

STATE TERRORISM AND ITS SPONSOR: THE ISRAELI WAR IN THE GAZA STRIP

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Abstract

One of the identified weaknesses of orthodox/traditional terrorism by the Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) is that, it has limited the perpetrators of terrorist acts to non-state actors. CTS argues that there is no deontological reason which precludes an actor, state or non-state from engaging in acts of terrorism as part of a broader political strategy; therefore, state terrorism is more of devastating eventuality as terrorism itself. The human rights implications of Hamas attacks against the state of Israel and her civilians on the 7th of October, 2023 are conventionally considered as terrorist attacks and consequently, this research argues that the consequential outcomes of Israeli reprisal attacks in Gaza are also nothing short of criminalized terrorist attacks (state terrorism) within the broader theoretical propositions of CTS. Based mainly on secondary data and qualitative research methods, this research classifies the gruesome human rights violations that emanated from Israeli reprisal attacks in Gaza as a crime of state terrorism, and the various military assistance of the U.S to aid the Israeli war in Gaza put the United States in the position of a sponsor of state terrorism.

Introduction

The contested definition of terrorism illustrates the absence of a universally acceptable definition. However, some three identifiable features are commonly found in almost every attempt to conceptualize its meaning: (1) terrorism is a perpetrated violence targeted at some protected civilians; (2) the perpetrators intend to instill terror or fear in some witnesses who are not direct victims of the violence; and (3) the perpetrators intend or expect the terrorized witnesses to behave in certain ways (Walter, 1969). Terrorism is defined as a premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate noncombatant victims (Enders & Sandler, 2012, p.4). Terrorists basically seek to circumvent normal channels for political purposes or political philosophy, ideology, religion, race, and ethnicity through violent means of traumatizing the public/citizens to compel or influence governments to address their demands or cause. As Eubank and Weinberg (1994) proposed, terrorist campaigns are more

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pervasive in liberal democracies, where the legitimacy of government hinges on its ability to protect the lives and properties of its citizens. The British Terrorism Act 2000 defined the term as follows: *“any action designed to influence the policy of any government, anywhere in the world, including by, for example, damage to property”* (Jawad 2015, p.105). Civilians and civilian properties have been the main targets of terrorism. In the United States, the Department of State under the Bureau of Counterterrorism has listed some foreign organizations as terrorist organizations attracting the need for necessary counterterrorist measures such as; *“Segundo Marquetalia, a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Peoples’ Army designated on the December 1, 2021 as terrorist organization; ISIS –Democrat Republic of Congo, designated on March 11, 2021 as terrorist organization; ISIS – Mozambique, designated on March 11, 2021 as terrorist organization; Harakat Sawa’d Misr (HASM), designated on January 14, 2021; Asa’b Ahl at-Haq, designated on January 10, 2020; Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), designated on the 15th of April, 2019; Jama’at Nusrat al Islamic wal-muslim (JNIM), designated on the 6th of September 2018; al- Ashtar Brigades, designated on the 11th July, 2018; ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS), designated on 23rd May, 2018. Boko Haram in Nigeria, designated on 14th November 2013; Hamas in Gaza strip, designated on 8th October, 1997, Hezbollah in Lebanon, designated on 8th October 1997, and so on”* (Oyepho 2024, p.31).

Contrarily, counterterrorism has to do with the various measures adopted to address the threat and consequences of terrorist attacks. These measures, either defensive or proactive, could be implemented by governments, military alliances, international organizations (e.g., INTERPOL), private corporations, or citizens (Sandler, 2015). At the global level, the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism is the body assigned with the duty of promoting international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and supporting member states in the implementation of the global counter – terrorism strategy. At the national level, the national armed forces and special units of each state are charged with such responsibility. The United States of America, after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, has engaged in the role of the world police to combat international terrorist activities, a justification of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other African countries. The fact that both terrorism and counterterrorism have resulted in horrific violations of human rights whereby civilians/citizens and their properties have become victims of both terrorist attacks and state militarized counterterrorist operations has attracted the attention of this research. The legitimacy of states to construct every potential attack against civilians for political, religious, ethnic, and self-determination motives by non-state actors as terrorist attacks while neglecting the various human rights violations and civilian casualties committed during states’ counterterrorist militarized operations is questionable by this research. Counterterrorist military operations of state armed forces have records of various violations of political and civil rights, economic and social rights, as well as the right to live in a wholesome environment and development. These rights are stated as right to life, right against torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment, right to liberty and security of the person, right to nondiscrimination, right to freedom of expression, and right to health (Oyepho 2024, p.32).

The advent of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) has invigorated the concept of state terrorism, which is an argument that terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors is not different from terrorized killings perpetrated by states (Jackson, 2007; Jarvis, 2016). According to Blakely & Raphael, (2016), the use of military, paramilitary forces, private security, and state security agencies to combat terrorism and insurgency has equally increased the level of terror experienced by the civilian population in many liberal democratic states, which has compelled the population at large to behave in certain ways to ensure the sustainability of failed political systems (cited by Oluyemi 2023, p.298). The sanctity afforded to states in the act of perpetrating terrorism within academic literature and international conventions has allowed many states to neglect the need for human rights protection

for the sake of national security (Oluyemi, 2023). CTS has provided an alternative critical framework to the study of terrorism, conceptualizing state terrorism and counterterrorism (Jackson 2008, 2007; Jarvis 2016). During the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, Donald J. Trump pledged to kill families of terrorists, prosecute American citizens at Guantánamo Bay, and ban Muslims from entering the United States. He argued that “the problem is, we have the Geneva Conventions, all sorts of rules and regulations, so our soldiers are afraid to fight,” promising to ‘make some changes.’ His pronouncements are striking not only because he endorses human rights abuses in the name of counterterrorism, but also because he egregiously legitimizes violations of American commitments to principles of international law. Both the Bush and Obama administrations were keen to evade, stretch, and reinterpret law to justify interrogation, detention, and ‘targeted killing’ policies in the ‘Global War on Terror’ (Sanders 2017, p.2-3).

