

It's a Genocide, and It Must be Stopped

FREE, FREE PALESTINE!

Friday 27 October 2023, by [Spectre Editorial Board](#) (Date first published: 24 October 2023).

Palestinians, as well as some left-wing Jews, are being suspended from studies, fired from jobs, or arrested at night – all because of social media posts.

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We are watching a genocide unfold in real time. As professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies [Raz Segal argues](#), what Israel has unleashed on Gaza is “a textbook case of genocide.” More than this, the Israeli government is doing little to conceal it. “Israel’s genocidal assault on Gaza is quite explicit, open and unashamed,” Segal writes. “Perpetrators of genocide usually do not express their intentions so clearly.”

On October 9, Israel’s defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced that Israel would impose a “complete siege” on the Gaza Strip, cutting off electricity, food, water, and gas. “We are fighting human animals and we act accordingly,” he proclaimed.

Three days later, as Israeli bombardment continued to increase, Gazans received another message from Israel: all 1.1 million Palestinians in the northern half of the Gaza Strip were told to evacuate to the southern half. This demand sets the stage for another round of mass displacement, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, on an even larger scale than during the 1948 *Nakba*.

After giving the order to evacuate northern Gaza, Israel bombed a convoy taking Gazans to the south along the agreed-upon safe route, killing seventy people. By the eighth day of its bombardment, Israel was killing on average over two Palestinians every ten minutes, according to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, which amounts to an average of 300 people daily. This assault is more severe than each of the previous four Israeli wars on Gaza, with continuous war crimes, and no time for Palestinians to grieve between assaults.

At the time of our writing, Israeli bombardment of Gaza has completely destroyed 17 mosques, damaged or destroyed 23 ambulances, 26 health facilities, and 50 media offices, killed 17 members of the press, and over 2,000 children. In total, over 5,000 Palestinians have been killed.

Israel has damaged or demolished 25 percent of all homes in Gaza and displaced one million people—nearly half of the Gazan population—who are either sheltering in homes of relatives or friends, in hospitals, schools, or places of worship—none of which are safe from Israeli bombardment.

On October 18, Israel bombed the Al Alhi hospital, killing hundreds. After briefly acknowledging

their assault, the Israeli government quickly pivoted to blaming Palestinian armed groups. We would be well to recall that when journalist Shireen Abu-Akleh was murdered by Israeli Defence Forces in May 2022, they similarly claimed that her death was due to Palestinian sniper fire. Journalists and human rights organizations that investigated this claim consider it a bald-faced lie.

Israel's response to Hamas's surprise attack of October 7, which temporarily broke through Israel's 17-year siege of Gaza, is total destruction. As Palestinian-American poet and physician Fady Joudah put it, their response is worse than collective punishment of civilians: "It is collective death."

Israel has repeatedly bombed the Rafah border crossing, where sorely needed aid from Egypt sat for days waiting to enter Gaza. On October 19th, Israel bombed Gaza's Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Porphyrous, the third oldest church in the world, damaging it badly and killing innocents of both Christian and Muslim faith.

Once again, Israel is committing egregious crimes under international humanitarian law. Through this assault it is violently extending its project of building an ethno-state, the final goal of which is the eradication of the Palestinian people from the land.

Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu is also using the bombardment to save his government. After months of protests against his administration in Israel, Netanyahu is falling back on the tried-and-true method of galvanizing support from the Israeli population: brutally bombarding Gaza.

COLONIALISTS BACK GENOCIDE

Western governments, led by the US, are fully complicit in the bloodshed. Biden, the entire US Senate, and the overwhelming majority of the House of Representatives have all voiced their full-throated support for Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. Only a handful have dissented, most notably, Palestinian American Rashida Tlaib.

All the historic powers of Euro-American colonialism have lined up behind Israel.

The western European imperialist powers have parroted Biden's talking points and turned to repression against their Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim populations.

