



Afterism and the False Narrative of Calm: How Ceasefires Mask the Occupation in Palestine

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Periods of relative calm, ceasefires, or political negotiations in Palestine are often weaponized to create a deceptive narrative that the conflict is "over" or improving. International media and diplomatic efforts frequently frame these moments as progress toward peace, yet they actually serve to normalize and entrench the Israeli occupying state's systems of control, settler colonialism, and land annexation. These "quiet periods" are portrayed as progress, masking the ongoing structural violence that persists beneath the surface.

During these so-called calm moments, the Israeli occupying state tightens its grip on Palestinian land and life through the expansion of illegal settlements, territorial annexations, and economic sieges, particularly in Gaza. Rather than ceasing during ceasefires, settler colonial practices often accelerate under the cover of global inattention. Palestinians continue to endure land confiscations, home demolitions, and severe economic restrictions, while the global narrative shifts its focus from ongoing human rights violations to the mere absence of open conflict. This form of Afterism enables the Israeli occupying state to consolidate gains made during violent escalations and further deepen control over Palestinian lives during periods of supposed peace.

Afterism normalizes the occupation by framing temporary political negotiations or ceasefires as indicators of progress while erasing the lived realities of Palestinians under military control. Political agreements, such as those seen under the Oslo Accords, are often used to suggest that the conflict is moving toward resolution. However, these negotiations frequently coincide with continued settlement expansion and other policies that further marginalize Palestinians, providing no real pathway to self-determination. This illusion of peace serves only to reinforce the status quo, allowing the Israeli occupying state to maintain its grip under the guise of diplomacy.

The silence during these "quiet periods" is just as harmful as the preceding violence. When international attention fades, the ongoing structural violence of settler colonialism thrives unchecked. Economic blockades, especially in Gaza, remain a severe burden, depriving Palestinians of essential resources and stifling their economy. The international community often uses these calm periods to reset the narrative, highlighting ceasefire agreements rather than addressing the continued siege and displacement of Palestinians, thus obscuring the conflict's root causes.

These insights prompt critical questions: How do calm periods obscure ongoing structural violence and oppression? What role does the international community play in sustaining this narrative of normalization, which perpetuates injustice? And perhaps most importantly, how can Palestinians resist not only military violence but the global erasure of their struggle during these so-called peaceful periods?

Ultimately, we must confront the global silence that follows each ceasefire or political negotiation, which allows structural violence to continue. Can international actors be held accountable for their role in normalizing the occupation by focusing solely on overt violence? How can the international community ensure that the end of direct conflict does not equate to the erasure of Palestinian suffering? Addressing these questions is crucial for understanding how Afterism perpetuates the occupation under the illusion of peace.

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From Ceasefire to Surveillance: How Afterism Perpetuates the Control of Palestinian Lives

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In this column we explore how the Israeli occupation of Palestine extends beyond military aggression, transforming ceasefire periods into opportunities for deepening control through advanced surveillance technologies. Al-Haq's 2019 report, *The Surveillance Industry and Human Rights: Israel's Marketing of the Occupation of Palestine*, uncovers how the Israeli occupying state turns moments of calm into a testing ground for its security apparatus, using the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) as a laboratory for developing and refining weapons and surveillance systems. This exploitation underpins the broader strategy of Afterism—the illusion that conflict ends while, in reality, control is entrenched through new, subtler forms of repression.

Ceasefires are often celebrated as steps toward peace, yet in Palestine, they mark a shift from overt military violence to covert surveillance. Israeli companies like Elbit Systems and NSO Group take advantage of these periods to deploy and field-test their technologies on Palestinians. Tools like facial recognition systems and drones, used during military operations, are rebranded as “battle-tested” products and sold globally. This underscores how ceasefires do not signify relief for Palestinians but the continuation of occupation through advanced surveillance. The OPT becomes not just a battleground but a laboratory, with Palestinians living under constant monitoring and control, even during so-called peace periods.

