

**Rania Masri**, concluding remarks given at the [Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal](#) press conference on **January 15, 2025**. ([Watch](#))

The [Final Report of this Tribunal](#) begins by reminding us that, in 1914, despite major opposition, Congress voted overwhelmingly in favor of war. The politicians defied the people they were supposed to represent.

Why? J.P. Morgan, one of the largest investment banking firms in the world, then celebrated that profit motives drove U.S. involvement in World War I.

In 1934, Senator Gerald Nye's extensive investigation of U.S. corporations, including weapons manufacturers, uncovered criminal and unethical actions including bribery of foreign officials, lobbying the United States government to obtain foreign sales, selling weapons to both sides of international disputes, and the covert undermining of disarmament conferences. Senator Nye declared in an 1934 radio address that they are "international racketeers, bent upon gaining profit through a game of arming the world to fight itself."

Almost one hundred years later, their horrors have only grown.

- The US is the world's #1 institutional polluter - domestically and internationally.
- The US has nearly a 1,000 military bases and forward operating posts in more than half the countries in the world, and is now expanding bases even further under the fabricated threat of China.
- No country in the world is safe from the harms of the US military.
- Each year, the budget devoted to the weapons industries gets larger. The Pentagon now consumes [more than half](#) the federal discretionary budget, forcing the average US taxpayer to spend \$1,087 per year on weapons contractors compared to \$270 for K-12 education and just \$6 for renewable energy. And [now a number of influential Washington commentators are calling to increase annual military spending by almost 90 percent](#).

We, [the jurors of this Tribunal](#), heard evidence of their sociopathic crimes — evidence of their influence, their lobbying (purchasing of representatives' votes), and their corporate takeover of this nation's foreign policy and mainstream media all to generate ever greater profits.

- They fabricated enemies to manufacture wars. Wars of choice. Wars then presented as advertisements for more weapons. for more wars. As Arundhati Roy said, "[Once weapons were manufactured to fight wars. Now wars are manufactured to sell weapons](#)."
- All the while, the US democracy is reduced to ashes, a puppeteering of power.
- All the while, false consent is manufactured through the media and Hollywood. Representatives from the military industrial complex are 4 times as likely to be interviewed by the mainstream press. And, in Hollywood, [the Pentagon and the CIA have exercised direct editorial control over more than 2,500 films and television shows](#)! Glorifying war and masking racism as patriotism.

This same philosophy of trading human lives for profit is evident in the US healthcare system. Nearly half of US adults (44%) struggle to pay their medical bills. Every year, 68,000 Americans die due to lack of access to care - one person every 30 minutes - while health insurance companies make almost \$70 billion in profits.

All the while millions around the world, more than 4.5 million, have been slaughtered, bodies shredded, homes burned, land stolen, dreams denied, again, and again. Thirteen people, killed every 30 minutes, for the past 20 years - directly by US weapons - in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, and occupied Palestine. And millions — 38 million people — have been displaced from their homes, their villages, their countries, their communities. And the killing continues.

For us here, despair fills our souls as we watch, again and again: wars on endless repeat.

We are told to be realistic, to be practical.

And all the while, our planet, quite literally, burns.

Fires are engulfing Los Angeles, burning homes to the ground and forcing even hospital patients to evacuate. On January 14, President Biden pledged to distribute one-time payments of \$770 to victims of the LA wildfire crisis, totaling \$77 million, while he has sent to Israel \$26.7 Billion in weapons over the last year. The administration's priorities are clear.

Imagine those LA fires again. But with paramedics, firefighters and hospitals bombed, and drones targeting children as they flee the flames.

Israel has dropped over 85,000 tons of bombs on Palestinians in Gaza in one year. Nearly 6 Hiroshima atomic bombs - dropped on a strip of land smaller than Raleigh. People vaporized, like in Nagasaki.

Every single bomb dropped on families in Gaza is dropped from a US-made plane.

A genocide. As Dr Ghassan Abu-Sitta explains, [300,000 Palestinians have died in Gaza from this ongoing genocide](#), that's 10-12% of Gaza's population. 45,000 are people who were taken to a hospital and death certificates issued. This excludes the tens of thousands under the rubble, excludes those whose bodies are being eaten by dogs in the streets. And with the use of 2,000 pound bombs, very little of the human body is left. People pulverized by the bombs. And then there those who have died from untreated chronic illnesses, and women dying from lack of maternal care during delivery. Horrors upon horrors. Palestinian families shredded because their deaths deemed profitable for US corporations.

Today, January 15, marks 466 days of mass murder, starvation, genocide in Gaza.

*(Today, the Israeli government, after pressure by incoming President Trump, finally agreed to a ceasefire - to begin in 24 hours. The Israeli/US bombs may stop, but the devastation wrecked on the agricultural land, the criminal siege imposed on the people, and the destruction of Gaza's health care system — all mean that the suffering, starvation, and deaths of Palestinians in Gaza may continue. (According to [UN human rights experts](#), this genocide has included "domicide, urbicide, [scholasticide](#), medicide, cultural genocide and, more recently, ecocide.)*

War is mass murder, deemed profitable for the US corporations. An advertisement for the manufactures geared to market future wars. The politicians and weapons' engineers and soldiers become serial killers, and their crimes normalized by directors and producers and journalists.

Enough.

In 1934, Senator Nye's Senate Committee recommended price controls, the transfer of Navy shipyards out of private hands, and increased industrial taxes. Senator Nye suggested that upon a declaration of war by Congress, taxes on annual incomes under \$10,000 — the equivalent of \$232,000 today — should automatically be doubled, and higher incomes should be taxed at 98%. Had that Senate Committee succeeded, our world today may have been gloriously different.

### **What can we achieve today for tomorrow's world?**

Do we let criminals go free and continue to subsidize their crimes?

We continue that struggle — to hold the criminals accountable.

Let us begin with the weapons manufacturers. behind these corporations, are people, the CEOs.

(1) The CEOs of Lockheed Martin: Vance Coffman, Robert Stevens, Marilyn Hewson, and James Taiclet.

(2) The CEOs of Boeing: Philip Condit, Harry Stonecipher, James McNerney, Dennis Muilenberg, David Calhoun, and Robert Ortberg. (3) The CEOs of RTX/Raytheon: Daniel Burnham, William Swanson, Thomas Kennedy, Gregory Hayes, and Christopher Calio.

(4) The CEO of General Atomics: Neal Blue.

They all aided and abetted the U.S. government in the commission of international war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

We strive to hold them accountable.

Just like the [Hind Rajab Foundation strives to end Israel's cycle of impunity through "offensive legal action against perpetrators, accomplices and inciters of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Palestine."](#) Hind Rajab, a 5-year old Palestinian girl, who was killed deliberately by 335 bullets.

Are we being impractical in seeking justice? Quite the opposite: accepting this ever increasing domination of our world by the weapons manufactures and the mining industry — accepting their mass destruction and humiliation — that would be impractical.

Rather, we need to devote ourselves to breaking their cycle, and to rejecting all their impunities — including both the Israeli and American war criminals and all those who normalize their crimes.

In the words of James Baldwin:

I can't be a pessimist because I am alive.

To be a pessimist means that you have agreed that human life is an academic matter. so i am forced to be an optimist. I am forced to believe that we can survive, whatever we must survive.