From Sacha Wigdorovits

In the NZZ am Sonntag of 24 November, Adina Rom and Shelley Berlowitz claimed that Israel had committed genocide in its war in Gaza against the terrorist organization Hamas.

As if to underline this, they pointed out that they were Jewish. Which should probably mean: If even we Jews think that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza, then it must be so.

Contrary to what Berlowitz and Rome suggested, this opinion is hardly shared by any Swiss Jews.

What is the basis for the claim that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza? On four accusations: 1. the large number of victims (the health authority in Gaza speaks of 60,000). 2. the fact that the Israeli army has also attacked hospitals, schools and homes. 3. the UN's claim that there was a famine in Gaza because Israel had temporarily banned the delivery of aid. 4. statements by some far-right Israeli politicians that the population of Gaza must be destroyed or expelled.

All four arguments are not proof that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. On the contrary, there are numerous facts that prove exactly the opposite.

Even the figure of 60,000 fatalities, as horrific as it seems, must be put into perspective. Not only because it is unverifiable and comes from a Hamas authority, but also because no distinction is made between civilians and combatants. The fact that an above-average proportion of the victims were male and of adult age points to the latter. Namely that many of those killed were terrorists.

Even clearer proof that Israel had no intention of committing genocide in Gaza was provided by the behavior of the army. It warned the population in the area in question of its attacks by means of text messages, phone calls and leaflets and gave them escape routes so that they could flee to safety. Genocide is different.

The Israeli attacks on hospitals, schools and residential buildings were also not carried out to kill civilians, but because Hamas fighters were operating from there. In this case, the law of war (Article 52 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions) allows attacks on such facilities, as they are then considered "military".

The same applies to the temporary ban on the import of aid, which Israel has occasionally applied at the borders with Gaza. Article 23 of the Geneva Conventions permits such a blockade if there is a risk that the aid could be used by the enemy for military purposes.

This was the case in Gaza: videos, drone footage and eyewitnesses proved many times over that Hamas hijacked aid transports in order to hoard them for themselves or sell them on the black market to fill their own war chest.

The accusation that there was a famine in Gaza due to the blockade of aid deliveries was also unfounded. In order to be able to denounce Israel for this, the UN defined the term “famine” for Gaza twice as broadly as it usually does, for example in Sudan.

Finally, the argument that Israeli politicians on the extreme right have themselves expressed genocidal intentions is just as misguided. This is true and unacceptable. But to infer a government policy from this is absurd and malicious.

For all these reasons, the accusation that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza is unfounded. This allegation has only one goal: to delegitimize the Jewish state. But defamation does not create “clarity”. Only the truth can do that.

So the question remains: Where does the obsession of Western, including certain Jewish circles, to demonize Israel in connection with the Gaza war come from?

Slovakian author Jan Kapusnak gave the answer to this question recently in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung. He diagnosed the West as being increasingly plagued by a guilty conscience and self-hatred due to its successes and history under the influence of the political left. And the perfect target for projecting this self-hatred outwards is the economically successful, technologically advanced, militarily strong, democratic and self-confident Israel.

“The Jewish state is becoming a lightning rod for the sins of its own imperial and colonial era,” writes Kapusnak in the NZZ, and concludes soberly with the words: “The Western world has already strayed far from its moral foundations under the influence of widespread anti-Semitic propaganda – and the time to change course is running out.”

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