politically or legally on the experiences of mothers in Gaza, women who are pregnant in Gaza, and women who are giving birth or post partem in Gaza [...]] This gap is particularly evident from those States who [...] claim to have a feminist foreign policy,” (former UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-terrorism Fionnuala Ni Aolain, 2024); *see also Medicide, Zygoticide*.

## Organized Irresponsibility

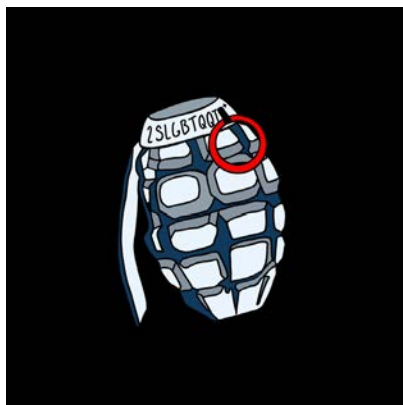
### legally structured impunity

“Particularly with respect to the production of large-scale harms – including extensive human rights violations, forms of colonialism, or environmental or nuclear devastation – [...legal institutions] operate to facilitate dispersals and disavowals of responsibility [...] in consistent and patterned ways,” (legal scholar Scott Veitch, 2007); ex. “[Out of] 739 cases in which [Israeli] soldiers killed, injured, or beat Palestinians, used them as human shields, or damaged Palestinian property [...] in a quarter (182) no investigation was ever launched, in nearly half (343), the investigation was closed with no further action, and only in very rare instances (25), were charges brought against the implicated soldiers [...] This is the system that officials bring as proof – to Israel and the world – of their claim that the military does everything in its power to investigate complaints against soldiers responsible for harming Palestinians and to prosecute the offenders,” (Israeli human rights NGO B’Tselem, 2016).

# Q

## Queermailing

weaponizing the target's sexual identity as an instrument of extortion and control



ex. “By painting Palestine and Palestinians as intrinsically homophobic, Palestinian resistance is framed as antithetical to queer liberation, while Israeli occupation is a form of queer salvation. In fact, Israeli security forces have admitted to deliberately threatening and outing queer Palestinians as a tactic to intimidate them into working as informants,” ([The Nation](#), 2023).

# R

## Reverse Reparations

“compensation” for “wrongs” extracted by colonizers from the colonized

ex. “Israel’s security cabinet approved a series of sanctions against the Palestinian Authority in response to its request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice in The Hague on Israel’s occupation of the West Bank [... including] transferring approximately 139 million shekels (about \$39 million dollars) from PA funds to [Israeli] victims of terrorism,” ([Haaretz](#), 2023); *see also Klepto-Colonialism*.



# S

## Scholasticide

annihilation and decapacitation of knowledge institutions  
and knowledge-keepers (from Palestinian academic Karma  
Nabulsi, 2009)

ex. “After six months of military assault [...] at least 60 per cent of educational facilities [in Gaza], including 13 public libraries, have been damaged or destroyed [...] Even UN schools sheltering forcibly displaced civilians are being bombed, including in Israeli military-designated ‘safe zones’ [...] Israa University, the last remaining university in Gaza was demolished by the Israeli military on 17 January 2024,” ([UN Experts](#), 2024).



## Self-Indigenization

### settler appropriation of Indigenous identity

ex. “Jewish people are not occupiers in their own land [...] No decision of lies in The Hague will distort this historical truth, and similarly, the legality of Israeli settlements in all parts of our homeland cannot be disputed,” (Israeli PM [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), 2024, in response to the [International Court of Justice](#) opinion declaring Israel’s 57-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza illegal); *see also Terra Nullification.*

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## Sonic Terror

### deploying sound and noise violence to intimidate and coerce

ex. “Israel is deploying a terrifying new tactic against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip by letting loose deafening ‘sound bombs’ that cause widespread fear, induce miscarriages and traumatise children,” ([The Guardian](#), 2005); “Testimonies from [Nuseirat] camp residents [in Gaza] [...] confirm that the sound of women screaming and babies crying was heard late at night [...] When some of the residents went out to investigate and tried to help, they were shot at by Israeli quadcopter drones. The sounds they had heard were in fact recordings played by the Israeli drones, with the intent of forcing the camp’s residents out into the streets, where they could be easily targeted by snipers and other weaponry,” ([Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor](#), 2024).

