

# Gaza: Solidarity - US, Canada, Australia...

Tuesday 30 December 2008, by [Correspondent\(s\)](#), [Socialist Alliance \(Australia\)](#), [Solidarity \(USA\)](#), [Stop the War Coalition \(Australia\)](#) (Date first published: 6 January 2009).

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## **DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE ISRAELI ASSAULT ON GAZA! LIFT THE SIEGE!**

WHEN: 11am Saturday January 10, 2009

WHERE: Israeli Consulate, 180 Bloor St West, Toronto.

As the Israeli ground, air and sea assault continues on the civilian population of Gaza — we need to continue mobilizing against these war crimes.

At least 540 Palestinians have been killed and thousands injured in the single largest massacre in Gaza since Israel illegally occupied the area in 1967.

These latest war crimes occur in the context of official Canadian complicity with Israel's illegal siege, bombardment and starvation of the civilian population in Gaza. We must denounce this on-going support - including the intensification of bilateral military, political and economic links between Canada and Israel. Palestinian civil society continues to urge solidarity in the form of a boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign until Israel complies with international law. This is the time for people of conscience to take up this call from Palestine.

Last Saturday, over 10,000 people rallied in Toronto in the largest Palestine solidarity demonstration in decades. This coming Saturday, millions of people across the globe will return to the streets in internationally coordinated demonstrations against the Israeli onslaught.

Join us this Saturday to demand that the Canadian government call for an immediate halt to Israel's attacks and an end to the siege of Gaza!

***Full listing of events across Canada:***

## **United States: Nearly 1000 NYers Protest Israeli Attacks on Gaza New Yorkers Respond to Israel's Attacks on Gaza**

### **Solidarity**

Nearly a thousand protesters flooded Rockefeller Center in Manhattan on December 28<sup>th</sup> in response to the Israeli attacks against Gaza.

The demonstration was called by ANSWER but the visible presence of the far left was dwarfed by Arab and Muslim families, women with baby carriages and teenagers, who packed Fifth Avenue between 50<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Streets and chanted in English and Arabic.

The NYPD was clearly unprepared for the enormity of the crowd and was forced to expand the pen an extra block. This prevented a planned march to the Israeli consulate on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Throngs of tourists stopped to take photographs as protesters chanted "Free Free Palestine" and "While you're shopping bombs are dropping." At least one tourist constructed a make shift sign on a brown paper bag and joined the demonstration.

### **In Gaza, Casualties Mount**

As of the writing of this article, the *New York Times* reports that the death toll has risen to over 280.

Electronic Intifada reports that a majority of those killed and injured were civilians and that water wells, mosques, community centers and private homes have been destroyed. The dead include students at a UN school and police trainees. Hospitals, already suffering from supply shortages due to the blockade, are unable to adequately care for the wounded.

### **International Response**

In a typical but still nauseating act of magical thinking, the US government has joined Israel in blaming Hamas for the Israeli attacks.

President-elect Obama didn't comment, but given his now-notorious speech at the AIPAC event in which he referred to Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel, there isn't much for Palestinians to get excited about come January 20<sup>th</sup>.

Helpfully, the *New York Times* reminded readers of the president-elect's Palestine politics by resurfacing this quotation in today's paper:

"'If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that,' Mr. Obama said in July. 'And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing.'"

The Egyptian government must be squirming; recently Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was

pictured on television sharing a warm laugh with Hosni Mubarak. According to the *New York Times*, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit responded to the attacks by calling on Hamas to renew its truce with Israel.

Even French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner did better than that. According to the *New York Times*, he commented that “We have entered a new spiral of despair.”

No wonder that Egypt, along with Israel and the US, was a major target of demonstrations throughout the Middle East this weekend. Mainstream Media Response

The *New York Times* and other mainstream media have echoed the US/Israel line by referring to Israeli “retaliation” and failing to point out that the Israeli blockade – which strangled Gazans by denying medical supplies, cooking oil and flour – was imposed throughout the time that Hamas was essentially adhering to the cease fire.

As usual *Ha’aretz*, a liberal Israeli daily, pulled off more thoughtful coverage of the crisis than the *New York Times*, pointing out, among other things, that Israel purposely led the public to believe that the strike would begin a day later than it actually did.

*\* Solidarity is an independent socialist organization dedicated to forming a broad regrouping of the U.S. left. Solidarity was founded in 1986 by revolutionary socialists who stand for “socialism from below,” the self-organization of the working class and oppressed peoples.*

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## **Protesters across Canada slam ‘terrorist’ Israel as Palestinian toll grows**

The raw realities of Middle East politics spilled onto the streets in several cities across Canada on Sunday as pro-Palestinian protesters denounced the bloody Israeli attacks on Gaza and blasted Israel as a terrorist state.

