

Political Inertia Leads to Fascism: A Critical Analysis of Israel-Palestine Conflict

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This study reconnoitres the deep-rooted nature of Israeli aggression towards Palestinians from the lens of systemic and structural international factors. Since October 2023, over 46,000 Gaza inhabitants have been killed amid ever-increasing violence uncovering a grievous humanitarian crisis comprising widespread disease(s), famine, and the collapse of basic health and social services. The international society regardless of ample evidence of genocide, has failed to act conclusively, manipulated by international power dynamics and ‘false equivalencies’ that abstruse the disproportionate suffering wreaked on Palestinians as compared to ventures taken by Hamas. The study critiques – the inaction of global society and particularly, the systemic and structural provision Israel obtains from international power stakeholders, underpinning how this patronage perpetuates Israel’s aggressive policies towards Palestinians. To examine this patronage relationship, the study employs the concept of ‘political inertia’ of Francis Fukuyama from holistic optics. The research contends that the international society’s failure to address Israel’s genocide - symbolises a suggestive political failure that inherits in ‘systemic-structural’ power dynamics which underpins Israel’s fascist behaviour.

Keywords: Israel-Palestine, Hamas, political inertia, genocide, Humanitarian Crisis.

“I cannot understand the passive response of the whole civilized world to this modern barbarism. Does the world not see that Hitler is aiming for war?” – Albert Einstein

A three-phased agreement, encompassing a ceasefire reached on January 17, 2025, aspires to end the 15-months of war between Israel and Hamas that devastated Gaza (Al Jazeera, 2025), perished more than 46,000 people in Gaza since October 2023 (Fick, 2025). This indicates a pivotal accomplishment in restoring peace and undertaking the humanitarian situation after destabilising the Middle East. As, Andrea De Domenico, Deputy Head, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, rightly pointed out during the war towards an international community it “has to answer the question of how much human suffering can be tolerated in the name of security?” (Grunblatt, 2024).

What alternative rationalise exists for the theatre of terror that Israel is conducting against women and children in Gaza, in addition to President Biden’s “overt contempt for Palestinians, his dehumanisation of Arabs, and his involvement in what numerous experts have described as a potential genocide,” as expressed by Arwa Mahdawi in The Guardian (Mahdawi, 2024). According to United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), about 10% of Gaza’s population has been killed, and up to 1.9 million people have experienced forced relocation (UNFPA, 2024). Today, diseases are transmitted, hospitals are being demolished, and children are starving to death in Gaza, creating a humanitarian disaster (UNICEF, 2025). In essence, the healthcare system has been crumpled. As De Domenico rightly argued there is a “systematic dehumanisation of civilians” in West Bank and Gaza.

Simultaneously, Israel disseminates meaningless propaganda to conceal apparent war crimes. Megan K. Stack argued in The New York Times, “Israeli officials have denied that they are to blame for the starvation of civilians and have said that there was no shortage of food in Gaza” (Stack, 2024). They have also accused Hamas of stealing humanitarian goods and claimed that the UN had neglected to provide food. In global power politics the phenomenon of ‘false equivalency’ prevails which is providing bolster to Israel’s fascism (Krishna, 2023). It is absurd to

comprehend the denunciation of the deaths of civilians, particularly children, within the prism of false equivalency, which holds that all parties to the Gaza War hold equal responsibility.

The Palestinian people have endured far worse suffering and terror at the hands of the Israeli state, both in the past and present, due to the immoral and massive scale of violence perpetrated against them (Alhossary, 2023). But ‘one thing has been made clear on the world stage: There is vastly documented evidence that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians’ as the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights correctly proclaimed (Johnson, 2024). In fact, “The evidence of genocidal intent is not only chilling, it is also overwhelming and interconvertible” asserted Tembeka Ngcukaitobi (South African Lawyer) (Abuznaid, 2024). Although the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is to be applauded for issuing arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu for war crimes against humanity it is not to be difficult to understand why he is still free! (Fernandez, 2024).