## Starting With Secondly

representing Indigenous responses to colonial aggression as the source of aggression; a corollary to Self-Indigenization

“It is easy to blur the truth with a simple linguistic trick: start your story from ‘Secondly.’ Yes, this is what [former Israeli PM Yitzhak] Rabin did. He simply neglected to speak of what happened first. Start your story with ‘Secondly,’ and the world will be turned upside-down. Start your story with ‘Secondly,’ and the arrows of the [Indigenous people] are the original criminals and the guns of the white men are entirely the victims. It is enough to start with ‘Secondly,’ for the anger of the black man against the white to be barbarous. Start with ‘Secondly,’ and Gandhi becomes responsible for the tragedies of the British,” (Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti, 1997); ex. “Though Israel didn't start this war, Israel will finish it,” (Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, October 2023).



## Techno-Washing

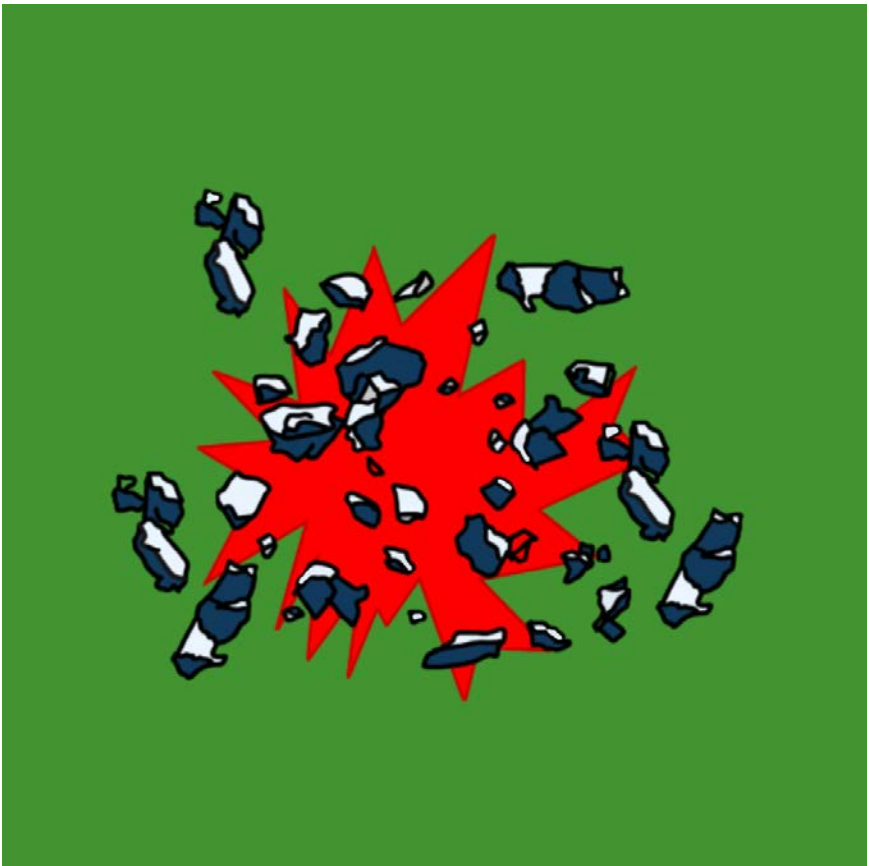
exalting colonizers’ technological superiority to project colonial atrocities as “humane,” “intelligent,” and “precise”

ex. “Since the October 7 massacre, the Israeli Air Force has been conducting a precise, focused and process-based campaign [...] Our planning principles include [...] selecting the right munitions to minimize collateral damage [...] though these munitions are not GPS-guided, they are still used accurately,” (Israeli Air Force Chief of Staff Omer Tischler, 2023); *see also Bionic Genocide, Humanitarian Camouflage.*