On October 7, 2023, it started with an indiscriminate firing of a barrage of rockets into Israel and shortly after, Hamas fighters and members of other Palestinian armed groups (a U.S. designated foreign terrorist organization, or FTO) breached the border fence surrounding Gaza and entered southern Israel from different locations. The group that was armed with heavy machine guns, rifles, grenades, rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons, carried out coordinated attacks against civilian and military targets, carried out deliberate mass killings, summary killings and other abuses, causing suffering and physical injuries. This is described as the deadliest attacks perpetrated against Israel in a single day since Israel’s establishment in 1948, resulting in severe civilian casualties, including; some 1,200 people, over 800 of them were civilians, including at least 36 children and 46 U.S. citizens in Israel, were killed during the attacks. In addition, the group captured 251 hostages during the attack (Amnesty International 2024, p.56). Consequently, the state of Israel has responded with the deployment of air, ground, and sea forces to fire thousands of tonnes of munitions, which has caused widespread destruction of Palestinian land and people. Within the first week, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) dropped more than 6,000 bombs weighing 4,000 tonnes, displaced and killed thousands of Palestinians. As early as October 17, a group of experts in conflict, genocide, and the Holocaust warned of potential genocidal war in the Gaza Strip (TWAILR, 2023) cited by (El-Shewy, Griffiths & Jones, 2025, p.75). The mass killing of civilians and destruction of civilian properties by Israeli armed forces coupled with the assistance of the United States in the fight against a group designated as terrorist (Hamas) has attracted the attention of this research. Based on the development of state terrorism within the Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS), this research establishes evidence that the state of Israel has embraced terrorist measures to combat terrorism, the need to expand the definition of terrorism to include certain acts of states to ensure an adequate protection of human rights and civilian population during the state’s counterterrorist military operations. With the critical examination of civilian casualties and the prevalence of human rights violations in Gaza, this research argues that there is no difference between the perpetrated killing of civilians and the destruction of civilian properties committed by non-state actors in acts of terrorism and those committed by states during their reprisal attacks against terrorist attacks. This research aims to delve into the human rights implications of the Israeli war in Gaza to establish considerable evidence of the Israeli state’s perpetrated killings of civilians and destruction of civilian properties in Gaza as an act of state terrorism, a justification established within the theoretical propositions of CTS and the various military assistance of the United States to aid the Israeli reprisal military operations as a sponsor of state terrorism.

Definition of Terrorism and State Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State defines *“the term ‘terrorism’ as a premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”* (U.S. Department of State 1993). The definition excludes the actions of states or their

military forces against the civilian population. This is farcical because Lakos considered the term “terrorism” to have originated from the French Revolution when “terrorism” was understood to mean state violence against domestic political opponents (Lakos 1991, 15). During the Reign of Terror under Robespierre, a Law of Suspects was passed that resulted in the imprisonment of some 400,000 men, women, and children as well as the execution of estimated 40,000 people by the new government as suspected of treason (Wardlaw 1982, 15). Notably, the term that originated from the context of ruling authority’s mass arrests and killings of its own citizens, and taking its primary meaning from such official violence, has been defined officially with strict reservation for people in positions of authority. The U.S. State Department further expanded the scope of terrorism to explain that terrorism around the world is sometimes funded and supported by sovereign states. *“Seven nations are designated as states that sponsor international terrorism: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria”* (U.S. Department of State 1993, p. 21). With the recognition and identification of state-sponsored international terrorism, the U.S. Department of State is still adamant about the possibility of designating a sovereign state as a potential terrorist actor.

The reluctance to provide adequate recognition of the reality of state terrorism is not conventionally shared among scholars. Grant Wardlaw argued that, terrorism *“is as much a tool of states and governments as of revolutionaries and political extremists. It is all too easy to focus on the outlandish activities of small groups to the exclusion of the institutionalized, “official” terrorism practiced by a number of readily identifiable regimes”* (Wardlaw 1982, p.9). Based on Wardlaw’s definition, political terrorism is *“the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators”* (Wardlaw 1982, p. 16). Wilkinson (1974, p.17), shared the same position, that is, political terrorism is defined as *“a sustained policy involving the waging of organized terror either on the part of the state, a movement or faction, or by a small group of individuals.”* Hacker (1977) distinguished between terrorism from “above” and terrorism from “below” to make it clear that it can be utilized in the exercise of authority as well as in a challenge to authority. Schmid and Janny (1982, p.2) argued that *“state terrorism is the main terrorist problem in a world where as many as 117 states violate human rights in one way or another.”*

Vetter & Gary (1991, p.9) agreed that *“Government or state terrorism within the domestic political process in some countries has grown to staggering proportions...”* In Latin America, the high level of insurgent or agitational terrorism, which has concentrated mainly on bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations, has been far exceeded by the level of enforcement terrorism performed by, and on behalf of, ruling governments.” Coady (1985, p.57) recognizes that the term “terrorism” is employed in very emotional and partizan contexts, and he finds no philosophical justification for applying a different moral standard to the evaluation of the state and non-state use of violence. Coady argues that *“many condemnations of terrorism are subject to the charge of inconsistency, if not hypocrisy, because they insist on applying one kind of morality to the State’s use of violence in war (either international or civil or anti-insurgency) and another kind altogether to the use of violence by the non-State agent (e.g., the revolutionary)”* Coady identified three ways of evaluating the morality of violence when it is used as a means to an end. First, the pacifist perspective explains that violence can never be morally acceptable even when it is used for good ends. Second, the utilitarian, on the contrary, assesses the effectiveness of violence in terms of its effectiveness toward a good end. Lastly, the internal viewpoint considers not only the consequences of violent means but also the nature of the violence itself, that is, whether it is disproportionate or barbaric or directed at morally inappropriate targets. Coady observes that the hypocritical tendency is to justify state terrorism by applying a utilitarian standard and to condemn insurgent terrorism by invoking an internal standard.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS)

