

## PALESTINE SOLIDARITY ISSUE

**Solidarity  
protests across  
South Africa**



**Gaza will rise  
– analysis by  
Cde Ronnie Kasrils**

Voice of the South African Communist Party

# Umsebenzi



# Stop the Genocide!

## Boycott apartheid Israel!

## Palestine will be Free!



*The mass bombing and invasion of Gaza are an escalation of Israel and imperialism's long-standing efforts to erase Palestine, but mass, worldwide solidarity can put a stop to the carnage and advance Palestine's right to statehood*

# Stop the genocide, free Palestine – make solidarity an unstoppable force!

*"We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." – Nelson Mandela, 1997*

**T**he razing of Gaza and the murder of thousands of Palestinian civilians in the territory by the far-right Israeli government is being supported by the West as "Israel's right to defend itself".

But the incursion by Hamas on 7 October didn't come out of the blue. It was the culmination of an explosive situation created by a 75-year-long genocide of the Palestinian people by Israel. The Palestinian National Authority had long warned that the repression of Gaza, in particular, was inevitable.

As the Palestinian Ambassador to the UK said on 7 October, "... what is more tragic or equally tragic is the blindness and the deafness of the world and the international community for so many years of the warnings we have been saying that this was coming. Israel knew that this was coming their way. We the national movement of Palestine, the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation), have found a different part 30 years ago, we have committed to what the world asks us; recognise Israel, commit to negotiations of non-violence... Israel was

expected to do one thing only, roll back its occupation... It's a consequence."

It erupted out of the 16-year blockade by air, land and sea of the more than 2-million Palestinians in Gaza; the collective degradation of Palestinians by apartheid laws, settler terrorism across the West Bank, forced removals and military raids on Palestinian villages and towns, and the arrest and detention of thousands of Palestinian men, women and children.

Now, playing on the events of 7 October, the Israeli regime is ramping up the elimination of Palestinians and preparing the ground for the end of Gaza as Palestinian territory, coupled with the further violent repression of Palestinians by settlers and the Israeli occupying forces in the West Bank.

The Communist Party of Israel and its ally, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash), are in no doubt about what is to blame for the current escalation of violence. "The fascist right-wing government's crimes to perpetuate the occupation are leading to a regional war that must be stopped. Even in difficult days like this – we repeat and voice an unequivocal condemnation of any harm to innocent civilians and call for their removal from the bloodshed."

In response to the start of the bombing of Gaza by Israel, the SACP said, in its Central Committee statement, 8 October, "Western imperialist aligned media call the Palestinian's armed struggle activities 'completely unprovoked'. They say the Palestinians, referring to Hamas, 'infiltrated Israel'.

This is gibberish, as Israel is the aggressor. For 75 years since the apartheid Israeli settler state was formed and expanded on Palestinian lands, it has conducted ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people, unleashing pogroms on Palestinian people, constantly violating their human rights, and depriving them of their right to self-determination."

Palestine solidarity demonstrations are being held across South Africa, including a march by the ANC together with Alliance partners to the Israeli Embassy in Tshwane, held on 22 October. The outpouring of solidarity with Palestine reflects a strong sense of empathy among South Africans with Palestinians suffering Israeli apartheid and oppression.

The political Bureau of Hamas responded with praise for South Africa's solidarity with Palestine, "We ask that you, our South African brothers, and sisters, remain firm in your support, con-



**Solidarity must be concrete – the message at one of the many protests in South Africa against the war on Palestine**

tinue your solidarity as our situation gets more difficult, continue to protest, demonstrate, pray, and join your hearts with ours. And ensure that your ANC government too continues to support our struggle and champions our cause in the UN and other multilateral bodies.”

In a letter to the United Nations Security Council, on 8 October, the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine, headed by Dr Riyas Mansour, stated that the events of 7 October “did not occur in a vacuum. They are preceded this year by the killing of hundreds of Palestinians, among them 47 children, and injury to thousands more by the Israeli occupying forces...”

Mansour called for “an end to the Israeli occupation and an end to the ongoing Nakba against the Palestinian people and to assist them to realise their rights, including to self-determination and return... The future of Palestine and the region is at stake, and whether it will be one of peace and justice, security and

stability, or one of chaos and war, death and destruction.”

At present, Israel and its Western backers favour the latter approach. Why? Israel represents a crucial foothold of Western imperialism in the Middle East.

True to Lenin’s description of how imperialism – monopoly capitalism gone global – carves up the world into areas of interest and control, Western imperialism has a vital interest in maintaining Israel as a bellicose ally in the Middle East.

US President Joe Bidon made this abundantly clear in a speech in 1986: “Were there not an Israel, we would have to invent an Israel to protect our interests in the region.” He has since repeated

## **Israel is Western imperialism’s foothold in the Middle East**

the same point. The US is now increasing its already bloated military aid to Israel as the Netanyahu regime seeks to destroy Palestine once and for all precisely to protect these interests.

The UK and countries of the European Union, among others, have adopted the same stance. But they didn’t reckon with the mass outpouring of public solidarity protests across the West and many other parts of the world. Judging by these, there is a fierce disconnect between the people and Western ruling elites.

Solidarity with the Palestinian people is now more vital than ever. When it is big enough, concerted enough and persistent enough, solidarity – as the global movement against apartheid South Africa and, earlier, the mass opposition to the Vietnam War showed – becomes a material force capable of forcing real change. That’s what is needed now to stop the genocide against the Palestinian people and boost the struggle to win their freedom. ★



# South Africans stand with Palestine

*Solidarity marches, pickets and rallies have been held the length and breadth of South Africa demanding an end to the war on Palestine and for solid sanctions against apartheid Israel*





Protest scenes in Cape Town and, here and overleaf, in Tshwane and Free State, including (top of page 4) ANC leader, Febe Potgeiter.

