

18th World Congress - 2025

Palestine: An imperialist attack on the entire Middle East

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The 18th World Congress of the Fourth International took place in Belgium from 23 to 28th February. The wide-ranging discussion covered the international situation in all its aspects from the structural polycrisis in its environmental, economic, social and political aspects to the movements of resistance, and the need to build and strengthen our own International.

A resolution was devoted to Palestine. We publish here the resolution approved by the congress by 116 votes in favor, 3 against, and 4 non-votes.

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The war against Palestine opens a new chapter in history. It is a genocide carried out by Israel with the active support of the United States and the active support or complicity of many other states.

Of Gaza's 2.4 million Palestinians, 1.9 million - or 86% of the population - have been internally displaced. Of the more than 47,000 deaths that have been identified, 40% are women and children, and the actual carnage is between 200,000 and 300,000 deaths, or around 15% of Gaza's population. Through its siege of the territory's population without food or support and its many other violations of international law, the murder of hundreds of journalists and doctors, and the blocking of humanitarian aid, Israel is demonstrating that its aim is to regain total control of the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, 16 Palestinian communities have been forcibly displaced from the West Bank, and 1,285 Palestinians had been displaced by July 2024.

It is an attack and a threat against all Palestinians and the majority of people in the Middle East, with major implications both for the region as a whole and for global geopolitical relations.



A long genocidal war

The Israeli attacks on Lebanon since September 2024 represent a new stage in the war: several thousand people are being killed by indiscriminate attacks and massive bombardments, and tens of thousands are fleeing the south of the country. On September 27, the assassination of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and several of its leaders completed what proved to be a systematic decapitation of the organization after sabotaging its communications network.

Subsequently, the focus of Israel's military and political attack extended from Gaza to southern Lebanon - i.e., the areas of that state where Hezbollah's rear base is located - along with attempts to redirect propaganda, which present Iran as the main threat to the so-called civilized world. In fact, Netanyahu has been conducting "limited military incursions" in this region since November 2023.

Biden's actions revealed the depth of his hypocrisy: the September 26 call by the U.S. and others for a three-week ceasefire between the Zionist state and Hezbollah quickly gave way to a statement by Biden hailing Nasrallah's demise, making it clear that his administration supports the Israeli offensive in southern Lebanon as well as Gaza. "Genocide Joe's" stance was one of the causes of Harris's defeat in the presidential election, as the Democrats lost the support of a substantial part of the racialized population. Trump's arrival coincided with wear and tear on the Israeli army and on Netanyahu's power, who was imposed a prisoner exchange as part of the January 15, 2025, ceasefire, at the rate of 1 Israeli prisoner for every 30 Palestinians.

But while the ceasefire represents a pause in the horror, it has done nothing to curb the genocidal intentions of the United States and Israel: Trump has indicated that he wants to take possession of Gaza, emptying it of its population by expelling them to Egypt or Jordan, while Israel escalated its attacks towards the West Bank. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz declared:

"We have declared war on Palestinian terrorism in the West Bank". "Once the operation is over, IDF [Israeli army] forces will remain in the Jenin camp to ensure that terror does not return".

An all-out war

Israel is thus waging mass terror in an asymmetrical war, with the aim of silencing all political, militant or military dissent. This war is not simply a continuation of the 75-year-old war of apartheid and colonization, and of ethnic cleansing against those who inhabited Palestine before the imposed creation of the State of Israel. There has been a qualitative leap in the will to eradicate the Palestinian people, through the dehumanization of Palestinians and in a supremacist logic, in a total betrayal of the memory of the Shoah.

The current carnage is also linked to the neo-fascist nature of the Netanyahu government. Severely weakened by months of popular protests against its arrogance towards the judiciary and the clear evidence of its corruption, Netanyahu, who has exploited the extreme weakness of the anti-Zionist left, has seized the opportunity of the bloody attack of October 7, 2023, to try to regain the initiative and control of the internal situation. It continues the Nakba, yesterday massacring and expelling in Gaza, today attacking in the West Bank. The aim of establishing a Greater Israel - which could include southern Lebanon as far as the Litani River -, the internal objectives of Israeli policy and the headlong rush to war are all part of the "clash of civilizations" rhetoric put forward by the Western powers, a discourse that perfectly suits their needs in the context of the global crisis of the system of imperialist domination.