The concept of Afterism is starkly evident in how Israeli companies market surveillance technologies post-conflict, boasting about their efficiency during military operations. These technologies are never truly about ensuring security but about reinforcing the occupation state's control over Palestinian lives. Under this framework, the “day after” a ceasefire is not a

step toward peace but a move toward more sophisticated tools of oppression. Ceasefires offer a chance for the Israeli occupying state to refine its technologies, further integrate surveillance into everyday life, and expand the market for these tools internationally, all while Palestinians remain under the same systemic oppression.

This analysis raises critical questions: How do ceasefires, marketed as steps toward peace, actually serve to reinforce systems of surveillance and control in Palestine? What role do global governments and corporations play in profiting from Israeli technologies that perpetuate these systems of repression? And, as surveillance becomes a more pervasive tool of occupation, how can Palestinians resist both military violence and the technological encroachment on their daily lives?

In this context, we must consider: How do we confront a world where ceasefires mask the continuation of control through surveillance? Can international regulations address the global spread of technologies tested on oppressed populations? And ultimately, how can Palestinians reclaim their future in a landscape where their present is exploited for profit under the guise of post-conflict normalization?

[AlHaq.](#)



"Day-After in Palestine: 1937-2024" by Raja Khalidi

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In his piece, *Day-After in Palestine: 1937-2024*, Raja Khalidi provides a profound critique of the repeated failures by external actors in devising post-conflict strategies for Palestine. Khalidi conceptualizes this failure as "dayafterism," wherein international stakeholders, notably the U.S. and European nations, craft visions for the "Day After" for Palestinians without adequately accounting for the historical intricacies, contemporary realities, or Palestinian agency. These external proposals, frequently misaligned with the aspirations of Palestinians, tend to reflect imperial interests rather than authentic paths to justice.

Khalidi posits that this flawed approach is deeply entrenched, tracing its lineage back to the 1937 Peel Commission's partition proposal that disregarded Palestinian rights. The recurrence of this pattern is evident in subsequent plans such as the UN's 1947 partition proposal, the Oslo Accords, and more recent initiatives. These efforts consistently fail to address the core issue of Palestinian self-determination, instead prioritizing Israeli security concerns over Palestinian rights. This results in asymmetric negotiations that perpetuate a status quo devoid of genuine independence for Palestinians.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza and the West Bank, coupled with the Israeli continued occupation and aggression, has dispelled any remaining illusions about the viability of a two-state solution. International plans for a post-conflict scenario often feature impractical objectives, such as the U.S. proposal for separate governance of Gaza, which further fragments Palestinian sovereignty. Such schemes neglect the imperative of fostering genuine Palestinian unity and self-governance.

Khalidi's analysis underscores a crucial point: real solutions cannot emanate from external impositions or a disjointed Palestinian political framework. Any meaningful resolution must address the plight of over five million displaced

Palestinians seeking justice and the right of return. Khalidi argues that as long as Palestinian unity remains elusive and the Israeli colonial occupation persists, any proposed post-conflict vision will merely perpetuate the existing status quo.

This analysis prompts critical questions about the future: How can Palestinians reclaim sovereignty when international powers persist in imposing detached solutions? Is it possible to achieve a just and lasting peace without confronting historical injustices and securing the right of return for displaced Palestinians? More urgently, how can unity be restored amidst internal divisions and external pressures that threaten to further fragment the Palestinian nation? Addressing these fundamental issues is essential for any hope of a just and sustainable "Day After."

In expanding on Khalidi's critique, it is essential to consider the broader implications of "dayafterism" on global diplomacy and conflict resolution. The recurrent failure of international plans highlights a profound disconnect between theoretical frameworks and on-the-ground realities. This disjunction not only undermines the efficacy of proposed solutions but also perpetuates cycles of injustice and conflict. Furthermore, the lack of genuine engagement with Palestinian voices and perspectives reflects a broader issue within international relations: the tendency of powerful states to prioritize their strategic interests over equitable solutions. For any future plan to succeed, it must not only address the immediate needs of Palestinians but also engage deeply with their historical grievances and aspirations, ensuring that any proposed solution is grounded in a nuanced understanding of the conflict and its participants.

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