

In the last couple weeks I keep thinking about the attacks of September 11, 2001, when we witnessed attacks on US soil that led to the deaths of nearly 3,000 people here. The number is greater 3,000 if you include the terrorists themselves. Within hours, the CIA blamed Al Qaeda and made Osama bin Laden the face of the that group. I shudder to recall the horrible Islamophobia that swept the nation.

It's worth remembering that the US promptly went to war with Al Qaeda, and a bit later in Afghanistan, in a war that lasted (officially) for 20 years. The war killed 176,000 people in Afghanistan: 46,319 civilians, 69,095 military and police and at least 52,893 opposition fighters.

The US and its allies killed 59 times more Afghans than died on 9/11. 15 times more civilians alone. Was that genocide?

Perhaps many of the people claiming that Israel's response to the recent attack is genocide also call the US's response to 9/11 genocide. At least there would be some consistency there.

Goodness knows I'm not condoning attacks on innocent civilians. Calling Israel's offensive a genocide just doesn't feel right to me. It feels human. Not right, necessarily. But human, especially in these early days when the loss and grief and fear are great.

I just think we need to be careful with our language. That's the least we can do, given our own history, and our distance in miles, and in most cases culture.

In Peace,
Rev Denis