Several thousand people marched through the streets of Salt River, Cape Town, 22 October, in a show of solidarity for the people of Palestine.

The march was organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Salt River Heritage Society. The protesters demanded that the Israeli embassy be shut down. They also called for an immediate ceasefire and for support for humanitarian aid for Gaza.



The ANC's Palestine Solidarity March in Tshwane, above, delivered a detailed list of demands to the Israeli Embassy (see page 12).

In Free State a protest by the South African Students Congress, 11 October, demanded that the University of the Free State ends its partnership with the University of Haifa in Israel. Left, Cde Asive Dlanjwa, Sasco's Deputy Secretary General and other Sasco leaders march on the UFS' offices and, right, protesters picketed the building





*Letter from **Riyad Mansour**, Minister,  
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine  
to the President of the United Nations Security  
Council, 8 October 2023*

## “Our pleas for the international community to act remain unheard”

**A**n all-out war has been declared by Israel, the occupying power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This endless campaign of State terror is claiming civilian lives by the minute, slaughtering children, women and men in yet another punitive military assault against on the besieged Gaza Strip, reminiscent of the deadly aggressions by Israel in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2018-2019, 2021, 2022.

At the writing of this letter, the death toll in Gaza stands at: at 313 Palestinians killed, including at least 20 children, over 2,000 injured, and thousands of families displaced, now over 20,000 civilians, in just the past 24 hours.

The scenes of devastation inflicted are harrowing. The occupying power has also declared that it will cut off the supply of electricity, fuel and goods to Gaza Strip, inflicting an even more dire humanitarian situation and untold trauma on the entire population, including children, women, elderly, sick and disabled persons.

The situation has reached the dangerous, explosive point that we have continually and explicitly warned of, yet to no avail. Crisis after crisis, our pleas for the international community to act on the collective political, legal, humanitarian and moral responsibilities towards this prolonged injustice remain unheard. Even as the occupying Power becomes more ferocious, racist and extreme, its systematic assaults on the Palestinian people and human rights violations escalating by the day, the pleas for international protection of our people remain unmet.

These developments did not occur in a vacuum. They are preceded by the kill-

ing this year of hundreds of Palestinians, among them 47 children, and injury of thousands more by the Israeli occupying forces (IOF), both army and armed settler militias, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem - a toll that has already surpassed the deadliest year for Palestinians in 2022 since the UN began recording casualties - and preceded by decades of Israel's unrelenting:

Military raids on Palestinian villages, towns, cities and refugee camps, terrorizing and attacking defenseless civilians;

Arrest, detention, imprisonment and abuse of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children and women;

A suffocating 16-year air, land and sea blockade of more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza and collective punishment of the entire Palestinian population by blockade, walls, permit regimes, closures and 645 checkpoints;

Terror and violence by Israeli settlers marauding throughout the Palestinian territory, intimidating, harassing, killing and maiming Palestinian civilians and torching, vandalizing and destroying their properties akin to pogroms;

Seizure of Palestinian land and seizure and demolition of homes and properties for the construction of more colonial settlements and the wall and annexation of more Palestinian land;

Forced displacement of Palestinians across the West Bank, including East Je-

**Israel, the occupying power, is fully responsible for this situation**

rusalem, including the transfer of entire communities from their lands, amounting to ethnic cleansing;

Attacks on holy sites, targeting in particular Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and provocations, incitement and assaults on Palestinian Muslim and Christian worshippers, breaching international law and the historic, legal status quo;

Exploitation and theft of Palestine's natural resources and wealth and impoverishment of the Palestinian people;

Humiliation and demonization of the Palestinian people and their subjugation to racist, discriminatory, dehumanizing policies and practices amounting to apartheid;

All perpetrated by Israel's army, terrorist settlers and government officials systematically, unapologetically and brutally imposing this illegal colonial occupation and apartheid regime deliberately depriving an entire nation of people of their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination and to live in freedom and dignity in their own homeland, and endangering their very existence, in grave breach of international law and every single moral standard and in perpetuity with no end in sight.

This occupation breeds incessant violence, assaulting and claiming Palestinian lives and endangering Israelis.

And, once again, as it pursues only the violence and terror it knows. traumatized Palestinian families in Gaza are desperately on the run, displaced from their homes to the only refuge available to them - UNRWA schools - as Israel rains bombs and missiles on them, indiscriminately killing, wounding and destroying and openly threatening even more wanton attacks, with no regard for the sanctity of human life.

This savagery must end. The Security Council must call for an immediate halt to the violence and ceasefire and for the protection of civilians. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, must be respected. It cannot be that all rules are suspended, with exception of the one Charter Article repeatedly invoked by some, while an occupying power declares war on the civilian population it has been illegally occupying and oppressing for decades.

The root causes of this grave situation must be addressed. The facts are known to all. Israel, the occupying Power, is fully responsible for this situation as a result of its insistence on subjugating the Palestinian people and stripping them of





**Not Gaza, but the West Bank: Israel's aggression against the Palestinian territory has a long history, but now millions of civilian lives are at stake**

their rights, their land, their heritage in pursuit of it illegitimate colonial annexationist agenda and domination schemes.

The Security Council must end its paralysis and move immediately to uphold its Charter duties in the face of growing threats to international peace and security. It must rise to its responsibilities regarding the Palestine question and offer the political horizon that has been missing for far too long. UN resolutions must be implemented; Israel cannot continue being allowed to act as a State above the law, evading accountability even as it breaches the law and dismisses the Security Council with contempt.

