



Solidarity with Palestine

Last Monday, as Israel in a deplorable display of triumphalism, celebrated the Trump administration's opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, Israeli forces massacred 62 Palestinians in Gaza, bringing the death count since Israel began its murderous attacks on the Great Return March to at least 110. More than 12,000 have been injured; many so severely that they will require the amputation of their limbs.

Monday's fatalities included a baby, who at the age of 8 months was the youngest of all those killed. She died from the inhalation of tear gas which had been dropped on her family as they sat near a tent, almost a kilometre away from the border.

These events, which have taken place on the occasion of the hostile and provocative opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, are but a continuing demonstration of Israeli contempt for the lives of Palestinians. They follow a pattern of massacres from Deir Yassin in 1948, through Qibya, Nahalin and Kufri Kasseem in the 1950s, Samu and other villages in the 1960s and 70s and Sabra and Shatila in 1982 together with a systematic campaign of terror against Gaza in recent years and the killing and injuring of Palestinians during and after the recent March 30th protests.

They reflect a racist hatred which has been exemplified since the early part of the 20th century in words which have sought to dehumanise the Palestinian people, and in actions which have sought to eliminate them and drive them from Palestine. It is no accident that David Hacoen, the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Israeli Knesset was cited in 1973 as saying of Palestinians: "But they are not human beings, they are not people, they are Arabs".

These attacks reflect a long-standing desire to assert complete control over Palestinian people and territory and represent a brazen rebuff to any semblance of a peace process. The words of Menachem Begin, a former Israeli Prime Minister that "It is inconceivable for us to allow a Palestinian state" continue to represent the position of the Zionist state.

This is the 50th year of the Nakba (the catastrophe), the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 in which Palestinians were attacked, dispossessed, driven from their homes and their homeland as part of the Zionist project to construct a Jewish-majority state.

The United Nations has repeatedly documented violations of human rights in the Occupied territories. The Occupied Territories remain under effective siege in violation of international and humanitarian law. Palestinian civilians, including children, are deliberately targeted for attack.

The blockade, the miserable conditions inflicted on the Palestinian people constitute collective punishment in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and are an act of aggression as defined by Article 3 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3314.

However, despite repeated human rights violations against Palestinians, the Israeli state has gone unpunished. Israel, assisted by the US and its allies, including the European Union, has repeatedly rejected all constructive efforts to secure a lasting settlement based on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, blocking any move towards the creation of an independent Palestinian state and devising a series of bogus schemes to deny Palestinians and their representatives a voice in their future.

The US regime far from criticising Israel for its recent murderous actions has praised it for its "so-called "restraint". On 18 May 2018, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva voted to establish an independent international Commission of Inquiry to investigate violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law in the occupied Palestinian territory, with a focus on recent events in Gaza.

The resolution to establish the Commission of Inquiry was voted through with 29 states in favour, two opposed (U.S. and Australia), and 14 states abstaining. Disgracefully, the British government abstained from the vote, and released a statement calling the vote "unbalanced" and calling on Israel to conduct its own investigation.

Equally disgracefully, the Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, whose government fawningly expelled a Russian diplomat without any evidence of wrongdoing, has refused to expel the Israeli Ambassador from Ireland.

The United Nations and its member states must insist on the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolutions on Palestine and take resolute action against Israel to end Israeli oppression and terror and to protect Palestinian lives and property.

The Workers Party welcomes today's demonstration and calls on all workers to demonstrate against this latest outrage, to demand action and to increase their solidarity efforts and activities with the Palestinian people, including the campaign in support of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement to demonstrate that the workers of the world will no longer tolerate these murderous attacks.

Palestinians have the right to freedom, self-determination and national independence. There are approximately ten million Palestinians in the world, two thirds of whom are refugees. This is the largest and most longstanding refugee problem in the world. The right of return for all Palestinian refugees in accordance with U.N. Resolution 194, is a minimum and fundamental requirement for justice, equality and respect.

We stand with the Palestinian people in their struggle for their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of a free, independent and sovereign state of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. We stand for the right to return.

Palestinians will continue the Great Return March. This will culminate in a huge mobilisation in Gaza on 5th June 2018 to mark the 51st anniversary of Israel's occupation of Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Let us stand in solidarity with them.

Expel the Israeli Ambassador from Ireland and the UK; Build the Boycott; Stop arming Israel; End the Occupation; Demolish the Apartheid Wall; Support the Right to Return.

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