Germany issued a ban against pro-Palestine demonstrations, as did France. The British foreign secretary called for action against waving the Palestinian flag or chanting pro-Palestine slogans. Predictably, the government of Canada has fallen in line.

From the inception of the settler-colonial project in Palestine, the western powers have supported Israel as their regional watchdog. Their motive is simple: to ensure their control over oil, the commodity that fuels global capitalism. Control over fossil capital is critical to domination within the world system.

So total is the commitment of the US establishment, including the likes of Bernie Sanders, to the defense of Israel as the West's Middle East enforcer that they justify blatant war crimes, including the killing of 2,000 children, as legitimate acts of "self-defense."

And while they banter on about the violence of Hamas, we must not forget that Israel, with US support, has used murder, mass detention, and military repression to crush *all* forms of Palestinian resistance, both violent and nonviolent. In recent years, it has waged a global campaign to criminalize the non-violent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. In the US, thirty-five states have implemented laws constraining BDS advocacy.

BIDEN OPPOSES CEASEFIRE

So unwavering is US support for the genocidal actions of the apartheid state that the Biden administration even saw fit to veto a UN resolution calling for a humanitarian pause in the bombardment of Gaza. Apparently, even a timeout in a genocidal war is a bridge too far for the American empire.

Rather than promote a ceasefire and humanitarian aid to Gaza, Biden doubled down on the aggression by deploying two aircraft carriers and thousands of troops to the region. This show of force is meant to serve notice that it will tolerate no deterrence of Israel's war on Gaza.

Biden exhibited the blood on his hands with an unprecedented wartime visit to Tel Aviv, where he embraced Netanyahu and sat in on a war council meeting. Immediately after his return he delivered a rare national address from the Oval Office, trumpeting his support for Israel's war crimes.

The next day he announced a new spending bill, which includes billions of dollars of monetary and military aid for Israel to conduct its genocide, in addition to aid to Ukraine, Taiwan, and border enforcement at home. In doing so, he tried to equate Israel and Ukraine.

Let us note the supreme hypocrisy here. After all, Palestine and Ukraine both confront predatory occupiers. Logically, Palestine deserves the same right to self-determination that, for self-serving geopolitical reasons, the US state applies only to Ukraine.

RACISM, ISLAMOPHOBIA, AND THE US STATE

One reason for the hypocrisy has to do with the commitment of Western imperialist powers to anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia. From the start of colonial intervention in the Middle East, western powers have dehumanized the indigenous peoples of the region. Their racism provides justification for Israel's war crimes.

Until Palestine is free none of us are free.

Unsurprisingly, this climate of government and corporate bigotry and propaganda has triggered anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab violence. In the West Bank, Zionist settlers are carrying out pogroms against Palestinians.

Similar hate crimes are being committed throughout the West. In Chicago, at the very heart of the US empire, a racist landlord killed six year-old Palestinian American Wadea Al-Fayoume, stabbing him 26 times and severely wounding his mother while proclaiming, "All Muslims should die!"

As the violence mounts and the body count grows, we are called upon to demonstrate our global solidarity with Palestine in every way we can. We are called to challenge anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia. In doing so we are not alone. Millions around the world are rallying for Palestine, often in the face of threats, tear gas, and mass arrests.

In the Middle East, mass marches have challenged the complicity of Arab ruling classes as well as Israeli violence. In the US, Europe, Asia and beyond, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and Palestine solidarity activists of all stripes have marched, chanted, and organized for solidarity with the people of Gaza.

NEVER AGAIN MEANS NEVER AGAIN FOR ANYONE

Defying liberal Zionists, courageous groups like Jewish Voice for Peace and If Not Now called marches in Washington, DC under the slogan “Never Again Means Never Again for Anyone,” declaring their solidarity with Palestine and opposition to Israel’s genocidal war.

These demonstrations have been the largest anti-Zionist actions by Jews in US history. Their culmination was a mass sit-in in the Capitol Building rotunda where hundreds chanted “Free, Free Palestine!”

