**The death of human rights**

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The signs of the death of human rights are omnipresent. Western governments are working hard to shield the Israeli apartheid from accountability, while criminalising Palestinians resisting Israel’s oppression and those supporting their liberation struggle.

The leading social media companies of the Global North are allowing dangerous misinformation targeting already marginalised and under threat populations to fester on their platforms. European countries are still selling a toxic pesticide – banned in the EU because of its proven harms to children and unborn babies – to countries in the Global South. And the list goes on.

All the while, the West continues to try and sell itself as the one true defender of human rights.

Western nations regularly condemn and even sanction the likes of Russia, China and Iran for violating the human rights of their citizens and those living in their influence zones. They often make foreign aid conditional on recipients making improvements on human rights protections, and some have even launched military interventions under the guise of addressing human rights violations in the past.

In response to the invasion of Ukraine, a country at the very heart of Europe, for example, the Global North states not only swiftly condemned the grave human rights violations Russia committed there, but also implemented special programmes to ensure any Ukrainian civilian in need can find safety in another country without facing significant obstacles. They also put their support behind the International Criminal Court (ICC) and provided its investigators with any help necessary to try and convict the Kremlin.

Viewed in isolation, this may be seen as confirmation of the West’s adherence to the international human rights regime it helped build. But for those in the Global South, who cannot help but compare the West’s embrace of Ukraine to its treatment of their own countries, this whole episode is nothing but confirmation of the Global North’s endless hypocrisy.

Indeed, the countries that took swift action to help the Ukrainian people did not open their borders to the Sudanese in the same manner when they were facing an equally grave military threat. They never did it for the Palestinians either, many of whom are still living under the iron fist of a violent invader.

They are also very selective about when they would support the ICC. Sure they supported ICC’s prosecution of Africans when it suited their agenda, but they never let its prosecutors anywhere near their own drone wars or unlawful torture programmes – in fact, the US is not even a state party to the court.

While they are now condemning Russia and any state that continues to collaborate with it, in the Global South they themselves have long been prioritising geopolitical interests over human rights concerns, supporting oppressive regimes and undermining democratic movements. This is arguably the main reason why many Global South nations have been hesitant to support Western-backed Ukraine’s resistance against the Russian invasion.

Excerpted: ‘The global human rights regime has collapsed’. Courtesy: Aljazeera.com