And, where the occupying power has clearly abdicated its obligations to ensure the protection of the occupied civilian population - in fact openly declaring them the "enemy", declaring war on them and threatening to reduce an entire civilian area "to rubble" - it is urgent for the international community to step in and protect civilian lives, as demanded by international humanitarian law and countless Security Council resolutions and the obligations incumbent on all High Contracting Parties to the 4th Geneva Convention.

The decades-long calls - by the Security Council, General Assembly, Human Rights Council, International Court of Justice and across the international community as a whole - to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and an end to this ongoing Nakba against the Palestinian people and to assist them to realize their rights, including to self-determination and return, must be immediately, seriously and truly acted on, not treated as mere slogans or rhetoric or illusions. The legitimate national aspirations and inalienable human rights of a people can neither be quashed, nor will they ever be forsaken, no matter the passage of time, no matter the force used against them. It is time to come to terms with the fact that peace and security will remain elusive for as long as they are denied.

Further delays and detours cannot be justified. Further negligence, false equivalencies and equivocating are unconscionable. Millions of civilian lives are at stake. The future of Palestine and the region is at stake, and whether it will be one of peace and justice, security and stability, or one of chaos and war, death and destruction. We urge the Security Council and all peace-loving nations to

act now on their solemn obligations under the Charter, including to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

This letter is in follow-up to our 803 letters regarding the ongoing historical injustice against the Palestinian people and the crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 8 October 2023 (A/ES-10/951-S/2023/ ) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter made available to the members of the Security Council for their valuable consideration and distributed as an official document of the Security Council. ★



Israeli air strikes on Gaza City, 12 October

Photo Mahmud Hams

*Hamas Political Bureau on  
South Africa's solidarity with  
the people of Palestine*

## **Hamas – “Our resistance and your solidarity will help us achieve our liberation”**

**O**ur people stand at a critical moment in our history. After 75 years of occupation and colonisation, we have decided that enough is enough. The resistance will no longer simply defend our people; we have begun the campaign for our full liberation. That is what Operation Al-Qsa Flood represents, uniting the resistance in Gaza and elsewhere and Palestinians around the world.

We are heartened by the unwavering

support of our friends and comrades all over the world. And to know that South Africans, the people of Nelson Mandela, the people who have inspired us in our struggle, are on the streets expressing their support for our anti-colonial struggle inspires us and increases our determination. On behalf of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, the Qassam Brigades, and the broad Palestinian Resistance, we extend our thanks and our hearts to you.

We know that South Africans and Palestinians are united by a common bond: the fight for justice, freedom, against apartheid, and our unwavering spirit of resistance.

Our glorious Palestinian people are showing remarkable courage in the face of hardship the merciless and genocidal attacks by the Zionist entity. They have been doing so for 75 years. God willing, we have begun on the road to our liberation. They and we and all our resistance fighters are unwavering in our steadfastness (Sumud), and our desire to serve our people and justice. We are ready to sacrifice everything for our liberation because we know that the oppressed people will always be successful.

We ask that you, our South African brothers, and sisters, remain firm in your support, continue your solidarity as our situation gets more difficult, and continue to protest, demonstrate, pray, and join your hearts with ours. And ensure that your ANC government too continues to support our struggle and champions our cause in the UN and other multilateral bodies. Our resistance and your solidarity will help us achieve our liberation, God willing. We take hope from your South African slogan: Amandla! Awethu! The oppressed people will liberate themselves and gain power. ★



*The SACP condemns the apartheid Israeli settler state for its genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people, reiterates unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just struggle for the freedom of Palestine*

## **SACP – imperialism sponsors genocide**

**T**he SACP condemns the apartheid Israeli settler state for its genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people, reiterates unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just struggle for the freedom of Palestine

The apartheid Israeli regime's decades-long impunity must end with immediate effect. Its leaders, past and present, must be held accountable for expropriating Palestinian lands, erecting illegal settlements and occupying Palestinian territories, and for their human rights violations, atrocious deeds and war crimes against the Palestinian people.

In pledging our unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just struggle to end colonial and imperialist occupation, reclaim their expropriated lands, and exercise their democratic national sovereignty free from oppression, as the SACP we strongly condemn the apartheid Israeli settler state for its genocidal bombardment of Palestinians, destruction of their homes and civil infrastructure, and cutting off of access to

water and electricity.

In intensifying its 75 years of Palestinian land expropriation and occupation, human rights violations and atrocious acts against the Palestinian people, since 1948, from 7 October the apartheid Israeli settler state has killed civilians—including patients and medical professionals in healthcare facilities such as the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza which the Israeli military bombed on Thursday.

Israel has killed Palestinian children, women and men for many years. It has now killed, and it is still killing more others, cutting off access to water and electricity in Gaza, and destroying their homes, roads and logistics infrastructure. The apartheid Israeli settler state has blocked humanitarian aid from flowing into Gaza while carrying out the pogrom and genocide. Besides bombarding Gaza every day now, the apartheid Israeli settler state is killing Palestinians in the West Bank as well, as it also displays its insatiable appetite for offshore Palestinian oil.

The Israeli regime is not alone but has

the automatic support of, and arms and other forms of active backing by the imperialist regime of the United States. It is also backed by numerous imperialist regimes of the European Union. The SACP denounces the United States and its allies for their support of the atrocious apartheid Israeli settler deeds.

Amnesty International has shared damning evidence of the war crimes that the Israeli apartheid regime has committed since 7 October, including wiping out entire families in Gaza, as the regime intensified its 75 years of atrocious acts and human rights violations against the Palestinian people. In its report, Amnesty International concludes that the horrific destruction, including attacks directed at civilians and civil infrastructure by the Israeli regime, violated international humanitarian law on each case.