What is conventionally known as Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) today started with a series of conversations among scholars in the United Kingdom in early 2006 concerning the generally identified poor state of terrorism-related research, particularly as it has developed since September 11, 2001. Critical terrorism scholars have collectively highlighted certain challenges of orthodox terrorism research and provided extensive analysis for a new approach (Stohl, 1979; Herman, 1982; Schmid & Jongman, 1988; Burnett & Whyte, 2005; Ranstorp, 2006) (cited by Jackson 2010, p.3). This initial dialog has developed into a series of concrete research activities; conferences, panels, articles, journal symposiums, and an edited volume that sought to investigate, debate, and conceptualize the contours of an alternative and explicitly critical approach to the study of terrorism (Hulsse and Spencer, 2008; Jackson, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Jackson, Breen Smyth & Gunning, 2007, 2009c; Jarvis, 2009b; Joseph, 2009). CTS is broadly an approach to the study of terrorism that coalesces around a core set of ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical-normative commitments (cited by Jackson 2010, p.3). CTS is intellectually associated with an early set of criticisms of the terrorism studies field in the 1980s and 1990s from scholars in political economy and anthropology (see, for example, George, 1991; Zulaika & Douglass, 1996). It has its roots in the Welsh school of critical security studies with a focus on *"issues such as the state-centrism of terrorism studies, its problem-solving approach, its pro-Western bias, its tabooing of the terrorist subject and its disproportionate focus on so-called 'Islamic terrorism'"* (Achieng, Oando & Jackson 2023, p.63). Similar to the position of critical security studies within the broader field of security studies, CTS has gained a distinct subfield and approach within the wider terrorism studies field rooted in different types of critical theory, including the Frankfurt School-inspired critical theory, critical constructivism, post-structuralism, critical feminist security studies, historical materialism, and more recently decoloniality and critical race theory (Achieng, Oando & Jackson 2023). The prominent protagonists of this theory have defined its identified features as sets of ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical-normative commitments that distinguish it from the broader terrorism field (Gunning, 2007; Jackson, 2007; Jackson et al., 2011). The ontological position of the theory argues that terrorism is fundamentally a social fact rather than a brute fact because the decision to label an act of violence as an act of terrorism depends on judgments about the context, circumstances, and intent of the violence and a series of social, cultural, legal, and political processes of interpretation and labeling (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996). The epistemological position argues that creating knowledge is basically a social process that relies on a range of contextual and process-related factors, such as the social position of the researcher, the institutional context within which they conduct research, and the adopted methodology. This means that neutral knowledge, absolute or real 'truth' about terrorism is not a possibility, and that there is always an ideological, ethical-political dimension to the research process. The ontological and epistemological commitments of CTS have consequential effects on its methodology, whereby CTS is characterized by adopting the methodological and disciplinary pluralism and a refusal to privilege social scientific methods and approaches to terrorism research based on rationalism, empiricism, and positivism (Dixit & Stump, 2016).

Another significant proposition of this theory is that it coalesces involve a shift from state-centrism and making state security the central concern, to a focus on the security, freedom, and well-being of individuals (Toros & Gunning, 2009; Sluka, 2009). Jackson (2007) challenged mainstream terrorism to have attributed objective knowledge to the concept of terrorism rather than recognizing this form of political violence as a social construction shaped by dominant social structures and also emphasizes the need to prioritize human security rather than national security/state as the referent object in fighting terrorism, which is a way of controlling human rights violations emanating from both terrorism and counterterrorism (cited by Oluyemi 2023, p.299). CTS scholars tend to pay more attention to ending the suffering of human beings than bolstering the state. This does

not reflect the fact that CTS scholars are anti-state but the main priority is that one of the key yardsticks of legitimacy is whether an act or an organization (including states and oppositional groups) improves the well-being of human beings (Jackson, 2010). CTS opened up the widening/ broadening debates on terrorism with arguments providing critical framework to the conceptualization of terrorism alternatively to the traditional orthodox mainstream approach (Jackson 2016, 2008; Blakeley 2007; Jarvis 2009, 2016). CTS scholars have highlighted certain challenges of orthodox terrorism research, and the most appealing highlighted argument to this research explains that, one of the characterized features of terrorism is that it is a form of political violence practiced solely by non-state actors, and that states are excluded in the act of terrorism because they have the legitimate right to use violence. This is identified as one of the weaknesses of the orthodox conceptualization of terrorism because it is clear that terrorism is a term for describing a particular act or strategy of political violence. As a result, there is no deontological reason that precludes an actor, state, or non-state from engaging in acts of terrorism as part of a broader political strategy. The idea of denying states' agents that have embraced the same act of violence (terrorism) as non-state actors to be identified as the same such as; when they launch attack against civilian airliners (the Lockerbie bombing) or a protest ship (the Rainbow Warrior bombing), or plant a series of bombs in public places (the Lavon affair), or the killings of ENDSARS' peaceful protesters by the Nigerian armed forces on October 20, 2020, is completely illogical, biased and unreasonable. The legitimate right of state to use violence is considered problematic because it does not include the right to use extra-legal violence against its own citizens or the citizens of other states; genocide, ethnic cleansing, assassination, torture, and other such acts are all prohibited in international law (Jackson 2010, p.12). This theoretically condemns the fact that the attacks of Hamas against Israeli civilians are officially labeled as terrorist attacks, while the retaliatory attacks of Israeli armed forces in Gaza Strip that resulted in the death and displacement of thousands of Palestinians is precluded from the same labeling thus reemphasizes the need and urgency of affording official recognition to the crime of state terrorism by international law.

Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip: Historical Perspective

The Gaza Strip (which, along with the West Bank, forms the current Palestinian territories) is a small territory with a landmark of about 360 square kilometers, 41 kilometers long, and 6–12 kilometers wide. The Palestinian territories have been divided into two opposing governments since 2007, both geographically and politically (Tivadar, 2021). Israel captured Gaza for the first time in 1956 and the second time in 1967 from Egypt, in which it also took the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. In the years after, the eruption of the second Palestinian intifada in July 2000 following the failure of Camp David Summit to produce a final-status accord, Ariel Sharon, who was then the elected prime minister of Israel a year later, concluded that the best option for Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians was to sever Israel's ties to at least some parts of the occupied territories. Consequently, in August 2005, Sharon decided to withdraw Israel's presence from Gaza, dismantling settlements, redeploying Israeli forces, and leaving Gaza to the PA (Simon & Stevenson 2023, p.39). Interestingly, the Gaza Strip is still held captive in the middle of violence between its government (Hamas) and the state of Israel. Hamas, an acronym for *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya*, is a Palestinian Islamist branch that emerged in 1987 as an offshoot of the Palestinian branch of the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood (Levitt, 2006). On August 17, 1988, the Hamas movement published its official charter. The Charter was drafted by Abdul Fattah Dukhan before it was passed on to the administrative bureaus of the Muslim Brotherhood in West and Gaza (Karakaya, 2021). The main points in the charter include; total rejection of the State of Israel and asserting that the land of Palestine is an Islamic land consecrated for future Muslim generation until judgment day. The armed struggle is emphatically identified as the only way to liberation, rejection of negotiation with any power as it contradicted the principles

of Islamic movement and an Islamic identity that conformed with Islamic teachings. The pamphlets of the Charter were widely distributed to the Hamas' Shura Council for their acceptance (Abumbe, Terhile & Dede, 2024).

Following the capture of Gaza through military means by Hamas, Gaza has remained under the control of Hamas (considered a terrorist organization by the US, Israel, the EU, and others) since June 2007 after Gaza witnessed the withdrawal of the Israeli government, its armed forces, and settlers in August 2005 after 38 years of occupation (Tivadar, 2021). Israel-Hamas war in Gaza has been a longstanding and complex issue with deep historical roots. The root of this war is associated with the broader Arab-Israeli conflict and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, as well as territorial disputes over land, particularly in Gaza and the West Bank (Olson, 2012). The Israel-Hamas war is historically connected with the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which raises problems such as; the position of Jerusalem, the right to return for Palestinian refugees, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (Tubman, 2012, & Motala, 2016). The emergence of Hamas as an Islamist political and militant group in the late 1980s, its preponderance in Gaza and West Bank and winning of legislative elections in 2006, its use of violence against civilian populations, the international community, including Israel and the United States leading to its designation as a terrorist organization, and different violent confrontations with Israeli armed forces constitute the reality of Hamas and Israel in Gaza (Nwoboshi & Itumo, 2017).

The Israel-Hamas war has demonstrated several escalations whereby both sides have been engaging in military confrontations that have resulted in civilian casualties and increased humanitarian concerns in the Gaza Strip. The fight has historically affected the civilian population, leading to the rise of humanitarian crises in Gaza such as; casualties, displacement, and infrastructural damage. The Gaza Strip has been subject to Israeli blockade since 2007, following Hamas' takeover of the territory (Elystian, 2009). The blockade involved the restriction of the movement of goods and people, which had significant economic repercussions and contributed to high unemployment, poverty and lack of access to basic services. The Israel-Hamas war involved sporadic exchanges of rocket attacks by Hamas and other militant groups from Gaza and Israeli airstrikes, targeting civilian populations, which resulted in casualties and fear among Palestinian citizens (Fassihi, 2017). The Israeli military has conducted airstrikes to target Hamas infrastructure and rocket launch sites, leading to the destruction of critical infrastructure in Gaza (Bar-Tal & Raviv, 2021). The United States, on the other hand, has historically been a key ally of Israel, providing military and economic support. According to Bowen (2023), the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine in Gaza, which started on October 7, 2023, is a complex issue fueled by both historical grievances and competition for scarce land and water resources driven by national interest. According to Olson (2012), the war between Israel and Hamas is rooted in territorial conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians, more particularly over land in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, where both sides claim ownership of the same territories, leading to tensions and hostilities. Bar-Tal & Raviv (2021) argued that, the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 was a significant event that constituted the origin of the war because the establishment of the Israeli state resulted in the displacement and the creation of Palestinian refugee populations, fueling grievances and contributing to the ongoing war.

Adeniyi (2019) argued that, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem coupled with the establishment of Israeli settlements in these regions could be described as the major sources of the conflict because Palestinians consider these Israeli actions as a hindrance to the creation of a viable Palestinian state. Bar-Tal (2021) argued that the war between Israeli forces and Hamas in Palestine in the Gaza region is historically fueled by religious and nationalist sentiments in the sense that Jerusalem, a city sacred to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, holds deep significance for both Israelis and Palestinians, contributing to the religious dimension of the conflict. Zanotti and Sharp (2024) submitted that the security concerns of Israel, pointing out to rocket attacks

from Gaza and other security threats as major issues that led to military interventions, argued that the military actions of the Israeli government are necessary to ensure the protection of her citizens. Walker et al. (2024) argued that the blockade imposed on Gaza by Israel and Egypt, as a result of Hamas' ascension to political control in Gaza, resulted in humanitarian crisis, economic challenges, high unemployment, and limited access to necessities for the people of Gaza, which provoked Hamas attack against Israel, which has led to the ongoing war. Nwoboshi and Itumo (2017) found that global events and shifts in geopolitical dynamics have also influenced the Israeli-Hamas war because changes in regional alliances, the broader Arab-Israeli context, and shifts in international politics impact the dynamics on the ground. Mishal and Avraham (2000) "emphasized Hamas's resistance ideology and its opposition to the Israeli occupation as key drivers of the conflict. Zanotti (2024) argued that the impossibility of progress in achieving a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, despite various attempts and negotiations, perpetuates the cycle of violence and instability in the region, especially in Gaza. Yazbek et al. (2024) argued that the socio-economic conditions in Gaza, exacerbated by the Israeli blockade and recurrent conflicts, contribute significantly to the humanitarian crisis and horrific human rights violations in Gaza.

