

Dehumanization Leads to War Crimes

We provide here the presentation of Lt. Col. (ret.) Anthony Aguilar to the International Peace Coalition Meeting, Friday, Aug. 8, 2025, reporting on his recent witnessing of war crimes while working for a subcontractor of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Subheads have been added. The video may be viewed [here](#).



Schiller Institute

Lt. Col. (ret.) Anthony Aguilar addressing the 114th meeting of the International Peace Coalition.

Aug. 8—Thank you, and thank you for having me on this platform. I think a lot of important discussion is happening today.

So, basically my experience was, I was hired as an independent security contractor for UG Solutions, which is a subcontractor under a greater contract with Safe Reach Solutions, which is the for-profit contract mechanism under what many have heard of as the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. So, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation is kind of the umbrella organization, but the organizations, the companies that are actually executing this humanitarian aid and assistance in Gaza are absolutely for-profit contract companies; they are there making money.

I've said it on many platforms in terms of what I've witnessed in terms of war crimes. I get a lot of pushback from people saying, "What you described aren't war crimes." Well, what I've described are exactly war crimes. I don't subscribe to it being war crimes just because it's on the news and you see someone beheading someone or somebody doing something grotesque. Those are certainly war crimes. But I call them war crimes based on what is prescribed and directed in the international humanitarian law, further codified therein by the protocols of the Geneva Convention, further codified in the laws of armed conflict. All of these are things that the United States is signatory to, along with Israel. I want to remind everybody that Israel is also a signatory to these things.

Is there a threat in Gaza? The threat of Hamas, the threat of an enemy? There absolutely is; I have never discredited or discounted that. However, there is also a very large, unarmed civilian population that is starving. They are on the brink of famine, if they haven't already

crossed into what can be described as famine. That is a fact. And anybody who says that there isn't mass starvation, or there aren't starving people in Gaza—that is irresponsible rhetoric and that should be condemned. There is starvation. War crimes are being committed when you have Israel Defense Force [IDF] soldiers and UG Solutions American contractors—who, mind you, are in the country on a tourist visa—who are firing at the crowd to control their movements; or firing at the crowd to keep them back from a certain area. That's just one example:

firing live ammunition, targeting an unarmed population for the means of controlling them is a war crime.

So, what all this has shown me, having been there, having been on the ground in Gaza, is that it seems to me that there is an active effort, an active campaign, if you will, to dehumanize the population. To label the entire population as the enemy, and then to further dehumanize the population through putting them in a position where they're literally begging for food. We have set up these distribution sites in areas that, in order to reach them, the Palestinians have to travel many, many kilometers to get there. When they do get there, it is a mass free-for-all, fight for survival, if you will, to get food at these locations. This further dehumanizes the population.

United States Complicity

My fear, based on the current information that is available [regarding] the proposal that Netanyahu is putting forth to go and re-occupy or occupy the entirety of Gaza once again, is, one: for the interests of the United States—we are complicit in that; they are using American weapons, they are using American bombs. Taxpayers' dollars are going into an American contract entity, an American contract mechanism that is making money. U.S. tax dollars going into a company that is making money to be a part of this forced displacement, if you will; putting Palestinians in danger. Regardless of the politics, beliefs and opinions aside, it is a fact that the distribution sites—the secured distribution sites where humanitarian aid is delivered and distributed in

Gaza—are built in the engagement areas of active combat zones. That’s a fact; I’ve been there and I’ve seen them. This, in and of itself, inherently puts a civilian population at great risk; just that piece alone should be condemned. The United States is absolutely complicit in that.

If Israel goes into a full occupation of Gaza, it will not be in Israel’s best interests, it will not be in the world’s best interests to occupy Gaza. To try to achieve a military defeat of Hamas is a fool’s errand. Hamas will not be militarily defeated. They have been militarily weakened, their leadership has been devastated. Now is the time for political and diplomatic actions, not military means. We have learned these lessons as a country in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Southern Philippines. I’ve been deployed to the Southern Philippines in the fight against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. We’ve been there since the 1950s, since the [early 20th-Century] days of General Pershing. We’ve learned that a military defeat of an organization of this nature is not going to achieve success. The full occupation of Gaza is only going to lead to much, much more death of a civilian population. It’s going to pull Israel into a quagmire of a conflict that will have no end. It is going to drag its allies into it with it—of which the United States is one.

So, I look at it through three different ways:

One: humanitarian rights, humanitarian law, Geneva Convention, international laws and treaties that the United States agrees to, that we hold as our values. We are violating those in Gaza every day. It’s like the tail wagging the dog, in terms of going along with whatever our ally says that we should do, rather than standing up to, or rather standing with our ally to hold them accountable for what is right. Because in the end, this is only going to severely damage Israel’s position and credibility on the world stage.

Two: the aspect of perception; that U.S. citizens are in Gaza, armed with fully automatic weapons, stun grenades, shotguns, machine guns, tear gas, used against an unarmed civilian population, mind you, that is starving. They come to these sites to get food. The unarmed population isn’t coming to these sites to protest or coming to these sites to try and incite an attack; they’re coming to these sites because we’re inviting them to come to these sites with food that they need to survive. And then, in return, they’re getting treated as if they were animals, as if they were sub-human. So, there is the aspect of the United States presence on the world stage and our American values. My message in spreading the truth of what I’ve seen in Gaza is not to shame

or belittle or criticize or blame. That’s on the world community. My position in this is to bring forth the truth so that the American people and the world have an honest assessment of what’s going on.