Netanyahu is today the vanguard of the global far right, which has put its traditional anti-Semitism on the back burner in favor of a global racist and Islamophobic offensive. We are witnessing the emergence of a new world order whose historic mission is to enable mass slaughter for the benefit of the great imperialist powers' domination of the world. Trump's arrival in power is enabling a gigantic acceleration of these orientations.

The repression of the Palestinians is not due to the whims of one man, but to the logic of the ruling classes of the Israeli state, at the expense of the Palestinian people.

The imperialists' interests and the Arabic governments

Nevertheless, Israel is not acting alone. This is the first time since the offensive against Iraq in 2003 that the United States has intervened so directly. Their support of millions of dollars and weapons to Israel is decisive in the realization of a historic massacre of civilians. It is being carried out with the complicit silence or hypocritical protests of the major Western powers, the belated protests of China or the tightrope walking of Putin's Russia. The imperialist powers ignore the various resolutions of the UN or the International Criminal Court, which have no influence on events.

As for most governments in the Arab world, their logic of "normalization" of relations with Israel and invisibilization of the Palestinian cause, which prevailed before October 7, makes their critical statements on the bombing of Gaza, conceded under popular pressure, pathetic and tragic. For millions of people in the Arab-speaking and Muslim countries of the region, Arab regimes are clearly perceived as collaborating with Israel and the imperialists. This policy leads them, as is the case in Algeria, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan, to step up repression against their populations, because they know that any mobilization in solidarity with Palestine would inevitably turn into a protest against their governments. The fact that they have denounced Trump's plan to make Gaza the "Middle East Riviera" is explained by their concern to defend their own interests, not by their support for the Palestinian people.

The complicity of the Palestinian Authority with the Israeli state has become increasingly obvious to a larger part of the Palestinian population.

The pro-Assad battalions in Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen, in rebellion against a Saudi-controlled government - all forces with links to Iran's theocratic and deeply repressive regime - claim to be acting in the interests of the Palestinian people, while in reality trying to advance their own interests. The collapse of Bashar al-Assad's hated regime in Syria is a relief for millions of Syrians, but there are also serious doubts and concerns about the evolution of the new regime, particularly on the part of the various ethnic and religious minorities.

It's a multi-targeted colonial and imperialist offensive, with violent repression and the encouragement of new settlements in the West Bank, the disappearance or mass exodus of Palestinians, military incursions into south-western Syria, and bombing raids on the Houthis in Yemen, who are attempting to block manoeuvres by the US navy and merchant ships at the entrance to the Red Sea.

What Israel is doing is not self-defense, but one of the most shameful massacres in recent history, rightly denounced as genocidal by South Africa before the Hague Tribunal. The ongoing tragedy is causing political and ideological upheavals the world over. It is becoming increasingly difficult for allies to defend both the United States and Israel.

A solidarity movement unprecedented for several decades

The carnage in Gaza is having a particular impact on peripheral youth around the world. The solidarity movement has met with widespread repression: demonstrations have been banned, participants repressed and even imprisoned. Hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated, blockaded arms factories and pressed for the agreements between their countries and Israel to be broken. The movement exerted influence in artistic circles and the boycott movement spread. Millions of young people who had not experienced the two Intifadas rediscovered this struggle and made it their own. Racialized young people in working-class neighborhoods, victims of rising Islamophobia, identified with the Palestinian cause.

While actions in support of this cause are quickly accused of antisemitism by those who defend Israel's actions, young Western Jewish humanists have shown an evolution of consciousness by developing a non-Zionist or anti-Zionist orientation, against the tide of pro-Israeli reactions to October 7, and are organizing a historic mobilization that is challenging the powers that be in the USA. The movement played a major role in replacing "Genocidal Joe" Biden with Kamala Harris.

The mobilization went through several phases. Firstly, in the months following October 7, it was very difficult to cope with the political pressure supporting Israel's pseudo-"right to defend itself". Then there were major mobilizations, with a magnificent rebound when the universities mobilized. Today, we're facing a new situation with the extension of the war to Lebanon, which follows targeted attacks in Iran. The threat of a regional war is more present than ever, and the headlong rush into war that we feared and announced seems to be underway.

There is also an opposition in Israel to genocide and colonization, with an appeal signed by 3600 personalities calling for sanctions against Israel, soldiers refusing military service, Israeli Communist Party deputies (Jewish and Arab) suspended from parliament for supporting South Africa's appeal against genocide in Gaza, journalists from the daily Haaretz who denounce Israeli crimes in Gaza and colonization in the West Bank, NGOs like B'Tselem that defend Palestinian political prisoners, etc. Admittedly, they're a weak minority, but we need to publicize their struggle, which has been silenced by so much propaganda.

Our actions for Palestine

It is more than ever our responsibility to build a worldwide movement of solidarity with Palestine. This movement must be broad and united, and demand:

- stop the massacres, and troop withdrawal,
- the reconstruction of Gaza by and for the Gazans, at the expense of the imperialist powers, both those directly involved and those who are accomplices
- access to humanitarian aid for the population,
- the release of prisoners,
- a full stop of displacement and the guarantying of the right of return for all Palestinians
- BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions)

All these humanitarian demands are fundamental. To achieve this, we need to step up

demonstrations, occupations and boycotts, demand the requisition of companies collaborating in the genocide, block arms sales, and call on governments to cease all links, especially commercial ones, and all support for the genocidal state. We need the support of the unions and the street. We support the formation of visible Jewish blocs in solidarity with Palestine. We aim to create maximum space for democratic debate within the movement.

But deep down, we know that this movement is also anti-imperialist, decolonial and anti-war, and that it resonates with the threat of a chaotic world where relations between the great powers are settled by arms. As part of this movement, we want to affirm the need for the peoples of the world, the working classes and racialized people, to rise up and wrest power from the criminals. We support the resistance of peoples, armed or unarmed. Only a massive mobilization, particularly in the Middle East, can change the present totally unbalanced balance of power and force states and organizations to mobilize against this genocide.

We do not share the political project of Hamas or Hezbollah, nor their repressive and reactionary visions of society. However, given the retreat of the left in the region and the absence of other forces of resistance to colonialism, these organizations have large electoral and popular support, so they are de facto recognized tools of resistance, whether in the region or by some in solidarity movements. We therefore denounce the rhetoric of the Western ruling classes that labels the Palestinian people and their organizations as “terrorist”. For Israel and its allies, the very act of resisting is a terrorist action. For us, the violence of the victims stems from the violence of the oppressors. While we do not support Hamas politically, we do support its democratic right to exist, and we demand the removal of the PFLP, Hamas and Hezbollah from the lists of terrorist organizations drawn up by the United States and the European Union, among others.

In Palestine more than anywhere else, the victorious struggle of the exploited and oppressed can be the path to a fairer world. We reaffirm the need to dismantle the Zionist state, as a “state for the Jews”, and that only a free, democratic, secular and egalitarian Palestine, to which all dispersed Palestinians can return, and where everyone can live, whatever their religion, as long as they accept this decolonial framework, can bring a just and peaceful solution to the peoples of the region. The balance of power needed to bring about such a solution, far from the mirages of a Palestine limited to Bantustans, implies global, and particularly regional, mobilization to stop the imperialists, the United States in particular.

Israel and the United States are isolated on the international stage.

Palestine is supported by the majority of the working classes. It's up to us to transform this support into mass action!

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P.S.

• Fourth International . Friday 14 March 2025:
<https://fourth.international/en/world-congresses/874/asia/674>