Historically, there have been several major Hamas-Israeli conflicts such as; Operation Cast Lead (2008), Southern Israel Cross-Border Attacks (August 2011), Operation Return Echo (March 2012), Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), and Operation "Swords of Iron" (2023) that have resulted in devastating civilian casualties and humanitarian crises in Gaza. In June 2006, Hamas launched an attack, captured the Israeli army, conscript Gilad Shalit in a cross-border raid from Gaza, prompted Israeli air raids and invasions that led to the death of approximately over 1,200 Palestinians. In December 2008, Israel launched a 22-day military offensive attack in Gaza after rockets were fired at the southern Israeli town of Sderot by Hamas, which led to the deaths of 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis. In November 2012, Israel killed the military chief of staff of Hamas, Ahmad Ja, and others, followed by 8 days of Israeli air raids on Palestine. Between July and August 2014, Hamas kidnaped and killed three Israeli teenagers, leading to a seven-week war that resulted in the deaths of over 2,100 Palestinians in Gaza and 73 Israelis, including 67 soldiers. In March 2018, the Palestinians started protests at Gaza's fenced border with Israel, and Israeli troops opened fire to keep them back, which resulted in another armed conflict between Hamas and Israeli forces leading to the deaths of over 183 Palestinians and around 6,000 injured. In May 2021, Israel launched air raids on Gaza as a violent reaction to rockets fired from Gaza, which led to an 11-day fight with over 260 Palestinians killed in Gaza, nearly 2000 were wounded, 13 Israelis died, and over 72, 000 Palestinians were displaced. In August 2022, Israeli planes carried out air attacks in Gaza, and as a response, Palestinian Islamic Jihad fired dozens of rockets into Israel, leading to the death of over 30 Palestinians, including women and children. In October 7 2023, Hamas launched a surprise sea and air attack on Southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, which resulted in the killing of over 1,200 Israeli civilians and Foreign Nationals, injured about 3,300 Israelis and taking hundreds of hostages that has provoked reprisal attacks from the Israeli forces, which has now become the deadliest war for the Palestinians since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war (Tukura & Tukura 2024, p.8-9). This Hamas attack has officially been labeled as terrorist attack and consequently, this research argues for the need to label the disastrous reprisal attacks of Israeli armed forces in the Gaza Strip as the same act of terrorism, a justification for the need to officially afford the same recognition given to terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors to state terrorism. Both the Hamas surprise attack and Israeli military forces' reprisal attacks have horribly violated human rights of civilians, with the latter being conducted with more severity than the former.

Israeli War in Gaza: State Terrorism and its Sponsors

While terrorism has been described as one of the most horrific criminal acts in human societies (Newman, 2006), it has also emerged as a relevant parameter shaping nation states politically, socially, economically, and culturally in the last few decades. It is observed that dominant and powerful states within the international system are using terrorism to shape their domestic and foreign policies, fostering a sense of fear among their citizens and around the world by directing the media and legitimizing the use of hard-power, including all sorts of conventional weapons in the fight against terrorism. Consequently, leading states in the world who are also permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) together with international organizations in the fight against terrorism have committed acts of state terrorism. These states, in the fight against terrorism, through their counterterrorism military operations, or for the sake of their national security, have committed terrorist acts against their citizens or civilians of another state. State terrorism has been disregarded as a war crime, and crime against humanity and as a result, it has favored aggressor states and international organizations. State terrorism is defined as terrorist acts perpetrated by a state against another state or its citizens. This involves premeditated, politically-motivated violence carried out by undercover state agents against non-combatant targets (Pillar, 2001). The idea that an attack or perpetrated killing by states' agents uniformed or other identifiable armed forces or state security is not terrorism is the official disregard for state terrorism (Falk, 2002: 11). It is also observed that, state-performed terrorism around the world is deadlier and destructive than terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors. This is a reality of the fact that state-perpetuated terrorism is relatively superior in terms of the number of weapons, equipment, intelligence information, and personnel, and thus cannot be compared with non-state actors' terrorist acts; thus, state terrorism should be subject to the laws of war due to the responsibilities of states regarding international law (Koncagül, 2021, p. 325) (Cited by Gökhan, 2024).

When the state armed forces commit horrific human rights violations, destroy civilian property, or confront humanitarian crises in their reprisal attacks against terrorist attacks, the idea of state terrorism becomes inevitably evident. After the attacks of 7 October 2023 in which Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, Israeli armed forces launched an immediate aerial response, followed by a ground invasion that continued into January 2025. According to El-Shewy, Griffiths & Jones, (2025, p.78-79), the ferocity of Israeli reprisal attacks has been described as something unprecedented, whereby within the first week, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) had dropped more than 6,000 bombs weighing 4,000 tonnes that displaced or killed thousands of Palestinians. By the beginning of November, the number of Gazans struck by bombs weighing more than 25,000 tonnes had risen to 12,000. An investigation carried out concerning the October 31 bombing of the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza that resulted in the death of 50 Palestinians concluded that *"the munition is almost certainly JDAM, either a GBU 31 (Warhead Mark 84) general purpose bomb or possibly a GBU 56 (Warhead BLU 109) bunker buster (that both weigh) about 2,000lb (900kg)"* (Graham-Harrison et al. 2023). Based on this investigation, the GBUs (Guided Bomb Units) used in Jabalia and other isolatable October attacks were produced in the U.S. by Boeing or under license in Israel. An Al Jazeera investigation into multiple air strikes (including Jabalia) a few days later (3 November) reported that *"the workhorse of the Gaza bombing campaign is the F-16"*, a fighter jet produced by Lockheed Martin and modified for the IAF by Elbit Systems and other corporations (Kusovac, 2023). On November 10, 2023, the IAF claimed more than 15,000 targets had been attacked, and hundreds more were attacked by ground forces, giving a median average of 430 targets per day (Scientists for Global Responsibility, 2024). By the end of November, the wave of Israeli military violence had destroyed 280,000 homes (60% of all homes) in Gaza and killed 13,300 Palestinians. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, called for an investigation into Israel's use of *"high-impact explosive weapons"* in built-up areas

(on 10 November) as the US State Department (on 6 November) approved the sale of \$320m of Rafael USA guided bombs to Israel (The New York Times 2023). By mid-December, Israel had dropped 29,000 bombs on Gaza, with the reported number of homes damaged to be around 439,000 (70% of all homes), as well as almost all religious, educational, and utilities infrastructure (Malsin & Shah, 2023).