The ‘systematic and structural’ augment provided by global power players to Israel is the reason behind its genocide and fascism (Feinstein, 2023). Adila Hassim of the South African legal team cautioned that “genocides are never declared in advance” in her opening statement before the ICJ, in January 2024 to hear Israel’s case for the Crime of Genocide (Al-Kassab, 2024). The UN Convention defines a crime against humanity as one committed with the intent to destroy a racial, ethnic, religious, or national group, in whole or in part. They construct it in ages with the backing of global state players like in the case of Israel (Al-Kassab, 2024). The political scientist Thomas Hobbes is credited with observing that human behaviour is fundamentally driven by self-interest and selfishness (Nweke, 2022). He contends that the concepts of morality, politics, ethics, and international law that societies uphold are essentially theoretical and normative. Hobbes’ remarks can be applied to modern Middle Eastern politics, where a multitude of entities, both state and non-state, are active and manipulate regional dynamics to suit their agendas.

This study examines the structural and systematic core of Israel’s barbarism which leads to its fascist political behaviour towards Palestinian people. The concept of structure and system is borrowed from Kenneth Waltz’s phenomenal work *Man, State and the War* and *Theory of International Politics*. In international politics, the word structure exhibits the distribution of power and system demonstrates the anarchic nature of the world. The structure describes the hierarchical power differences that Israel and Palestine have which are intrinsically backed by systematic factors. The systematic factors prevail in an anarchic system because of power politics led by global state players to strengthen Israel – economically, militarily, politically, and institutionally. The study highlights that the biggest failure of the global community is its inability to force Israel to stop its genocide. To examine this discourse, the research work has applied the concept of political inertia from the political philosophy of Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 2014) and Bart Zantvoot (Zantvoot, 2016). The political inertia indicates the reluctance of global institutions and state political systems to change and maintain the existing order (Doc McKee, 2024).

Israel-Palestine Conflict from Historical Lens

The geopolitics and history of the Middle East are deeply intertwined with the present-day Israel-Palestine conflict. The onset of the conflict is linked with the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Palestine was a part of the Ottoman Empire (McGreal, 2023). During this period, there was an uprising of Zionist immigration, which exacerbated tensions between Jewish and Arab communities. At the end of WWI, Britain was given an international mandate to govern Palestine by the League of Nations. The UN General Assembly in 1947 adopted a proposal to divide Palestine into two states – an Arab state and a Jewish state (MFA, s.d.). However, the Palestinian people and the peripheral Arab states were vehemently against this decision (Kelman, 2007). Consequently, the first Arab-Israeli War began in 1948 with the State of Israel’s declaration of independence in May 1948. During this war, countless Palestinians were forcibly evacuated from their homes and displaced. This momentous event is often referred to as the Nakba, which indicates catastrophe in the Arabic language (Narea, 2023).

Eventually, Israel annexed several territories that were meant for the future state of Palestine. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was established in 1964 to act as the global representative organisation for all Palestinians, particularly those who were living in mandated Palestine before the creation of the State of Israel. Once the Six-Day War in 1967 ended, PLO’s prominence grew fundamentally (Ghanem, 2013). Following Israel’s conquest of the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Golan Heights along the Jordan River in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat pursued diplomatic efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement in compliance with UN’s Resolution 242 (Jouejati, 2023). Israel was required by this resolution to give back the territory it had taken. These demands were rejected by Israel, and the tensions that followed eventually resulted in the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

After the start of the 1st intifada in 1987, Hamas was founded as a group that opposed the PLO's secular stance. After its emergence, Hamas established itself with a separate identity that held a position of exercising resistance through military means until the independence of Palestine. According to the organization's 1988 charter, Palestine is an Islamic homeland that should not be ceded to non-Muslims and is inviolable. Moreover, Hamas perceives it as a religious obligation of Palestinian Muslims to fight a holy war to reclaim Palestinian land from Israel (Teran, 2024).