Since 7 October, Israeli forces have [at the time of writing, 22 October] launched thousands of air bombardments in the Gaza Strip, killing at least 3,793 people, and still killing mostly civilians, including over 1,500 children, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza. Approximately 12,500 have been injured, and over 1,000 bodies are still trapped beneath the rubble. Israel is daily increasing the numbers by killing more people and causing injuries to more others.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, at least 79 Palestinians, including 20 children, have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers amid a spike in excessive use of force by the Israeli army and an escalation in state-backed settler violence, which Amnesty International is also investigating.

The Israeli regime has also blocked key telecommunication channels and access to important online Palestinian hubs, while the US and Western European imperialist “news” agencies, media propaganda machinery, bombard the world with one-sided reportage in favour of the apartheid settler state.

The SACP calls upon the world working-class movement and progressive forces in every country to intensify mass demonstrations against the atrocious apartheid Israeli settler state and its genocidal deeds. In our country, we will press ahead with democratic protest action among others for the apartheid Israeli settler state embassy to shut down and leave. We call upon our trade union movement to intensify the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions activities against the apartheid Israeli regime. ★



**Devastating heartbreak – the scene outside Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, central Gaza, 29 October**



*The African National Congress March of Solidarity with Palestine to the Israeli embassy in Tshwane, 20 October, brought hundreds of ANC and Alliance supporters out onto the streets in a lively and vocal show of support for the Palestinian people. Below is the memorandum delivered by the ANC to the Israeli Ambassador, Eliav Belotsercovsky*

## ANC – “We need lasting peace between Israel and Palestine”

The African National Congress March of Solidarity with Palestine to the Israeli embassy in Tshwane, 20 October, brought hundreds of ANC and Alliance supporters out onto the streets in a lively and vocal show of support for the Palestinian people. Below is the memorandum delivered by the ANC to the Israeli Ambassador, Eliav Belotsercovsky

As the African National Congress and various faith-based, civil society, community, trade unions, and solidarity organisations, we are gathered here today in protest against the continued oppression of the Palestinian people.

The recent events, which sees the state State of Israel escalating the attacks on Gaza and the West Bank, are but the latest in a series of atrocities against the people of Palestine in violation of international law.

We declare that at the root of the conflict is the denial of the right of self-determination and statehood to the Palestinians.

We acknowledge that international solidarity played a key role in the victory of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Accordingly, as the progressive forces in South Africa, we stand in solidarity with the People of Palestine and the Saharawi People and called for an end to the blockade of Cuba by the

USA.

Since the Nakba in 1948, the situation in occupied Palestinian territories has been getting worse. Over the last two decades in particular, the state of Israel has subjected the Palestinian people to forms of racial oppression and brutal suppression no different to what the Black people experienced under the apartheid regime in South Africa.

South Africa stands with the Palestinian people today as we did during our long struggle for freedom and democracy in our motherland. We do so not because of their religion or the colour of their skin, but because we recognize our common humanity. Palestinian lives matter. Race or religion should not be used to determine our response to human catastrophe and injustice.

Our stance is consistent with UN Resolutions which call for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and the urgent implementation of the two-state solution – the independent State of Pal-

**Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories**

estine existing side by side and in peace with the State of Israel.

Comrade Nelson Mandela, the global icon and founding President of our democratic nation, was unequivocal when he said: “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians”.

We need lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. No amount of atrocities committed by the Israeli apartheid state will silence and suppress the Palestinian’s thirst for freedom, self-determination and nationhood.

Through this March of Solidarity, we:

- Call for an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of peaceful negotiations.
- Demand that Israel’s ultimatum that over a million Palestinians should overnight leave their homes in preparation for what can only be to commit genocide. We condemn in the strongest terms the bombing of hospitals, homes and other civilian targets, which are gross violations of human rights.

- Demand of the apartheid Israel government to heed the call for safe passage of humanitarian aid, which includes medical supplies and food. We condemn any blockade of such humanitarian aid as complicit in aggravating the humanitarian disaster and genocide against the Palestinian people.

- Recognise that the current episode of the conflict as of October 2023 follows years of murder of innocent Palestinians, including the murder of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by the Israeli regime with impunity.

- Condemn the selective morality and unconscionable stance of the US and some EU countries that have spoken only about the killing of Israeli civilians by Hamas while saying nothing about the killing of Palestinian civilians by the apartheid state of Israel.

- Call on the ICC to immediately indicate their intention to investigate the grave breaches by Israeli leaders of the crimes under the jurisdiction of the Rome Statute.

- Call on young South Africans to refuse military call-up by the Israeli war machine, as we called on young White patriots to refuse military conscription during the anti-apartheid struggle. None of our patriots should participate in committing genocide in Palestinian territories.

- Call for the speedy resolution of the conflict through the two-state solution, of Israel and of Palestine, premised on the 1967 borders and UN resolutions. ★



Tens of thousands of homes have been destroyed across Gaza, and the bombing continues

*In the following statement, the Congress of South African Trade Unions pledges its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in their quest for justice, peace and for the end of violence*

## **Cosatu – End the root cause of the violence by ending 75 years of occupation and apartheid**

**T**he daily crimes committed against the Palestinian people, coupled with the suffocating blockades on Gaza, have created a humanitarian crisis that has persisted for far too long.

Cosatu has always been a key part of the international solidarity movement with various struggles across the world, including the struggles of the Palestinian people against apartheid rule and occupation.

This is not only based on the South Af-

rican experience of apartheid and colonialism but on the intolerable abomination of all crimes against humanity.

Cosatu regards global solidarity as an important pillar of working-class struggles against all forms of oppression, exploitation, and injustice across the world.