As detailed by Takura and Takura (2024, p.10), by November 30, 2023, there are more 22,000 people killed in Gaza. As of December 31, 2023, over 26, 124 Palestinians were killed, including 11,422 children, 5, 822 women, 481 health workers, and 97 journalists (92 Palestinians, 2 Israeli & 3 Lebanese), and over 54, 822 Palestinians were injured (Gaza Health Ministry, 2024). As of January 31, 2024, more than 29, 422 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, and over 65, 087 Palestinians were injured (Salama, 2024). On February 29, 2024, over 30,000 Palestinians were killed and more than 69,333 people were injured (Gaza Health Ministry, 2024). As of March 31, 2024, over 32, 184 Palestinians were killed, and over 72, 889 others were injured. As of April 30, 2024, more than 35, 000 Palestinians and 1, 410 Israelis were killed, including 224 humanitarian aid workers and 179 employees of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA, 2024). As of May 31, 2024, over 36, 284 Palestinians were killed, and over 82, 057 were injured. On June 13, 2024, more than 37, 232 people were killed and 85, 037 were injured (Gaza Health Ministry, 2024). According to El-Shewy, Griffiths & Jones, (2025), by early 2024, the Gaza Media Office put the number of bombs dropped at 45,000 and the total weight at 65,000 tonnes, identifying specifically “bunker-busting bombs of types (BLU-113), (BLU-109), (SDBS), the American type (GBU-28), guided by GPS systems white phosphorus, smart bombs, and Halberd Gudum missiles” (Middle East Monitor 2024). A mid-January report by Oxfam (2024) estimated the average deaths per day in Gaza (250) to be significantly higher than “any recent major armed conflict including Syria (96.5 deaths per day), Sudan (51.6), Iraq (50.8), Ukraine (43.9), Afghanistan (23.8) and Yemen (15.8). The International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered its interim ruling on the case brought by South African lawyers that Israel was engaged in acts that could plausibly violate the Genocide Convention. The human rights implications of the Hamas attack of October 7 are nothing compared to the various human rights violations and destruction of civilian properties committed by the Israeli armed forces in Gaza, which has either been described as ethnic cleansing or genocide but preferably defined within the tenet of state terrorism in this research and the various military assistance offered to Israel in perpetrating these terrorist attacks by the United States is considered as sponsor of state terrorism.

Historically, the United States and the United Kingdom are the biggest supporters of the State of Israel in all aspects of global relations (Freedman, 2012; Kolander, 2020), together with the various contributions from Europe to this regard (Greene & Rynhold, 2018). Consequently, Chomsky (2002, p.224) has identified the U.S. as a sponsor of state terrorism, whereby states around the world are incapacitated to defend themselves against the U.S aggressive counterterrorism policies, which has become a doctrine since the 1980s and most significantly after the attacks of 9/11. The simple message of this doctrine states that "no one has the right to defend against US terrorist attacks, and the US is a terrorist state by right". Additionally, the U.S. has legitimized the organization of a terrorist army of proxies to subjugate unsubmitive people (Yalçiner, 2006, p.106). The consequential outcomes of various Israeli military operations over civilian lives and properties in Gaza since October 7, 2023 are evidence pointing to the fact that the Israeli state has become an aggressor of state terrorism, and the continuous military and financial assistance from the United States to sponsor Israeli military operations in Gaza evidentially criminalizes the U.S as a sponsor of state terrorism. El-Shewy, Griffiths, and Jones (2025, p.79) stated that on February 23, 2024, the UN issued a statement citing the Geneva Conventions of 1949: “*States must accordingly refrain from transferring any weapon if it is expected, given the facts or past patterns of behavior, that they would be used to violate international law*” (OHCHR, 2024).

Even given this stance, the ICJ ruling, and isolated export pauses (e.g., from Japan and the Netherlands), the flow of arms to Israel has not been stemmed; in mid-February, the US Senate passed a package of \$14bn in extra funding for Israel's military in addition to its annual \$3.8bn signed-off by the Obama administration for the period 2017–2028. On February 20, the United States vetoed a UN Security Council Resolution (S/2024/173) calling for a ceasefire. In early March 2024, The Washington Post reported that, in addition to the military aid noted above, more than 100 "Foreign Military Sales" (FMS) (a bureaucratic mechanism that sidesteps scrutiny in Congress) have been approved and delivered to Israel (Hudson 2024a), as the use of US military stockpiles that have been maintained in Israel since the 1980s (Davies & Ganguly, 2023). Consequently, by September 2024, Israel's military operations have killed more than 41,000 people in Gaza. The war on Gaza continues, even after a UN Security Council Resolution (S/RES/2728) ordering a ceasefire was finally passed on 25 March. According to UNICEF (2025), the devastating war of 15 months in Gaza has resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip whereby most children have lost access to quality healthcare, education, water, and other vital services. At least 14,500 children have been killed in the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023, representing an average of 32 children killed every day, and many more are injured, while thousands are likely under the rubble, and an estimated 17,000 children are unaccompanied and/or separated. According to Aljazeera (2025), within the period of 15 months of Israeli reprisal attacks, at least 46,707 people in Gaza have been killed, including about 18,000 children, and many analysts and rights groups believe the real number of people killed is far higher. The death toll means that one out of every 50 people in Gaza has been killed. At least 110,265 people have been injured in Gaza because of the war, which is one in 20 people. In addition, an estimated 85,000 tonnes of explosives were dropped on Gaza, according to the Environmental Quality Authority of Palestine. Experts predicted it could take more than a decade to clear debris left by the bombing, which totals more than 42 million tonnes, according to the UN Development Programme. Nearly 1.9 million people in Gaza are internally displaced, of whom nearly 80% live in makeshift shelters without adequate clothing or protection from the cold.