The 2nd Intifada, which took place in the 2000s and continued for five years, was far more violent and bloodier than the first and claimed 4,973 Palestinian lives (Adam, 2020). Following a devastating suicide attack in March 2002, Israel launched Operation 'Defensive Shield,' and resumed control of sections of West Bank and Gaza. Israel built barriers of separation, as well. The violence had decreased by 2005 (Rojas, 2016). After winning the 2006 legislative election, Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007 (Tharoor, 2023). The existing war is linked with the surprise attack of Hamas on October 7, 2024, which jeopardise the Israel state. Consequently, at least 1,139 people were killed and 240 were seized as hostages. In response, Israel initiated the 'existential genocide' (Byman, 2024).

Gaza's Humanitarian Crisis: How Terrible Is It?

The situation in Gaza is worrisome and complex to elucidate. A pervasive sense of despair prevails everywhere in Gaza. The UN secretary general for humanitarian affairs stated that "it was worse than 'awful scenes' he witnessed during the civil war in Syria a few years ago" (Arnold, 2024). And "Gaza is worst humanitarian crisis I have seen in 50 years" (Arnold, 2024). The Lancet, a well-reputed journal, published a study titled 'Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential' which precisely portrays the situation (Khatib, 2024). The Gaza Health Ministry is increasingly encountering difficulties in attaining and gathering statistics due to the extensive destruction of infrastructure. The UN projects that 35% of the Gaza Strip's structures would have collapsed, suggesting that there are probably a significant number of dead still under the debris—more than 10,000, according to estimates (Rasha Khatib, 2024).

The Gaza war has had a devastating effect on healthcare access and service. The World Health Organisation (WHO) data indicate that "16 out of 36 hospitals of Gaza were partially operational, with 20 closed" (Lords Library, 2025). Moreover, residents - especially children are now more susceptible to infectious diseases due to inadequate sanitation, mobility constraints, infrastructural breakdown, and shortages of clean water (UNOCHA, 2024). Since mid-October, there has been a reported rise in the number of cases of diarrhoea and polio among children under five years old. Additionally, there have been more cases of skin rashes, respiratory infections, scabies, lice, chicken pox, and rashes (WHO, 2023). If we compare the rates of diarrhoeal infections with those before the recent fighting, they have grown by over 23 times (WHO, 2023). Medical associations have released warnings about the possibility of disease epidemics in these conditions.

The mental and reproductive health of the Palestinians is directly affected by the psychological toll of the war. A UN expert warned that "acute mental distress that will turn into anxiety and other kinds of mental illnesses later on in life is important to start thinking intentionally about" (Reuters, 2024). There has been a striking increase in both the number of births and difficulties during pregnancy, making women and children especially vulnerable. The current crisis in Gaza has increased the likelihood of long-term mental health issues, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), for children who already have mental health issues. People with chronic medical illnesses are even more at risk since they cannot get the treatment they need due to the gasoline crisis, the lack of shelters, and the previous airstrikes that affected medical transport (Reuters, 2024).

The international community must act immediately to protect civilians, supply basic humanitarian requirements, and prevent an imminent health catastrophe in Gaza, as the war has generated a devastating humanitarian situation. The academic community has a dual moral responsibility to promote and support policies that emphasised saving lives and preventing additional human suffering. Moreover, the measures to ensure safe transport of food, medicine, water, and other basic human needs.

It is requisite to document the number and nature of casualties in this war. A correct estimation of the magnitude is necessary to recognise the actual cost of the war and ensure historical responsibility (Moorthy, 2022). The international law also mandates it. As the interim measures outlined by the ICJ in January 2024 for Israel must "take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of the Genocide Convention" (Khatib, 2024). The sole organisation keeping track of the deceased is the Gaza Health Ministry. The delineated data will also be essential for arranging humanitarian help, rebuilding infrastructure, and recovering from the war.

The Scale of War

After Hamas's attack in October 2023 and Israel's offensive response, it became quite evident that the war's ramifications would be extended beyond Gaza. As a result of their relational ties, major nations are drawn into this war in a convoluted manner. The situation in the Middle East and the Levant could not be contained because an international coalition of Palestinian supporters interfered or threatened political or military vengeance against Israel's genocide (Al Talei, 2023). It was claimed that Iran was instigating anti-Israeli or anti-Western actions through its backing of the 'axis of resistance' in Yemen, which included the Houthis, the Lebanese Hezbollah, the Shiite militias in Iraq, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza (Al Talei, 2023). However, it was evident that Iran sought to exert control over these groups to avoid confrontation with Israel and the US. On the other hand, there were around a hundred assaults on US bases in Iraq, three US soldiers killed in Jordan, rockets launched into Israeli territory by Hezbollah, and missile and drone attacks against Western ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, two of the busiest maritime trade routes, by the Houthis (Al Jazeera, 2024).