Towards that end, Cosatu:

1. Unequivocally reaffirms its support for the struggles of the people of Palestine to end apartheid, and colonial occupation and for the right to independ-

ent statehood.

2. Reaffirm our full support for the Palestinian trade union movement and express disappointment in the Israeli trade union federation, Histradut, for refusing to condemn the occupation and the daily brutalisation of Palestinians, despite repeated calls by the global progressive trade union movement to this effect.

3. Calls on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to ensure the criminal prosecution of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and all those responsible for war crimes. The ICC must end its selective and targeted bias as well as its double standards in prosecuting war crimes.

4. Reaffirm our call for all countries committed to democracy, human rights and freedom from apartheid and colonialism; to diplomatically isolate Israel and close down Israeli embassies.

5. Further reaffirm the resolutions of the United Nations's (UN) World Conference against Racism (WCAR) declaring Zionism as racism and a crime against humanity.

6. Call on all progressive forces to mobilise and join the various pickets, including the events planned for the 29th of November UN Day of Solidarity with Palestine.

7. Call for end to all forms of violence and for a cessation of hostilities towards a serious process of negotiations for a genuine settlement that accommodates Palestinians and Israelis as equals in a united and democratic society with sovereign rights and freedoms for all. ★



A paramedic rushes a wounded Palestinian child to casualty at Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza City. By the end of October, some 5000 children had been killed in Gaza and many thousands more injured.



*In this series of articles, **Ronnie Kasrils** details the initial extent of Israel's onslaught against Gaza, examines the context of what is now happening, and stresses that the Palestinian resistance is far from being vanquished*

# Like the Phoenix, Gaza will rise



The bombardment of densely populated Gaza is a war crime on an industrial scale

(PART ONE)

## October Genocide Day 18: 26 October 2023

**G**aza is being reduced to rubble and if Israel is left unchecked will be levelled to ground zero before long. As of 25 October, of its 2.3 million population, a recorded 5,791 people had been annihilated by the Zionist State. Of these, 2,055 are children, with women and the elderly accounting for well over one-third of deaths.

More than 15,000 people have suffered traumatic wounds, many life threatening. One Palestinian child is killed every 15 minutes. On Day 18, a record 704 lives

*Ronnie Kasrils*



were wiped out. Televised images sear into the mind – of frantic parents rushing bundles of bloodied infants through shattered hospital wards or digging with bare hands through collapsed rubble for buried loved ones. People everywhere

in unbearable pain and anguish. Entire families wiped out, leaving a single member as survivor.

The nature of the barbaric aerial and artillery bombardment of the miniscule, densely-populated territory of 360 square kms is a war crime on an industrial scale. At this rate of slaughter, over 30,000 will be killed by the new year, with 150,000 injured. Some 10,000 children will be killed and 50,000 maimed, if the Israeli carnage is not stopped. Netanyahu and his bloodthirsty generals declare that



their “war” could last months, so these statistics are not improbable.

Given that 12 of Gaza’s hospitals have been destroyed, 32 medical centres partially damaged or out of service, including the Al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza City where 500 people died from an Israeli rocket. Hamas rockets don’t destroy entire buildings. Israeli missiles do. Entire neighbourhoods flattened and smouldering as in World War Two cities, one million displaced, and more than 1,000 missing under the rubble, the fatalities are bound to rise exponentially.

Israel’s bellicose defence minister, Yoav Gallant, announced at the onset of its “total war” on 8 October: “I have ordered a complete siege of the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel... We are fighting human animals.” Those words could have come from the mouth of a Nazi exterminator.

Exactly a fortnight later, with the world outraged at the slaughter of Palestinians, and Israel’s infamous instruction that gave the hapless Gazan populace of 1.1 million in the north of the Strip just 24 hours to evacuate their homes, some

twenty-seven UN relief trucks with food, water, medicine but no fuel, managed to enter through the Rafah border crossing with Egypt under UN pressure. That’s akin to feeding 2.3 million people with an eye-dropper. Gaza, under siege for 17 years, had been serviced by 500 trucks a day – and that amounted to borderline starvation. How many will now die of thirst and starvation bereft of care and medication. There are an estimated 55,000 pregnant women, 5,000 close to giving birth, 130 babies in incubators, 140 cases in ICU. ★

(PART TWO)

## Aluta continua: Slaughter of Palestinians is not new

In 1948, when Israeli fascists slaughtered 240 men, women and children in the Deir Yassin village near Jerusalem, its agriculture minister, Aharon Zisling, declared in horror: “We have behaved like Nazis and my whole being is shaken.” Physicist Albert Einstein, and Hannah Arendt, expert on the Nazis, correctly labelled the architect of that massacre, Menachem Begin, a fascist. He later became Israel’s prime minister. Whether Ben Gurion’s Labour Party, Sharon and Netanyahu’s Likud, or the latest brand of neo-fascists at the helm, they are all united behind a singular racist myth: Palestine is their God-given land and they are the Chosen People. A coalition government was hastily cobbled together, after half of Israel had been protesting against Netanyahu’s moves to overhaul the judiciary and save his skin from.

The Collective West has provided the cover for Israel’s crimes at birth. That continues, with the USA’s \$3.8 billion per year funding for Israel’s military alone, irrespective of which brand of racist colonial settlers are in power in Israel. Biden announced an immediate \$14 billion military aid package for Israel with not a cent of humanitarian aid for Palestinians. The Zionist state is the West’s strategic asset in the Middle East. It colludes with Israel in its ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, genocidal operations and apartheid practices, and

in its aggression against neighbouring states.