According to Amnesty International (2024), on October 7, 2023, Israel embarked on a military offensive on the occupied Gaza Strip (Gaza) of unprecedented magnitude, scale, and duration. Since then, it has carried out relentless aerial and ground attacks, many of them with large explosive weapons, which have caused massive damage and flattened entire neighborhoods and cities across Gaza, along with their life-supporting infrastructure, agricultural land, and cultural and religious sites and symbols deeply engrained in Palestinians' collective memory. Israel's military offensive operations have killed and seriously injured tens of thousands of Palestinians, including thousands of children, many of them in direct or indiscriminate attacks, often wiping out the entire multigenerational families. The state of Israel has forcibly displaced 90% of Gaza's 2.2 million inhabitants, forcing them to live in conditions that expose them to slow and calculated death. Israel has deliberately obstructed or denied the import and delivery of life-saving goods and humanitarian aid. It has restricted power supplies that, with damage and destruction, have led to the collapse of water, sanitation, and health care systems. It has subjected hundreds, if not thousands, of Palestinians from Gaza to incommunicado detention and acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. On 13 October 2023, the Israeli military issued its first mass 'evacuation' order, instructing some 1.1 million people, the entire population living in the north of Wadi Gaza, to move to the area south of Wadi Gaza 'for their safety and protection', and failing to take measures to ensure the displaced population's access to basic necessities. The order applied to hundreds of thousands of people who were already displaced and were sheltering in UN schools, as well as all patients and staff working in 23 hospitals and medical facilities in the area. The level and speed of damage to and destruction of homes and infrastructure across all sectors of economic activity has not been seen in any other conflict in the 21st century, with remote sensing experts

noting that it was “much faster and more extensive” than anything they had mapped before. About 62% of all homes in Gaza were damaged or destroyed by January 2024, affecting approximately 1.08 million people according to a joint Interim Damage Assessment published by the World Bank, the EU and the UN in March 2024. By July 2024, approximately 63% of the total structures in Gaza had been damaged or destroyed, according to a UN Satellite Center (UNOSAT) satellite imagery-based assessment. Amnesty International estimated that, on average, there would be one damaged or destroyed building every 17metres in Gaza by then. Meanwhile, 625,000 students missed out on an entire academic year, with an estimated 85% of schools having sustained some form of damage (Amnesty International 2024, p.15-16).

The devastating Israeli reprisal attacks in Gaza have been aided by the US military assistance. Congressional Research Service (2024) detailed the U.S-Israeli cooperation with the emphasis that there has been a long-standing multifaceted bilateral security coordination of the U.S-Israeli relationship whereby U.S. law requires the executive branch to take certain actions to preserve Israel’s “qualitative military edge (QME)” and expedites aid and arms sales to Israel in various ways. This is a 10-year bilateral military aid memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed in 2016 and committed by the United States to provide Israel \$3.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and to spend \$500 million annually on joint missile defense programs from FY2019 to FY2028. The MOU also legalizes supplemental aid in emergencies, such as in the event of an armed conflict. As a reaction to the ongoing Israeli war in Gaza, the Congress has allocated more than \$12.6 billion in regular and supplemental FY2024 appropriations to the Departments of State and Defense, specifically in support of Israel. It is observed that lawmakers appropriated the funding without imposing any conditions limiting the use of U.S. weapons for Israel. The rapid rate of U.S. arms exports to Israel during the ongoing conflict has generated increased congressional scrutiny since October 7, 2023, whereby upon the issuance of NSM-20, there was continued scrutiny from some lawmakers, together with additional reports of U.S. munitions used as airstrikes in Gaza that have resulted in Palestinian and other civilian casualties. On April 1, an Israeli drone strike killed seven humanitarian workers from the World Central Kitchen (WCK) organization (including a U.S. citizen); the Israeli government described the strike as a “grave mistake (Congressional Research Service, 2024)

Some analysts assessed that President Biden had implicitly threatened “to slow U.S. arms transfers to Israel or to temper U.S. support at the U.N.” If Israel did not take certain steps to control the civilian casualties and humanitarian crisis arising from its various military attacks in Gaza. In May 2024, a report of U.S. officials confirmed that the Biden Administration was making necessary efforts to review some near-term security assistance” for Israel and had consequently paused a shipment of 2,000 pound bombs and 500-pound bombs, based on concern about their potential use in Gaza’s southernmost province of Rafah. Although the administration later released the shipment of 500-pound bombs, as of July 2024, it was reportedly continuing to review the shipment of 2,000-pound bombs. In August 2024, during a congressional recess, the administration formally notified Congress of five potential Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to Israel for over \$20 billion, including up to 50 new F-15IA fighter aircraft and additional F-15 upgrades Caterpillar D9 tractors, arguing that “further delays will endanger Israeli lives, increase the likelihood that the conflict will escalate further, and harm American national security interests.” On September 26, Israeli defense officials issued a statement that they had reached an agreement with U.S. counterparts on technical details for the use of \$8.7 billion in U.S. assistance (possibly from FY2024 supplemental appropriations in P.L. 118-50) on various U.S., Israeli, and co-produced weapons systems, and that the aid package reflected the “strong and enduring strategic partnership between Israel and the United States and the ironclad commitment to Israel’s security (CRS 2024, p.11-12).