The maritime security of the ships had been compromised by Houthis creating the Red Sea Crisis. Since October 2023, military tensions in the Red Sea have increased to a never-before-seen degree. Houthi troops in Yemen have launched multiple drone and missile assaults against military and commercial ships as payback for Israel's continuous assault on Gaza. On January 12, 2024, the US and Britain launched an operation against Houthi sites within Yemen under the banner of Operation Prosperity Guardian, a global military coalition created to protect the Red Sea from Houthi threats (Hamasaed, 2024). The security forces of Australia, Canada, Bahrain, Denmark, New Zealand, Singapore, and other countries joined this alliance.

Over 60 ships were attacked between November 2023 and June 2024; several of them sank, posing an ecological concern, prompting military responses from the US and the UK, including the destruction of Houthi land targets (Euronews, 2024). To avoid the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, whose traffic was cut by 65%, several hundred ships were rerouted across Africa. This increased shipping costs and stoked concerns about a return of global inflation (Baraniuk, 2024). Regardless of those endeavours, international trade via the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab al-Mandab became a major target of Houthi rebels stationed in Yemen in mid-November, posing a significant security risk. Within weeks, the situation worsened, with negative consequences for trade and transportation (Baraniuk, 2024).

The Red Sea's strategic significance for global trade is largely dependent on the Bab el-Mandab Strait, which divides Yemen and Djibouti. It's one of the busiest cargo and oil transit hubs in the world, handling over 12% of all goods traffic passing through it (Notteboom, 2024). Choke points as supply networks are being weaponised geopolitically, making them increasingly vulnerable as tools of economic statecraft. States' incentives and actions in the area of international security have a significant regional component, as renowned academic Buzan has manifested (Buzan, 2003). As a result, the main neighbourhood of a state is the source of its security concerns. There are relationships between the security of one state and the security of other states in the region. Actors are likely to feel the strongest threats when they are local (Barry Buzan, 2003). The Red Sea Crisis and the way that the attacks in Gaza are escalating regional tensions throughout the Middle East are examples of the same.

Moreover, following Israel's attack on the Iranian Consulate in Damascus on April 1, 2024, which resulted in the deaths of two Iranian generals and twelve civilians. Consequently, Iran attacked Israeli territory on April 14, 2024, using drones and missiles (Loanes, 2024). Iran's response was entirely defensive by maintaining the deterrence equilibrium with Israel. Since October 2023, Israel vowed to kill the significant leadership of Hamas and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). As of August 2024, Israel has reportedly killed these commanders of Hamas – Ibrahim Biari, Saleh-al-Arouri, Marwan Issa, Mohammad Deif, Ismail Haniyah. The IRGC commanders that killed by Israel are; Razi Mousavi, Mohammad Reza Zahedi (Kierszenbaum, 2024).

The scale of the Gaza war has so widened that it rattled university campuses across the US since April 2024 – including Yale University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University and Tufts University etc. (Iqbal, 2024). Hundreds of students and university staff protested against the US government's support of Israel. The protests in universities were so strong and evident that many analysts urged that history is repeating in US educational campuses. The famous US journalist, Ray Hanania, indicated that "What played out in 1968 is playing out again today and, coincidentally, is also having a significant impact on a presidential election" (Hanania, 2024). Time will draw the lines regarding it!