Western states, led by the USA, have vetoed and undermined UN resolutions and international law from 1947 and through the 1967 military occupation to the present day to protect Israel, and to provide a blank cheque to wipe out Palestine on the basis of its “right to self-defence”. Joe Biden and his handler Anthony Blinken, the USA’s arch-neocon and Zionist Secretary of State, warmly embrace Israeli leaders, as do France’s

and 1,200 settlers were killed by resistance fighters engaged in a liberation struggle against apartheid settler-colonialism. Those settlers died because the Israeli state failed to protect them from fighters who had broken out of perpetual open-air imprisonment, enraged and provoked by brutal abuse and suffering of almost eight decades from the time of the dispossession of grandparents. The guerrillas raided the Israeli towns, villages and kibbutzim built on land stolen from their Palestinian families in the 1940s, during the Nakba that had cast them into refugee limbo.

Indeed, two-thirds of the residents of Gaza are refugees, many from those same destroyed villages. Some settlers, including some revellers at the music festival on Gaza’s doorstep, died, as Israeli eyewitnesses have revealed, owing to either deliberate or incompetent shooting by Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers, operating under the military’s “Hannibal doctrine”, that death is better than being

taken captive by the Resistance.

The Collective West and its servile media claimed 7 October was an “unprovoked” attack. No reference was made to more than 75 years of provocation of ethnic cleansing, incremental genocide and collective punishment; or the 17 years of Gaza’s siege; or the five deadly onslaughts on Gaza since 2008; or the cold-blooded assassination of 220 protes-



Gaza City, 10 October

Macron, and Britain’s Rishi Sunak, with other obedient American poodles. Sunak’s wealthy family has enormous investments in Israel as do many others on the Zionist bandwagon. They chorused “Israel has a right to defend itself” after the 7th October “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood” launched by Hamas, when the two-billion-dollar Gaza security fence was breached, and 360 Israeli soldiers





**A Palestinian man with family members killed by Israeli bombing in Jabalia, north Gaza, 9 October**

tors, including 46 children, and injuring of 36,000 in the peaceful March of Return of 2018-19. Settlers from neaSderot ate popcorn and cheered Israeli snipers as they mowed down defenceless people like nine pins.

Israel is again given the green light, with the US, Britain, France, and Canada voting against a ceasefire in the UN Security Council, making them complicit in war crimes. The US has despatched two aircraft carrier groups, with 2,000 marines, to protect Israel, and has delivered more bombs and missiles for the “defensive” onslaught on Gaza, and quite likely gas and flame throwers for the ground attack on the Hamas tunnel system. Israel, acclaimed as one of the most powerful militaries in the world, is short of munitions and even batteries for its Iron Dome. The dogs of war will soon be let loose, we are told by Netanyahu and Gallant, in an almighty ground invasion of Gaza. The region, and particularly the resistance axis of Iran, Hezbollah, Syria, fighters in Iraq and Yemen, are warned to stand down or face the might of Uncle Sam. There is no certainty they will.

The fate of Gazans unravels before the eyes of a shocked world, begging belief. It is ethnic cleansing and genocide,

turning Gaza from the biggest concentration camp in the world into an extermination camp. We agree with Aharon Zisling that Israel behaves like Nazis. We cheered the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto who rebelled, guns in hand, against Nazi incarceration, prepared to die on their feet rather than await death like lambs. We South Africans, like other national liberation movements, took up weapons when there was no other option, as did Palestinians under occupation. Armed resistance against military occupation and tyranny is recognised as a universal right in international law. Hamas is a national liberation movement, engaged in an anti-colonial struggle. Isis, and other such real terrorist groups, are not. There is no comparison.

How stark are the contrasts with the West’s claimed “values”. Let’s leave it to the goddess of war and European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, who often praises her Nazi grandfather, to expose the Collective West’s complicity and double-standards: “Russia’s attacks against civilian infrastructure, especially electricity, in Ukraine is a war crime. Cutting off men, women, children from water, electricity and heating with winter coming – these are acts of pure

terror. And we have to call it as such.” This is applicable to Russia, but not Israel?

The West’s geo-political interests are glaringly obvious to the world as it struggles to assert its neocolonial, imperialist global domination. Zionism’s 19th Century founder, Theodor Herzl, in seeking support from European powers, promised that a “Jewish state” in Palestine would build an iron wall “against Asian barbarism”, meaning securing Western imperialist interests against the Arabs and further east, by a European colonial settlement in what for centuries had been Palestine. This became fundamental over the years and explains the financial, military, diplomatic and servile mainstream media support for Israel – an extension of Western imperialism.

As for the fate of the Palestinian people – who had cultivated the fields, developed agriculture, trade and towns, and created a thriving culture, from the times of the Canaanite Kingdom, Herzl explained: “Once in power, we will spirit the penniless Arabs across the borders.” That was the basis for ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people energetically begun by Ben Gurion in 1948 when 750,000 people – three-quarters of the Palestin-



ian population at the time who vastly outnumbered Jews – were forced into exile as refugees. Gaza and the West Bank, seized in Israel's 1967 war of expansion, created more refugees. Clearly, Israel's objective in levelling Gaza is to see its 2.3 million people – those who survive the terror – housed in tents in the Sinai Desert and becoming Egypt's responsibility.

The West Bank and East Jerusalem is in turmoil. Zionist expansion since the 1993 Oslo Accords, and its mirage of a two-state solution, has seen illegal settlers increasing from 250,000 at that time to 700,000, making that two-state fantasy impossible. Extremely provocative and insulting has been the desecration of the sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque, with the mob attacks on worshippers and residents of East Jerusalem peaking this year, the sustained assault on Palestinians in the West Bank, and the frenzied pogroms launched by illegal settlers screaming "Kill the Arabs!"