Discussion and Conclusions

The perpetrators of terrorist crime of killing civilians and destruction of civilian properties cannot be rationally designated as non-state actors' criminal acts. Both states and non-state actors are eligible to commit this crime, which is the rationale behind the eventuality of terrorism and state terrorism. The devastating consequences of Israeli reprisal attacks over non-combatants in Gaza, which has been described as genocidal attack, is considered by the findings of this research to be more brutal than the terrorist attacks of Hamas on October 7, 2023. Arguably, the Hamas attack is a direct violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms such as; violation of rights to life, the right against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, rights to freedom of movement, association and assembly and the right to sound physical and mental health. The violent incident recorded unlawful interference with privacy, enforced disappearances and abductions, restrictions to freedom of expression and media freedom, including violence or threats against journalists, and violation of right to liberty and security of the person. Approximately 1,100 civilians were killed, over 5,400 were injured, and the abduction of around 253 hostages led to the setting ablaze of houses and valuable civilian properties. Based on the findings of this research, the criteria of considering the October 7 Hamas attacks as terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and the state is not different from the consequential outcomes of Israeli reprisal attacks against Gazans, reinforcing the fact that civilians have become victims/targets of both terrorism (Hamas attacks) and counterterrorist military operations of the Israeli state. There is credible evidence that the state of Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip. Israeli officials have used dehumanizing language in their public statements and speeches, describing Palestinians in Gaza as human animals. They have also been unequivocal in the goal of maximum harm, stating that the emphasis is on damage and not on accuracy, using fire of a magnitude that the enemy has not known. Since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war following the killing of an estimated 1,100 Israelis on October 7, 2023, over 50,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed and 1.4m out of 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza have been internally displaced. Additionally, considering the horrific situation of human rights violations and humanitarian crises in Gaza as a result of the ongoing Israeli reprisal attacks, the massive military assistance made available and obtainable for Israel by the United States to aid Israeli military operations in Gaza has attracted the attention of this research. Based on the findings of this research, the outcomes of Israeli military operations in Gaza are defined within the basic tenets of state terrorism, and the U.S. military assistance is considered a sponsor of state terrorism.

Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 guarantees the right to life; thus, everyone has the right to life liberty and personal security. The state of Israel has an obligation under international law to respect and protect the right to life of inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli state also has an obligation to ensure the protection of its nationals and non-nationals residing in Israel or the Gaza Strip. It becomes questionable and disturbing when a state, in the act of protecting or responding to terrorist attacks against its people, embraces terrorist means through the violation of human rights and the killing of civilians. The duty of a state to ensure the protection of its national security and its people cannot be carried out at the detriment of human rights protection and humanitarian prevention. The state of Israel (IDF) has embraced deliberate targeted killings to eliminate specific individuals as an alternative to arresting them and bringing them to justice; shoot-to-kill law enforcement policies are deployed in response to perceived terrorist threats. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 provides for the right to torture: 'No one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. On the same vein, Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 states that 'No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; in particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific

experimentation. The 2023 country reports on Human Rights practices on Israel, West Bank, and Gaza by the United States Department of State confirmed the cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the Israel defense forces (IDF). Human rights organizations raised concerns over reports of systemic torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli facilities after October 7. Prisoners are being tortured to death in some detention centers in Israel, as captured by the 2023 country reports on Human Rights practices in Israel, West Bank, and Gaza. The right to liberty and security of a person emphasizes that all persons are protected against unlawful or arbitrary interference with their liberty. All the military measures adopted by the state of Israel to combat Hamas terrorists since 7 October 2023 have violated the right to liberty and security of individuals (Oyepho, 2024). The need to start holding states accountable for human rights violations is becoming alarming, which is only a possibility when state terrorism is officially recognized as a punishable crime under various international conventions. This could also facilitate an enabling environment for (a) state armed forces to be regulated and measured during their internal security involvements (b) states to consider more peaceful alternative approaches to address internal conflicts or uprisings (c) both states and international organizations would regulate their military counterterrorism operations in a way to adequately respect human rights and controllably manage civilian casualties (Atta, 2022, p.16) (cited by Oluyemi 2023, p.304).

Furthermore, acts that constitute crimes against humanity were first defined in the Nuremberg Charter, Control Council Law No. 10, the Tokyo Charter, and the statutes of ad hoc tribunals. Acts prohibited in the latest Rome Statute are defined in detail. Today, to determine the material elements of crimes against humanity, international criminal law first requires that these crimes be committed within a specific, general context; once these conditions are met, the individual material elements differ for all crimes (Cassese, 2008, p. 109). The context of crimes against humanity as defined today includes: “*Acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population.*” (Günel, 2013, p. 51). The deliberate and systematic destruction of an entire people or ethnic group has been called the “crime of all crimes.” It is observed that among the many problems confronting humankind during the last quarter of the 20th century, the most pressing problem is the mass killing of defenseless citizens by states’ agents or armed forces. According to the Convention on crime against humanity, it encompasses: “(a) *Killing of members of the group; (b) Causing serious harm to the physical or mental integrity of group members; (c) Intentionally subjecting the group to conditions of life likely to result in its partial or total destruction of its physical existence; (d) taking measures aimed at preventing births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring the children of this group to another group*” is sufficient to constitute the crime of genocide (Günel, 2013, p. 51-55, 58). Based on these definitions, it is evidentially considerable to argue that the state of Israel has been committing crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023. According to Gökhan, (2024), the IDF has deliberately, purposely, planned, and willingly tried to exterminate all people residing in Gaza through all means of ethnic cleansing. The IDF kills all people living in the Gaza Strip regardless of their targets. Additionally, Israel has continued to target settlements, hospitals, schools, mosques, and churches in its attacks on Gaza. It is observed that the IDF is not fighting against an army of another state in the Gaza Strip but has engaged actively in ethnic cleansing against the people of Gaza under the umbrella of counterterrorism, which is the rationale behind the topic of this research; Israeli war in Gaza instead of Israeli-Hamas’s conflict in Gaza as popularly mentioned within the literature and media. This research recognizes generally human rights’ implications of various military operations of states’ agents/armed forces around the world against their citizens, civilians of another states, and non-state actors in the fight against terrorism or protection of national security and

recommends the official definition and recognition of state terrorism as a punishable offense under international law as a means of subjecting states under proper control, most especially in African countries.

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