## Terra Nullification

erasing Indigenous sovereignty to convert Indigenous land into colonial property

ex. “Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank] were not seized from a sovereign state recognized by international law, and the State of Israel has a right to impose its sovereignty over these areas [...] The above is furthermore anchored in the book of Maccabees 1, chapter 15, verse 33: ‘It is not a foreign land we have taken nor have we seized the property of foreigners, but only our ancestral heritage, which for a time had been unjustly occupied by our enemies,’” (letter from Israeli government Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs to Palestinian human rights NGO Adalah, 2023); *see also Self-Indigenization.*



## Terror Nullification

nullifying the rights of the colonized by depicting them as “terrorists” deserving unrestricted state terror in response

ex. “In an interview on Israeli television, former Mossad official Rami Igra said all Palestinians in Gaza over the age of 4 are ‘involved’ and deserve to face Israel’s collective punishment policy of withholding food and humanitarian aid [...] ‘In Gaza, everyone is involved. Everyone voted Hamas. Anyone over the age of four is a Hamas supporter,’ [Igra said],” ([Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention](#), 2024).

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## Time Theft

appropriating the life-time of the colonized by obstruction, incapacitation, and incarceration

ex. “Time, like space, has been critical to colonial rule in Palestine [...] The direct corollary of Israeli freedom of movement and expansion through space and control of time is that Palestinian space shrinks, time slows and mobility is constricted. Palestinians wait at checkpoints for hours before being allowed to pass with no explanation as to why they are being delayed [...] Time has thus become another commodity, like land and water, which Israel expropriates from the population in the occupied Palestinian territories,” (anthropologist [Julie Peteet](#), 2008); “Rebuilding homes in Gaza destroyed during Israel’s seven-month military offensive could take until 2040 in the most optimistic scenario [...] according to United Nations experts,” ([The Guardian](#), 2024); see also *Carceralization, Klepto-Colonialism*.

## Unchilding

evicting young people from the protections of childhood, while exploiting its vulnerabilities

“Unchilding operates through global politics by constructing Palestinian children as dangerous entities [...] daily exposing them to violence and humiliation by imprisoning, maiming, and killing,” (Palestinian feminist academic Nadera Shalhoub-Kervorkian, 2019); ex. “As the number of children killed in Gaza approached 1,000, Knesset [Israeli Parliament] member Meirav Ben-Ari declared ‘the children of Gaza have brought this upon themselves,’” (Mondoweiss, 2023); *see also Misopedy, Pedocide.*

# V

## Vertical Apartheid

three-dimensional domination and segregation, extending from aerial occupation to subterranean “resource” exploitation

“[Israel’s] ‘aerially enforced colonization’, based on drones’ ability to maintain a perpetual ‘surveillance and strike’ capability, is an economically efficient alternative to the otherwise onerous and expensive tasks of colonial policing [...] Even the so-called ‘peace plans’ [...] relied on the overall logic of the politics of vertical separation [...] Every Israeli proposal for a ‘final status arrangement’ demands that Israel retain control of airspace, borders, and subsoil,” (critical scholar and architect Eyal Weizman, 2017); *see also Digital Occupation, Klepto-Colonialism.*

# U

## Wastelanding

transmutation of Indigenous homelands into wastelands (from historian of colonialism Traci Voyles, 2015)

ex. “For each square metre in the Gaza Strip, there is now over 107 kg of debris, which may contain UXO [unexploded ordnance], hazardous substances and human remains [...] Removal and disposal of all the debris may take up to 15 years” (UN Environment Program, 2024); *see also Colonial Rubbishing, Environmental Nakba, Holocide*