Almost 2,000 West Bank Palestinians have been injured and more than 100 killed since 7th October, with 200 murdered in the preceding months this year. These attacks were met by courageous armed resistance in towns such as Jenin, Nablus and Khalil (Hebron), which has challenged the military occupation and seen the transfer of numerous IDF battalions from Gaza to the West Bank.

Popular resistance has increased, and the number of Palestinians imprisoned (or taken hostage) by Israel has almost doubled to 10,000, including 200 women

and increasing numbers of children as young as twelve, most of them without trial. The Israelis being held by Hamas are being offered in exchange for the freeing of those prisoners, held under abominable conditions, and many for longer than Nelson Mandela's 27 years' imprisonment. Two of those prisoners mysteriously died this past week. Israel's policy is not to negotiate a prisoner exchange. This has been exposed by Qatari and Egyptian mediation for the release of four women by Hamas; all appeared in good health following their ordeal and indicated they had been well treated although the experience had been traumatic. Another woman held hostage in a kibbutz on 7th October, explained on Israeli TV that she had been well treated in the hours before the IDF arrived and explained that many Israelis had been killed by advancing Israeli soldiers, and that her house, virtually razed to the ground, was damaged by IDF tank fire. The interview was swiftly removed from online platforms. The claim that babies had been beheaded – initially believed by a feckless Joe Biden – was soon revealed to be a lie, with the White House backtracking in embarrassment, and explaining that Biden had not seen the pictures he claimed he had. That lie continues to be used by frenzied Zionist spokesperson to mislead the public.

It is easy to understand the hatred harboured by many but not all Palestinians for Israelis – given the barbaric treat-

ment they have endured for decades. On the other hand, Zionism's antisemitic race card has brainwashed Israelis and played on the gullibility of people globally, especially in the West. It is Zionism, a political doctrine with minimal support among global Jewry before World War II, which is to blame for the fate of Jews in Israel. They were duped into believing that the founding of a Zionist state was their salvation and the answer to anti-semitism, especially in Europe. Not all Jews, however, support Zionism and its world view, and the number is increasing given the atrocities Israel commits. International anti-Zionist Jewish networks have been proclaiming that Palestinians have every right to resist, and declare that Israel does not speak in their name.

Righteous people mourn the loss of life of all civilians that died, Jews and Palestinians, yet the losses on both sides are incomparable. Palestinians have been punished for decades, had no hand in the Nazi Holocaust, lost their land to a criminal colonial project, and are the ones suffering unspeakable brutality. As has been observed throughout history, when slaves rise up against the slave owner, and deal with him and his family, the blame is not on those who had been the victims of oppression. They hold the moral high ground. Their cause is just. Nevertheless, it seems the situation could not look bleaker for Gaza, and for that matter all Palestinians. Or could there be a twist in the tale? ★



A wounded Palestinian child receiving treatment at the overcrowded Al-Shifa hospital following an Israeli attack, 11 October



**Palestinians have shown that they can never be vanquished – Palestine will be free!**

(PART THREE)

## Whither Gaza – Whither Palestine – Whither Israel?

**A**s horrendous as the outcome appears to be it doesn't look like Israel's plans for vengeance are on such a smooth track. The massive ground force of 100,000, and 300,000 in reserve, with tanks, armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and heavy artillery, have been on hold into the third week of Galant's promised retaliation.

It is never wise to deploy your force in an emotive knee-jerk reaction, with no clear military and political strategic objectives. There is the daunting prospect of a ground invasion having to contend with the intricate tunnel system the Resistance fighters have developed over the years. Attacking in urban conditions against a formidable opponent is the most difficult and dangerous of all operations. Add to that, Hamas has demonstrated extraordinary mastery of guerrilla tactics as illustrated by the lessons it dished out to the IDF on 7 October. How is it that under the bombardment of two weeks, rockets and now even drones are

launched into Israel and at the assembled ground force. They have demonstrated the canny ability to ambush the IDF ground forces on previous engagements in Gaza. The IDF cannot afford to face any further calamities. The Israeli public will not stand for that from either politicians or a military whose inadequacies have already been so rudely exposed, no doubt because it has become a glorified police force dealing with stone throwing kids.

An occupation force of a corrupt and decrepit state, despite all the boasting, cannot produce sustained high morale, especially when going up against a highly-motivated opponent with a deeply-felt cause, contemptuous of death. Those Israeli troops must be getting very restive and edgy as the days drag by. Most will be mighty afraid of those booby-trapped tunnels, and the time the Gaza fighters have had to prepare, anticipating for months, even years, the ground force invasion that would likely follow an opera-

tion such as Al-Aqsa Flood. Who knows what surprises there are in store for the invaders? Israel has to maintain considerable forces on its northern front with Lebanon, and its most feared opponent, Hezbollah.

Skirmishes have already been occurring there as guerrilla fighters probe Israel's defences. The most likely scenario is that once the IDF's ground attack into Gaza commences, all hell will break loose in the north, with a barrage of potent missiles fired into Israel's cities, accompanied by a ground incursion. The Hezbollah threat is most feared by Israel, and is one reason why the US naval fleet is close at hand. Likewise, the West Bank resistance is also likely to register a potent response, as will operations within Israel itself, if history is anything to go by. Guerrilla fighters throughout the region have developed impressive operational capacity and daring, and demonstrate a far greater threat to Israeli military prowess than the conventional



Arab armies that Israel contended with in 1948 and 1967.