The Gaza war is a manifestation of disequilibrium which has been constructed since 1948. The existential war rightly depicts the political and institutional limits of global stakeholders over Israel. The primary concern of this study is why it took 15 months to stop Israel. To inspect it this study has applied the philosophy of political inertia. Political inertia refers to the tendency of political systems and institutions to resist change and maintain the current state of affairs (Doc McKee, 2024). Here, concerning political systems mean anarchic behaviour of states and institutions represent the global institutions (Kocs, 1994). As Francis Fukuyama argued in *Political Order and Political Decay* political inertia is a feature intrinsic to political systems (Zantvoot, 2016). Institutional rigidity and cognitive factors are both deeply ingrained in human nature. The concept of inertia needs to be examined from three distinct angles – historical, functional, and normative for a complete understanding of Israel's fascist behaviour (Zantvoot, 2016).

Political inertia in historical context refers to the historical analogy of Israel's establishment as a state by illegally annexing the land of Palestine. As Oren Yiftachel mentioned in his phenomenal work "Is the battle raging between Israel and Gaza a colonial war? In his study, he contends that 'Settler Colonial' (SC) interactions concerning Palestinians and Jews in Israel and Palestine have resulted in this horrifying situation (Yiftachel, 2023). Therefore, colonial and counter-colonial forces (Hamas) are expressed in the current war asymmetrically (Yiftachel, 2023). However, he also contends that the contemporaneous situation has amply demonstrated that the SC paradigm by itself is unable to adequately explain the myriad factors influencing Israel/Palestine 'generally' and the Gaza hotspot in 'particular.' The SC paradigm is frequently at odds with national, religious (including Jewish and Islamist fundamentalists), liberal, geopolitical, and international systematic forces (Yiftachel, 2023).

Beyond highlighting these forces' strong presence and how far they extend 'beyond the local axis of settler-indigenous dialectics,' there isn't much space to get into here. It is crucial to recognise the stark power disparities that exist between the non-state actors (Hamas & Hezbollah) and the strong Israeli government, as well as the reality that only a small portion of Palestinians share the anti-colonialist ideologies of Islamic Jihad and Hamas. In conclusion, the Gaza War serves as a hotspot in the struggle between Palestinians and Islamist non-state organisations against Israeli settler colonialism. The political geography with the anxieties of different generations, it seems that we are fighting both a colonial and a counter-colonial war at the same time.

Political inertia's "functionality" with supporting variables is another feature that makes it stronger. One instance of primitive accumulation is the blockade of Gaza and the West Bank. Late October 2024, saw an upsurge in Israeli bombing, and Israel started granting permits to foreign energy corporations to explore for gas and oil off the coast of the Mediterranean (Transnational Institute, 2024). This action was a part of Israel's larger plan to become a major energy hub and gas producer in the region, as well as a substitute for Russian gas in Western Europe. A December advertisement for the construction of opulent homes in destroyed Gaza neighbourhoods was published by an Israeli real estate company that is well-known for creating settlements in occupied Palestinian territory. Other ads emphasised the Ben Gurion Canal Project's rebirth, which has been inactive since it was first conceived in the 1960s (Khalil, 2023).

The idea entails constructing a substitute for the Suez Canal, which is now operated by Egypt, which would connect the Mediterranean to the Negev desert and Gaza from the Gulf of Aqaba. The existence of Palestinians in Gaza is the only obstacle preventing the recently revised Canal project. Following the Hamas attack on October 7, Israel sent thousands of Palestinian labourers back to Gaza, and Israeli businesses requested permission from the government to replace those workers with 100,000 Indian labourers (Khan, 2023). Even in the thick of the conflict, thousands of Indian labourers were flooding Israel by the beginning of 2024.

The last facet that contributes to political inertia is the problematic of international norms that resist institutional change (Zantvoot, 2016). Since October 2023, international institutions have exercised extreme restraints in their efforts to compel Israel to stop its genocide with the support of major power stakeholders in the world. The only talks, apart from the January 2025 truce, that happened comprised multiple mediators, including Egypt, Qatar, and the United States. The result was a brief ceasefire that was repeatedly extended in November 2023, during which Israel freed Palestinian captives and Hamas released hostages (Reuters, 2023). Additional discussions for the extension of ceasefire, release of hostages and prisoner exchanges have occurred, and following multiple setbacks, the UN Security Council ultimately resolved (with the US abstaining) to require: "an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan respected by all parties leading to a lasting sustainable ceasefire, and also demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access to address their medical and other humanitarian needs, and further demands that the parties comply with their obligations under international law in relation to all persons they detain" (UN News, 2024).

