

India: In solidarity with Gaza/Palestine, resist Zionist aggression

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The Israeli attacks on Palestinians are being portrayed by the Western media as defensive actions. It is claimed that had Hamas not been an Islamic fundamentalist organisation dedicated to the destruction of Israel, such things would not have happened.

The following facts therefore bear understanding:

1. The state of Israel was created by the United Nations at a time when the Palestinian Arabs had no voice in the UN. Once oil was discovered in West Asia and North Africa, the western imperialist powers were determined to keep a stranglehold on the region. Britain's Balfour's declaration of 1917 supported the creation of a Zionist state, at a time when very few people globally supported Zionism. Subsequently the UN, dominated by Europeans and North Americans, decided that the genocide on Jews in Europe should be expiated by creating a "Homeland" for the Jews, who had been living in Europe all this while, in West Asia, by carving out a territory. The Zionist movement's slogan had been, "A land without a people for a people without land", thereby effectively saying that Arabs were cattle, rather than human beings.

2. In 1948 the state of Israel was finally created through a monstrous crime - the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinians from their homes. This violence is known to Palestinians as the Nakba - the Arabic word for "catastrophe". It was followed by a second humanitarian disaster in 1967 when Israel seized the whole of Jerusalem and the entirety of historic Palestine - leading to over 40 years of military occupation and successive waves of killings in defence of the Zionist state: in the twenty-first century these have included Operations Summer Rains (June 2006), Autumn Clouds (November 2006), Hot Winter (February 2008), Cast Lead (2008-9), Returning Echo (March 2012), Pillar of Defence (November 2012) and now Protective Edge, just to name a few.

3. Between 1948 and 1967, Israel attacked and took over further land, dispossessing the Palestinians, who became refugees. The UN Partition plan gave the Jews 55% of the land of Palestine, at a time when they actually owned less than 7% of the land and constituted less than one third of the population. By 1949, after one wave of wars, Arab areas had shrunk to 23%. 418 Arab villages (531 according to other estimates) had been depopulated and erased from the map. By September 1949 there were 726,000 Arab refugees outside the Armistice lines, plus a further 32,000 internal refugees within the Armistice lines - according to the UN itself. In 1967, the UNRWA estimates a further 3,55,000 Arabs became refugees as a result of a further war by Israel, which resulted in the occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

4. The Israeli state invaded Lebanon and this resulted, in 1982, in the further displacement of 600,000 people, both Lebanese and Palestinians.

5. By 1991 there were some four and a half million people of Palestinian origin who were refugees or displaced persons, including those born as refugees.

6. The Palestine Liberation Organisation had been created to resist these continuous violations of the most basic human rights of the Palestinians. And it had been led for a long time by relatively secular, moderate and even conservative forces. By contrast, it was Israel that was a self proclaimed religious exclusionist state. It claimed to be a state of the Jews. Any Jew from anywhere in the world had a supposed right to return. And Palestinians repeatedly thrown out are denied the right to return.

7. It is this sheer provocation, through the use of the armed forces, as well as in other ways, that creates the conditions for Palestinian reactions. The rise of Hamas represents the extreme moderation, and dependence on Arab oligarchies, of the old PLO. To focus on the rise and role of Hamas, in addition, is to ignore the fact that Israel is a religious state that systematically discriminates against non Jews, and has been globally condemned as an apartheid state.

8. We are aware of the Israeli state mechanisms' attempts to legitimize their oppression of the Palestinian people and their denial of the right of Palestinians to self-determination through positioning themselves as the only democratic and liberal state in the region. One of the primary ways in which this is achieved is through 'pinkwashing', that is, promoting Israel as a LGBTQ friendly state and thereby downplaying its role in occupying Palestine and through this co-opting LGBTQ populations outside the region.

Nonetheless, we believe that acts of individual terror do not advance the Palestinian cause, not because of any false moralism that equates the violence of the oppressed with the violence of the oppressor, but because we believe that this is counterproductive under the current situation, where it enables Israel, backed by the "democracies", to carry out brutal, sustained and ruthless terrorism. But we refuse to condemn such acts at par with Israel's state terrorism.

That three young people were killed is certainly condemnable. However, Israel, knowing they were dead, pretended to go through the motions of searching, in order to intensify terror. They have named two persons for these killings, and even though no trial has been completed and nobody has been found guilty even by the Israeli courts, they have also informed the families of the suspects that their homes in Hebron are to be demolished. They have then launched a war by another name, killing about 1000 already. And the murderer Netanyahu tells the world and the bourgeois media parrots after him, that it is Israel that is under threat of Hamas rocket attacks, and defends the sustained violence. The form of "collective punishment" the Israeli authorities are carrying out, is reminiscent of similar "collective punishment" cases by all colonial powers and shows the hollowness of the Israeli claim to high moral ground.

Every ceasefire agreement has been violated by Israel. It is slowly but surely killing the entire population of Gaza, numbering close to 1.8 million. In November 2012, Israel agreed to "stop all hostilities in the Gaza Strip [by] land, sea and air including incursions and targeting of individuals." Hamas asked that Israel should abide by this. Israel has rejected this, instead demanding new terms which amount to further violation of basic rights of Palestinians.

However, our protest against Zionist apartheid politics is in no way anti-Jew. We oppose the exclusionary, apartheid politics of Zionism, not the democratic rights of human beings, regardless of their religious or ethnic identity. We have no support for any anti-Semitic protest.

- We support the right of Palestinians to a homeland, returned to them from the seizures carried out over 67 years.

- Accordingly, we demand UN recognition of full statehood for Palestine.
 - We demand immediate end to all violence including defensive violence.
 - We condemn the continuous repression and murder of the Palestinians.
 - We urge the Government of Egypt to open the Rafa border.
 - We demand the trial of all Israeli politicians and other state personnel and individuals involved in the killings and torture, as war criminals, by organisations like the ICC (International Criminal Court).
 - We call on all our fellow citizens to take part in the growing international campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. This once helped put pressure on the racist South African regime. This is a peaceful, yet powerful weapon that can compel the apartheid regime of Israel to accept that Palestinians have rights which must be respected.
 - We demand that the Government of India and all state governments must snap economic ties with Israel. We demand that institutions and corporate bodies who have stable ties with Israel sever them.
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