

Forgive me for my silence.

I have yet to find the ideal words for this deeply intricate and horrific past 2 weeks, weeks that have turned the world's attention back towards a situation that has been taking innocent lives and affecting families for decades. I have much to say, but for today, I will keep it short.

I've been sent hundreds of death threats daily, my phone number has been leaked, and my family has felt to be in danger. But I can not be silenced any longer. Fear is not an option. The people and children of Palestine, especially in Gaza, cannot afford our silence. We are not brave - they are.

My heart is bleeding with pain from the trauma I am seeing unfold, as well as the generational trauma of my Palestinian blood. Seeing the aftermath from the airstrikes in Gaza, I mourn with all the mothers who have lost children and the children who cry alone, all the lost fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, friends that will never again walk this earth.

I mourn for the Israeli families that have been dealing with the pain and aftermath of October 7th. Regardless of the history of the land, I condemn the terrorist attacks on any civilians, anywhere. Harming women and children and inflicting terror does not and should not do any good for the Free Palestine movement. I believe deep in my heart, that no child, no people anywhere, should be taken away from their family either temporarily or indefinitely. That goes for Israeli and Palestinian people alike.

It's important to understand the hardship of what it is to be Palestinian, in a world that sees us as nothing more than terrorists resisting peace. It is harmful, it is shameful, and its categorically untrue.

My father was born in Nazareth in the year of the Nakba (the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948). Nine days after he was born, he, in his mother's arms, along with his family were expelled from their home of Palestine, becoming refugees, away from a place they once called home. My grandparents, Never being allowed to return. My family witnessed 75 years of violence against Palestinian people - most notably, brutal settler invasions which led to the destruction of entire communities, murder in cold blood and the forcible removal of families from their homes. The practice of settlements on Palestinian land still continues to this day. The pain of that is unimaginable.

We must all stand together in defending humanity and compassion - and demanding that our leaders do the same. All religions are peace - it is governments that are corrupt, and intertwining the two makes for the greatest sin of all. We are one, and God has created all equal. All bloodshed, tears, and bodies should be mourned with the same respect.

There is an urgent humanitarian crisis in Gaza that must be attended to. Families need access to water and food. Hospitals need fuel to power generators, tend to the wounded and keep people alive.

Wars have laws - and they must be upheld, no matter what.

We need to keep pressure on our leaders, wherever we are, not to forget the urgent needs of the people of Gaza, and to ensure that innocent Palestinian civilians are not the forgotten casualties of this war.

I stand with humanity, knowing that peace and safety belong to us all.