

SUPPORT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE! CONDEMN ISRAEL WAR CRIMES IN GAZA!

The toll of Palestinians killed and wounded continues to rise rapidly as Israel intensifies its brutal air and ground assault on the trapped and starving people of the Gaza Strip.

While Israel conducts a campaign of killing and collective punishment against the civilian population, the United States, with the support of the Harper government, continues to block all diplomatic initiatives aimed at imposing a cease-fire. Since Israeli troops, tanks and artillery crossed the border into Gaza last Saturday night, many more Palestinian civilians have been killed bringing the total dead in the 11-day war to more than 700, as of Tuesday night. The number of wounded is in the thousands. After an aerial attack on a UN school on Tuesday which killed at least 40 people, the Israeli army tried to justify this war crime by claiming that Hamas was firing rockets from the school and using civilians as shields. This claim has now been shown to be false - even by Israeli officials, and exposed as a calculated lie.

According to press reports and statements from the Israeli military, Israeli forces have taken control of several towns north of Gaza City, cut the narrow enclave in half and surrounded Gaza City. There are also reports that Israeli forces are moving toward Gaza's southern border with Egypt in an attempt to cut off the last remaining connection, already restricted by the Egyptian regime, between the besieged population of 1.5 million Gazans and the outside world.

Contrary to Israeli and US propaganda and disinformation, while Hamas observed a ceasefire agreement during the past six months, the Israelis continued their acts of war through a suffocating blockade to starve the local population and targeted assassinations to decapitate the leadership. As such, it is not Hamas who ended the ceasefire. However, despite the Israeli ground assault and ongoing bombardment, rockets continue to be fired from Gaza into southern Israel.

The U.S., Israel and Canada have refused to recognize the democratically elected government of Gaza, and instead carried out a blockade which is an act of war in international law. UN special investigator Richard Falk has condemned Israel's blockade of Gaza as a "flagrant and massive violation of international humanitarian law" and "Crime Against Humanity."

No amount of propaganda and lies can conceal the fact that Israel, with the full support of the United States, is committing yet another war crime. Over the weekend, the European Commission condemned Israel, saying it was "blocking access to people who are suffering and dying," acts which it described as a breach of humanitarian law. According to some reports from the region close to the Israeli border, entire areas have been turned into virtual free-fire zones. *USA Today* on Monday cited Ashraf al-Masri, a 35-year-old taxi driver in Gaza, as saying Israeli troops are "shooting at anything that moves."

PALESTINIANS ARE UNDER ATTACK BECAUSE OF THEIR STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION AND THEIR OPPOSITION TO ISRAELI APARTHEID

Until there is justice for the Palestinians, there will no lasting peace in the Middle East. We call for an end to the brutal colonial policies of the Israeli government which have always sought to dispossess, disenfranchise, humiliate and marginalize Palestinians as part of a long term strategy to steal their land and expel their population. Any just settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will have to be based upon:

- an end to the military occupation of Palestinian land (UN Resolution 242)

- an end to the building of illegal settlements on Palestinian land, and a dismantling of all existing illegal settlements (4th Geneva Convention)
- an end to the illegal expropriation of Palestinian land (4th Geneva Convention)
- an end to the forcible transfer and expulsion of Palestinians (4th Geneva Convention)
- an end to the use of economic blockades and economic sabotage as forms of collective punishment (4th Geneva Convention)
- an end to assassinations and “targeted killings”
- an end to policies of closure, separation, checkpoints, ghettoization and curfews;
- an end to the denial of the most basic human rights and civil liberties
- an end to the state structure that privileges Jews over other citizens (Declaration of Human Rights: Articles 2 & 7)
- a demolition of the “security wall” (International Court of Justice ruling)
- an end to administrative detentions without charge and the routine use of torture of thousands of Palestinians including young children treated like adults
- an end to land seizures, house demolitions, crop destruction - with compensation paid to those who have lost their homes, their land and their livelihoods (Declaration of Human Rights: Article 17)
- an end to the colonial condition of Palestinian statelessness
- the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland (UN Resolution 194)
- the right of Palestinians to elect their own institutions of government without foreign interference

We call upon the Canadian government to recognize and uphold the inherent rights of the Palestinian people for national self-determination and social justice. We call upon the Canadian government to end its hypocritical support for Israel’s many violations of international law. We recognize the unity of the Palestinian people – whether located in Israel, the Occupied Territories or in outside refugee camps – and their legitimate rights of self-defence and national resistance to colonial oppression.

IT’S TIME TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE OCCUPATION – SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FOR NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE