

# Palestine: The courage of the #GreatReturnMarch

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The Fourth International salutes the desperate courage, resolve and creativity of the thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip taking part in the #GreatReturnMarch. We are in full solidarity with them. They have already made a great step forward for the Palestinian cause, by bringing 70 years of dispossession and ongoing Nakba back to the attention of a world that had proved all too willing to be distracted.

For the state of Israel, the #GreatReturnMarch is truly the 'return of the repressed', a jarring reminder that millions of Palestinians will not die out, disappear or be ignored. Only this can make the wholly disproportionate and criminal nature of the Israeli response comprehensible: shooting down and in dozens of cases killing human beings guilty above all of coming within a few hundred meters of a borderline. The world's passivity in the face of this crime shows how widely shared complicity in it is.

The Fourth International joins international public opinion in condemning:

- the Israeli governing class, the obvious primary culprit - not only the right-wing and extreme-right-wing parties that make up the current government, but also the so-called 'centre-left opposition', notably the Labour Party/Zionist Union, which has joined in justifying the use of live ammunition against defenceless demonstrators
- the US governing class, including not only the Trump Administration but also the great majority of Democratic Party politicians - with a few honourable exceptions like Bernie Sanders - who continue to constitute an unshakeable military and financial base of support for the Zionist state
- the governments and political establishments of the European Union, which are ineffectually backing U.N. Secretary-General Guterres' call for an investigation in the confident knowledge that the US Security Council veto will protect them from any consequences, and are meanwhile continuing their military and scientific cooperation with Israel and their free trade agreement with it that make Europe the main bulwark of the Israeli economy and of Israel's regional supremacy
- almost all the Arab region's governments - notably Egypt, Israel's unflagging partner in the strangulation of Gaza, and the Saudi kingdom, which is now moving closer week by week to an open alliance with Israel and open abandonment of the Palestinian people
- the Palestinian Authority, which has unforgivably continued its 'security cooperation' with Israel in the face of each new atrocity, and has taken the initiative in a series of assaults on the people of Gaza, enlisting Israel as a willing accomplice
- so many other governments and political and economic actors around the world, which have responded to Israel's crimes with verbal denunciations without lifting a finger to help the Palestinians in practice.

In the face of the complicity and passivity of the world's rulers, the Palestinians of Gaza and the rest

of the Palestinian people have no one to turn to except solidarity and social movements. These movements, at least, must not let the Palestinians down. The courage of the marchers must elicit a qualitative escalation in international solidarity and mobilization. If not now, when?

Boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns remain a key component of the resistance. While BDS campaigns have not yet taken a major toll on the Israeli economy, they have made rapid enough progress to make Israel and its international allies view BDS as one of the most serious threats they face. As the uselessness of the U.N. and of the 'international community' generally in reining in Israel becomes steadily clearer, political, civil society and labour movement institutions must be forced to take their responsibility for cutting the economic and social lifelines of the Zionist juggernaut.

The Gaza marchers have now given BDS campaigners additional, powerful arguments for the indissolubility of the campaign's three central demands, as formulated in Palestinian civil society's call in 2005: not only an end to Israel's occupation of the 1967 territories, but also fully equal rights for Palestinians, Jews and others in every part of historic Palestine, and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the homes they were driven from 70 years ago. These demands are also, as the Fourth International has consistently maintained, central components of a just solution to the question of Palestine. The protests by Israeli Jews against the Israeli army's killings in the Gaza Strip, however small, are important in keeping hope alive for a just solution, founded on equality and solidarity, in which the three central demands of the BDS campaign have been achieved. The Palestinians of Gaza have now made clear, at the cost of their lives, that the Palestinian struggle cannot and will not end until every one of these demands has been won.

**The Fourth International Bureau**, 20 April 2018

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\* <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article5464>