The US, eventually, tabled a new Security Council resolution that was approved on June 10, 2024, with Russia abstaining (DW, 2024). The resolution sought to end the Gaza War by negotiating a comprehensive ceasefire agreement that would be implemented in three stages. While some Israeli government officials criticised the plan, Hamas accused Israel of being ambiguous over the actual end of hostilities and disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The US behaviour towards Israel is questionable particularly its providence of institutional cushions to Israel's genocide by voting against a Gaza ceasefire draft UNSC resolutions (Al Jazeera, 2024). Meanwhile, the US administration, since October 2023, has 'enacted legislation providing at least \$12.5Bn of military aid to Israel and nearly \$3.8 billion approved in March 2024' (Merrow, 2024).

With this economic and military aid, the Israeli economy is rightly equipped for the mass murder of Palestinians. As William I. Robinson correctly noted, Gaza serves as a warning sign that, in the years to come, genocide could be used politically to resolve the irreconcilable conflict between excess capital and excess humankind (Nguyen, 2024). When a situation threatens international peace and security and directly impacts one of the permanent members—the US, or its interests, the UNSC has once again shown its inefficiency and paralysis in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Throughout the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US has consistently exercised its veto power over any SC decision that went against Israeli interests (Nguyen, 2024).

Fukuyama argues that blindly adhering to compromised norms gives leaders an evolutionary advantage because they enable sophisticated social behaviour (Fukuyama, 2014). The issue lies in the fact that regulations that were beneficial or fitting in a particular situation are nonetheless implemented when those conditions alter. To better navigate their surroundings and manage international society, leaders build 'mental models' and rule-based organisations. However, these models become psychologically embedded in the minds of people, giving them 'intrinsic value' (Zantvoot, 2016) like Benjamin Netanyahu possesses. John Kiriakou rightly deconstructed how Israel perceived the notion of 'hostages' and 'detainees' to frame its barbarism (Jones, 2023). Therefore, it would seem that Fukuyama is making the case that political inertia is the outcome of irrational action, which arises from people's psychological and emotional attachment to unsuitable or ineffective institutions and mental models (Fukuyama, 2014). Rational trade-offs between efficiency and flexibility lead to the fact that established regulations are hard to modify.

Conclusion

On reasonable grounds it's not hard to believe that Israel is committing genocide in Palestine and no one has the audacity to stop it! The political landscape of Palestine is being transformed by the ongoing existential struggle, which is a terrible by-product of the Zionist settler colonial effort that lasted for a century. A 'theatre of terror,' severe medication shortages, and a lack of staff members are all results of the Israel-Hamas conflict, which has also produced the worst humanitarian catastrophe in recent memory. There is an immediate need for international involvement since it has exacerbated the already overburdened healthcare system and contributed to increasing rates of diseases and famine!

The complications and implications of the Israel-Palestine conflict have extended far beyond its immediate borders, encompassing multiple states and non-state actors while escalating regional tensions. The Red Sea Crisis, compelled by Houthi attacks, has disrupted global trade and increased shipping costs, underlining the vulnerability of maritime key chokepoints. The conflict has also prompted military responses and deepened geopolitical rivalries, with significant impacts on international security and regional power dynamics. As global trade routes face unprecedented threats and the Middle East becomes increasingly volatile, the broader implications of the conflict underscore the urgent need for diplomatic efforts to stabilize the region and mitigate further escalation.

Despite the widespread evidence of genocidal actions and the devastating impact on Gaza's population, global responses have largely been marked by indifference or false equivalency. This negligence perpetuates the cycle of violence and suffering, reflecting a troubling failure of international mechanisms to address or halt the ongoing atrocities. The study underscores that this inaction is driven by systemic-structural factors and political inertia. Israel's fascist behaviour is driven by political inertia which led to horrid behaviour and unwillingness to modify because it imbibed into the minds of leader(s). The significant step is to highlight a critical need for a re-evaluation of global priorities and interventions based on humanity.

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