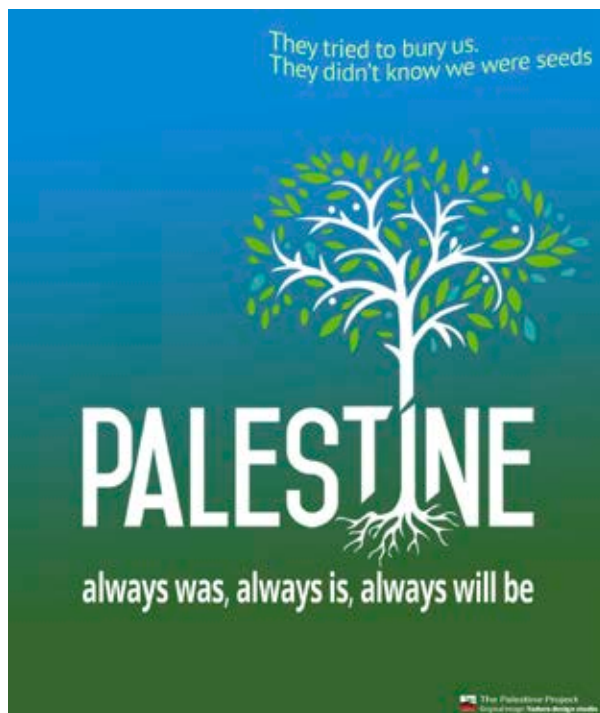
The Israeli public, including families of the hostages, is becoming extremely angry with the government and IDF's reluctance to negotiate a prisoner exchange. Public protests are increasing. As some hostages with Western citizenship are released through foreign pressure, the outrage will grow, placing enormous pressure on Netanyahu. This will further effect a ground invasion of Gaza. As possible prisoner exchanges take place, the weaknesses of the Israeli state will become more obvious. Recall that in 2011 the IDF soldier Gilad Shalit was exchanged for over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. Hamas is holding a very strong card.

Despite the Israeli bombardment, it seems many Gazan citizens will also lose fear of the IDF; after all, what have young people in Gaza to lose? The arrival of convoys of supplies through Rafah will be seen as the victory it is. It is clearly against Israel's wishes, but signalled by Biden, for fear of the way the humanitarian suffering has begun to turn Western public opinion against Israel, the increasing global protests, and some change in the mood of mainstream media. Hope will return to the embattled Gaza streets, as well as in the West Bank, where resistance fighters have displayed huge tactical ability over the past year. The US-Israeli objective of propping up the Palestine Authority (PA), of dividing Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza, between Fatah and Hamas, has long rendered Mahmoud Abbas a lame duck with no credibility, the two-state solution as futile, and the notion of only peaceful forms of struggle as inadequate. Current events have put paid to those plans or the idea that the PA could be brought in to govern Gaza. Gaza is uniting the determination and belief of Palestinians everywhere – in the occupied territories, within Israel itself, in the refugee camps of the region, and in the diaspora. That's not the only headache for Western objectives.

Both the US and Israel are concerned at the possible setback to the Abrahamic Accord and Israel's normalisation with its neighbours, which Netanyahu was only recently smirking about in his UN General

Assembly address. As unreliable and even treacherous as most Arab governments have been regarding support for the Palestinians, Algeria, Syria and Yemen being exceptions, the unprecedented Palestinian Resistance has galvanised the Arab masses as reflected in the huge protests in the Middle East and beyond.

The last thing the US wants is a quagmire in the Middle East, with the Axis of Resistance on the offensive. This at a time when their proxy war in the Ukraine is unravelling, the futile Kiev counter-offensive grinding to a halt, and the battleground situation looking like Russia is in the process of an offensive of its own. The Collective West is rent by contradictions, and the US's bankrupt strategy cannot handle these prohibitively-costly wars on two fronts – never mind a third



in the Taiwan Straits; and more particularly given the economic problems testing all Western countries. China and Russia have consolidated their alliance, are growing in strength and capacity, and are being less tentative in their dealings with Israel, prepared to support Iran if needs be, leading a regional test of strength with Israel. This would certainly benefit their anti-Western interests and the military threats they are contending with.

Taking all these factors into account, the prospect of Gaza being on the brink of extinction is not a done deal. The buildings might be reduced to rubble, and thousands killed, but Palestinians have exhibited the most extraordinary resilience and steadfastness (sumud)

over decades, contrary to Israel's expectations. Ben Gurion once said that after the 1948 Palestinian generation, 'the old will die, and the young will forget'. What complacency; what ignorance of Palestinian nationalism and love of freedom and self-determination. Hamas and the other resistance groups – in Gaza and West Bank, along with Hezbollah – are part of their communities, supported by their people, and protected by them.

Much depends on how Hamas and other resistance groups contain the coming ground invasion. They may fare far better than many expect. Already 7 October reflects that Palestine is well and truly on the road to freedom. Palestinians have shown they can never be eradicated. Gaza might be turned into dust but the Phoenix will rise from the ashes.

What can be done

The international community has a sacred mission to stand by Gaza and with Palestine:

Recognise the legitimacy of the Resistance!

- Demand an immediate ceasefire
- Allow humanitarian aid.

- Negotiate prisoner exchange.
- Lift the blockade of Gaza.
- End Israel's occupation of the West Bank

- Dismantle the illegal settlements

- Demand the return of the refugees

- Demand the UN honour its responsibility, resolutions and duties

- Demand the ICC issue warrants of arrest for Israeli war criminals

- Fill the streets; march on Israel embassies, and those of its allies

- Counter media lies and project the Palestinian narrative

- Strengthen the BDS campaign and totally isolate Zionist Israel

- The South African government should lead the way in expelling the Israeli Ambassador and ending all ties with Israel in its present form

- Pave the way for Muslims, Christians, Jews, Bedouin and those of whatever faith, to find a peaceful settlement and unite for a common Palestinian homeland from the river to the sea. ★

**Cde Kasrils is an SACP, MK and ANC veteran, internationalist, and former Deputy Minister of Defence and Minister of Intelligence Services**