I think anyone can agree that, with the amount of secrecy in Gaza—no foreign press, no press can go in; no foreign entity or anybody who may speak out against the IDF or Israel. When I think about the secrecy and the hiding of the truth and the doublespeak and the language of, “Oh, no one’s being shot, and no one’s starving.” Then when you show ample evidence to the contrary, then the narrative turns to, “OK, well, some people are starving, and some people are being shot, but Hamas is bad.” You create these red herring arguments. So, when you think secrecy, and red herring arguments deflecting blame, there are other countries in the world that do that. North Korea. Is that the line-up that we want to be with, in terms of how we engage in the world and how we prosecute conflicts and wars? I don’t think so.

The third aspect I look to is Israel, an ally, and their position in the world. If they continue down this path to where it is now evident to the world that there is starvation; it is evident to the world that it is seemingly systematic and that it’s done intentionally. If Israel does not change their approach of what they’re doing, to include not going forth with a full-scale invasion of Gaza; if they continue on this path, this trajectory, they’re only going to harm their position on the world stage. They will lose allies and supporters, and they will make themselves more of a target and isolate themselves to the point where they will not have support in the future.

Again, I always make an attempt to take in all perspectives, everyone’s view, why someone thinks the way they do. I did not lose a close family member or a fellow citizen on October 7th. So, it would be unfair of me to say, “This is how an Israeli or the IDF should feel.” That would be unfair of me to say that. However, regardless of the justification of a war, regardless of the justification of the reasoning to take action against a perceived enemy, there are values and guidelines and rules and laws and treaties that dictate and establish how that should be done. These maintain responsibility and accountability in our world; that’s what we’ve been doing for hundreds of years. From what I have witnessed, just looking at the facts as they are, there are war crimes being committed in Gaza. There are crimes against humanity being committed in Gaza. If that’s being done intentionally, or just through the mission creep and the fog and friction of war, I don’t know. But I invite the world to investigate and to look at that.

Coming Day of Reckoning

I've said this before, and I'll say it again in ending here: A day of atonement, a day of judgment, a day of reckoning is coming. More and more of the world is waking up to what's going on in Gaza; it cannot be ignored. The months and months and months of, "Oh, there's no starvation. Oh, there's no mass killing; women and children aren't dying. That's all made up." That rhetoric has been exposed. And a day of reckoning is coming when the world is starting to take a hard, hard look.

It's like a box; and when that box is opened, and we look in there and see what's truly going on, the world is going to demand accountability. Now is the time—not next week, not next year, not after; now is the time for the United States to stand and hold our ally accountable. Because if we do not, the world is going to hold *us* accountable right alongside of them; right alongside Israel. It will not be to the benefit of Israel, the United States, and, quite frankly, the world.

The thing is, we know this; we can see it. There's ample evidence, not just from me, not just from one American who was there. I share these stories with you not as someone who read the newspaper or read an article and applied some kind of opinion to it. I was there on the ground, seeing it with my own eyes, witnessing it firsthand.

But even beyond that, if you can't take my word for it, the evidence includes IDF soldiers who, in the last week, have come forth to confirm many of the things that I have said. So, what I would ask is, let's look at the truth and let's take an honest assessment of our position in the world right now, and choose the right path. Because if we do not, we will be on the wrong side of history as a nation. That's something that I don't want, and I'm sure that's something no one here wants.

Discussion Period Returns to Subject of 'Dehumanization'

The dehumanization aspect is something that I have seen time and time again. I remember as a young lieutenant, as we were going into Iraq, the post-invasion counterinsurgency world was new to America, in terms of conventional war transitioning into a counterinsurgency-type war with a long duration of staying in that nation. It's something the United States as an Army was not prepared for. I'm not saying the United States hadn't experienced it in other places before—Vietnam, [the] Moro [people in the] Philippines, other places, etc. But at this scale in terms of a conventional fight transition-

ing into a counterinsurgency fight to where the conventional army was a player in it... [audio loss]

The names and things we give to our enemy, or just to the population. We've all heard these horrible things. I'll say them, not that they're my beliefs, but they're things that have been said. In Iraq, we called them "rag-heads," or in the Philippines calling the Filipinos "flips," and things like that that you hear. This dehumanization not only comes through in how we act, but in our language and what we call people and how that conveys it. The same thing in Gaza; the UG Solutions personnel on the ground—who, by the way, the contract leader, the guy in charge of the contract, is a high-ranking officer in the Infidels Motorcycle Club that claims to [believe in] the downfall of all Arabs and all Muslims. He's the guy in charge of the security contracts; the guy who wears a tattoo that says "Infidel." They call the Palestinians the "zombies"; they call them the "shit heads"; they call them just horrible names. All of that is part of the dehumanization. You don't refer to them as human beings; you refer to them as some name that dehumanizes them. Then it's easier to not see them as a human. Then, when they're crawling around on the ground, trying to pick up food to survive, they're subservient to you, and you have all the power. That's another step of dehumanization. When you lie about their plight, when you lie about their struggle—"Oh, they're not starving; they're fine."—you dehumanize them further.

What's really sad and striking to me, is that dehumanization is not just coming from the uneducated and the ignorant. That dehumanization is coming from the likes of Ambassador Huckabee, [who claimed] "There's no starvation." Come on; the American people aren't dumb; we can see it. Or, what was striking was that Ambassador Huckabee and Mr. Witkoff went to visit one of the sites in Gaza recently. Parts that were cut out of the mainstream media that I saw, the video that was shot was that they're saying, "Oh, the IDF aren't shooting at the civilians." During their visit, just outside the site, you can hear constant machine gun fire. OK, somebody is shooting somebody. It's just the blatant lies in the face of the truth that to me is concerning.

What changes that is the American people speaking up and saying, "We won't tolerate that." But the dehumanization aspect, yes, you and I, sir, [referring to Ray McGovern, another speaker on the call], we've seen that. We've seen that in conflict; we've seen that in places around the world. That is often an approach by one enemy to another, to dehumanize the population, because then it makes it more palatable to oppress them.