Many of these groups were already part of the Palestine solidarity movement and have long organized BDS campaigns against Israel. But thousands more have joined recently out of outrage at Israel’s ever-escalating atrocities—the bombing of Gaza’s schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, and evacuation and aid routes.

Ever larger numbers, shocked by Israel’s crimes, are beginning to question their support for the apartheid state. In an indication of this radicalization, [a majority of Democratic voters oppose Biden’s plans](#) to ship more arms to Israel, and [two-thirds of voters support the call for a ceasefire](#).

A MASS MOVEMENT FOR PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

These are the ingredients for building a mass movement against Israel’s genocidal war and for developing the needed solidarity with Palestine. To this end, the left has three main tasks: build solidarity with Palestinians and Palestine solidarity groups; consolidate our existing forces into united action; and expand our ranks to welcome those who are breaking from support for Israel.

Certainly we must continue to organize protests and civil disobedience against the Biden administration and all politicians complicit with its policies. But we also must organize teach-ins and reading groups to deepen the understanding and political commitments of those only now coming into the movement for solidarity with Palestine.

The main demands should be: Ceasefire Now; Stop Israel’s Genocidal War; End the Siege of Gaza; Provide Immediate Humanitarian Aid to Gaza; Defend the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties of Palestinians and Palestine Solidarity Activists; Stop Any New Aid to Israel; and Regalvanize the Struggle for BDS.

We must do all in our power to disrupt support for Israel’s genocide in Gaza. We need to build the pressure necessary to create more defections from genocide, such as that of the state department [official who resigned in protest](#) over Biden’s endorsement of Netanyahu’s war.

Critically, we must work to build the power of organized labor to refuse to deliver the guns, missiles, and bombs for Israel’s military. Palestinian unions have called on workers in the international labor movement to:

- Refuse to build weapons destined for Israel.
- Refuse to transport weapons to Israel.
- Pass motions in their trade union to this effect.
- Take action against complicit companies involved in implementing Israel’s brutal and illegal siege, especially if they have contracts with your institution.

- Pressure governments to stop all military trade with Israel and all funding to it.
- Already, actions of this sort are underway. Italian dockworkers in Livorno, Italy have refused to load shipments of arms to Israel. Meanwhile, Labour for Palestine in Canada is deepening union solidarity against Israeli apartheid.

In the US, the challenges are large, since most union officialdom is complicit in US foreign policy, including support for the colonial settler state of Israel. Notable exceptions include the United Electrical Workers, Starbucks Workers United, and a handful of others, which have all put out excellent statements in solidarity with Palestine.

But we are in propitious times for organizing workers in solidarity with Palestine as strikes erupt in industries from auto to entertainment and healthcare. And we have precedents to build on.

In 2021, Palestine solidarity activists set up a picket line at the Bay Area's port, which was respected by the International Longshore Workers Union. The result was to prevent the unloading of an Israeli ship. With grassroots education and mobilization, similar labor actions for Palestine can be organized.

All of these efforts should aim at building new mass movements to carry on organizing in this moment of emergency—and to build long-term campaigns. Most important will be developing ever-broader support for BDS in order to end all US funding and arms shipments to the Israeli state.

To do that requires overcoming illusions in the Democratic Party and Joe Biden in particular. His pretensions to be “the most progressive politician since FDR,” “the leader of a rules-based international order,” and “convenor of a league of democracies” have been blown out of the water by his backing of Israel's murderous campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The struggle to build mass solidarity with Palestine is thus linked to forging a new left, independent of the Democratic Party, one willing to fight for its principles in the streets and workplaces.

Palestine is a line in the sand. It is the critical test of global solidarity in this moment, in the same way that opposition to the war in Vietnam was for an earlier generation. Freedom for Palestine is bound up with the collective liberation of us all. It raises the prospect of a transformed world in which human lives and the planet on which we live become priorities, rather than the perpetuation of fossil capitalism and its imperial war machines.

Until Palestine is free none of us are free.

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P.S.

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