## X-Ray State

surveillance sovereignty rendering the colonized hyper-visible, while immunizing its own operations of power as invisibilized and opaque

ex. “In 2021, a report in the Washington Post exposed a programme by the Israeli military known as the Wolf Pack system; a vast database containing imagery and all the information available exclusively on Palestinians from the West Bank [...] ‘We don’t know how soldiers are using this information, and we don’t know what they have access to or what they will use against me. There is no influence we can have on the system,’ [Palestinian interviewees said],” ([Amnesty International](#), 2023); see also *Biometric Extractivism, Exclusionary Surveillance, Invisible Violence*.



# Y

## Yellow-Plating

ascription of markers of privilege within an apartheid system

ex. such as the yellow license plates that provide Israelis only access to roads barred to Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.



## Zygoticide

extinguishing Indigenous life before birth

ex. “In a single missile attack launched by an Israeli tank in December 2023, the Al Basma IVF center was destroyed, along with the potential future use of thousands of embryos, specimens of sperm and unfertilized eggs stored at the largest fertility clinic in [Gaza] [...] Legal minds are now puzzling through whether an attack on a fertility clinic, such as Al Basma, could be considered an act of genocide,” ([PassBlue](#), 2024).

## Post-Script

Of course, naming does not guarantee justice – Israel’s impunity extends to acts that have long been named as illegal under international law: torture, annexation, apartheid, genocide – but unnamings enables even the possibility of justice to be perpetually denied. As [Israel’s persecution](#) and punishment of Palestinian intellectuals like [Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian](#) (some of whose terms appear above) demonstrates, the illegibility of coloniality is neither passive nor natural but actively produced. Unnaming thus not only protects violence, but is a form of violence itself.

# Credits

## **AUTHOR**

Azeezah Kanji

## **EDITOR**

Hayden King

## **ILLUSTRATOR**

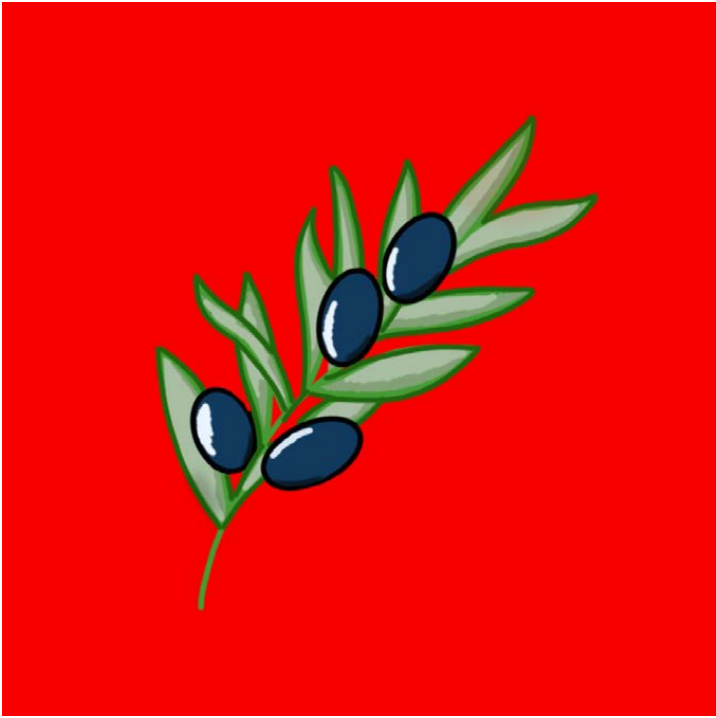
Ash Vols

## **DESIGNER**

Yumi Numata

## **CITATION**

Kanji, Azeezah. "A Dictionary of Unnameable Violences: From "Aerocide" to Zyogticide" in Palestine." Yellowhead Institute. August 26, 2024, <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/a-dictionary-of-unnameable-violences-from-aerocide-to-zygoticide-in-palestine/>



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