



**News Release
For Immediate Release**

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***Journal of Palestine Studies* Sets the Record Straight on Nicolas Pelham's Report on Gaza's Tunnels**

August 5, 2014 - During Israel's latest assault on Gaza, a *Journal of Palestine Studies* article published in Fall 2012 has garnered attention after being quoted in Tablet, an online Jewish magazine. The [JPS article](#), "**Gaza's Tunnel Phenomenon: The Unintended Dynamics of Israel's Siege**" by Nicolas Pelham, outlines the Palestinians' resort to the use of commercial tunnels into Egypt starting in 2007 in a response to Israel's economic asphyxiation of the small coastal enclave.

Recent interest in the *JPS* article has concentrated on the descriptions of the deaths that occurred in the commercial tunnels, including deaths of children who were working in and transporting items through the tunnels. Contrary to the claim in the Tablet, and reprinted by the *Jerusalem Post* and numerous other news sites, the article concerns the commercial tunnels that Palestinians dug to Egypt in desperation to secure basic supplies for 1.8 million people when Israel and Egypt closed Gaza's borders in 2007, not the tunnels to Israel.

Since the article was first cited by Tablet, numerous sites have expanded and continued to distort the original quotation, making unfounded claims and citing the *Journal of Palestine Studies* Pelham article as the source. Allegations that the articles states that tunnels built by the military wing of Hamas, the Qassam Brigades, into Israel were dug by children, or accounts of child slaves being killed by Hamas are false and not substantiated by the *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

As the *JPS* article notes, many workers, including children, died in commercial tunnels – not least when Gaza's neighbors bombed and flooded the tunnels. Many of the commercial tunnels described in Pelham's *JPS* article were destroyed by Egypt and Israel, resulting in the deaths of those inside them.

Pelham states in his article: "By the end of 2010, [Egypt] claimed to have sabotaged some six hundred tunnels by various means, including plugging entrances with solid waste, sand, or explosives, and flooding passages with sewage. Use of tear gas and other crowd-control techniques inside the tunnels resulted in several deaths."

Similarly, he reports: “In an effort to interrupt the traffic, Israel repeatedly deployed drones and manned aircraft to bomb Gaza’s tunnels, while Egypt stepped up tunnel detection and demolition.”

The Institute for Palestine Studies is committed to accurate research and documentation of Palestinian history and affairs. Please read the [article](#) available in full on the IPS website and [subscribe](#) to the *Journal of Palestine Studies* for more in-depth, relevant and exclusive reports and articles.

Contact Paige Brownlow at 202-342-3990 ext. 13 or paigeb@palestine-studies.org to schedule an interview with the author, Nicolas Pelham.

About the Author

Nicolas Pelham is a writer on the Arab world for *The Economist* and the *New York Review of Books*. He has reported as a correspondent for the BBC, the *Financial Times* and *The Economist* based in Rabat, Amman, Jerusalem and Iraq. Taking occasional breaks from journalism, he was a senior analyst for the International Crisis Group, and worked for the United Nations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, reporting on Gaza’s tunnel economy and the rise of the Bedouin in the Sinai peninsula. His report, “Gaza’s Tunnel Phenomenon: The Unintended Dynamics of Israel’s Siege” appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

About the *Journal of Palestine Studies*

The *Journal of Palestine Studies* is the oldest and most respected English language journal devoted exclusively to Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It brings you timely and comprehensive information on the region's political, religious, and cultural concerns. With an emphasis on peaceful resolution of conflict, the journal unites sound research and analysis with a variety of well-informed perspectives by academics, policy makers, and diplomats. Published quarterly, the *Journal of Palestine Studies* is a vital resource for anyone interested in the Palestine Question. It is published by the Institute for Palestine Studies, a non-profit organization dedicated to research on Palestine. (<http://www.palestine-studies.org>)

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