The largest demonstration was in Toronto, where tempers flared and tensions mounted as about 800 protesters outside the Israeli consulate screamed at a few dozen pro-Israel supporters across busy Bloor Street.

“I am here to stand up for the victims of Palestine who are being brutally slaughtered by the Israeli terrorist state,” said protester Ali Mallah as he waved a Palestinian flag.

“If there was no occupation, there would be no rockets. Occupation is the worst form of terrorism. People have the right to resist their occupier by any means necessary.”

Police had their hands full keeping the two groups apart as the pro-Palestinian group surged across the road, but, apart from some minor scuffles, there was no violence.

At least 290 Palestinians have been killed and about 800 injured in recent days in a series of intensive Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip that Israel says is in reprisal for rocket attacks from Palestinian militants.

Harold Medjuck, who stood holding a pro-Israel banner across the road from the larger protest, said the Israeli air strikes were defensive.

"What would Canada do if somebody wanted to do air strikes against Canada?" Medjuck said. "All they (the Palestinians) want to do is kill Jews."

In Montreal, about 300 protesters showed up on a warm, windy day to show solidarity with people in the Gaza Strip.

Blasting Palestinian music and flying Palestinian flags, the protesters - many wearing the distinctive black-and-white checked keffiyeh - marched through the city's downtown core as shoppers stopped to gawk and take photographs.

"They're living in fear," said Abdul Elsalfti of his family in the Gaza strip.

"My family is looking for bread, they're looking for shelter, they're looking for water, they're just looking for basic needs."

Lesley Levy, a member of the British-based Independent Jewish Voices, said she "felt ashamed" for what was going on in Israel.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon has expressed concern about the escalating violence but has made clear the federal government believes Israel has a right to defend itself.

Protection of civilians was Canada's utmost concern and the deliberate and constant targetting of civilians by Hamas was the main reason for the bloody events, Cannon said.

Ismail Zayid, who joined dozens of protesters at a downtown Halifax park in condemning the "massacre" of Palestinians, was incredulous at Cannon's statement.

"The people who've been subjected to this don't have the right to defend themselves, but Israel has the right to defend," said Zayid, 75, a retired doctor who has lived in Halifax for 36 years but is originally from the West Bank.

"We claim to uphold (international law) and yet here, when human rights are violated, we are not critical of the people who commit these crimes."

Following their protest outside the Israeli consulate in Toronto, hundreds of demonstrators then marched about a kilometre to the U.S. consulate, shutting down University Avenue as police, some mounted, some on bicycles, kept a watchful eye.

Among the protesters was Samer Nouredine, 11.

"I don't like what I'm hearing on the news about the bombs in Palestine," Nouredine said. "I have some family friends in Palestine right now that live in Gaza so I'm here to represent them."

About four dozen protesters also gathered in Ottawa outside City Hall carrying flags and signs reading "Save Gaza."

Organizer Monzer Zimmo calling for international pressure on Israel to stop "this madness of attacking civilians and police stations and women, men, children and elderly people this holiday season."

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## **Palestinians, solidarity activists condemn Israel's mass slaughter in Gaza, call for protests and sanctions**

(updated Dec. 31)

Occupied Ramallah, Palestine — December 27, 2008 — Today, the Israeli occupation army committed a new massacre in Gaza, causing the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinian civilians [latest reports place the death toll at more than 200], including a yet unknown number of schoolchildren who were headed home from school when the first Israeli military strikes started. This latest bloodbath, although far more ruthless than all its predecessors, is not Israel's first. It culminates months of an Israeli siege of Gaza that should be widely condemned and prosecuted as an act of genocide against the 1.5 million Palestinians in the occupied coastal strip.

Israel seems intent to mark the end of its 60<sup>th</sup> year of existence the same way it has established itself — perpetrating massacres against the Palestinian people. In 1948, the majority of the indigenous Palestinian people were ethnically cleansed from their homes and land, partly through massacres like Deir Yassin; today, the Palestinians in Gaza, most of whom are refugees, do not even have the choice to seek refuge elsewhere. Incarcerated behind ghetto walls and brought to the brink of starvation by the siege, they are easy targets for Israel's indiscriminate bombing.

Prof. Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and international law expert at Princeton University, described Israel's siege of Gaza last year, when it was still not comparable in its severity to the current situation, as follows:

*"Is it an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalised Nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not. The recent developments in Gaza are especially disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention on the part of Israel and its allies to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty. The suggestion that this pattern of conduct is a holocaust-in-the-making represents a rather desperate appeal to the governments of the world and to international public opinion to act urgently to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy."*

The most brutal episode of this "collective tragedy" is what we have seen today.

Israel's war crimes and other grave violations of international law in Gaza as well as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, could not have been perpetrated without the direct or indirect complicity of world governments, particularly the United States, the European Union, Egypt and other Arab regimes.

While the US government has consistently sponsored, bankrolled and protected from international censure Israel's apartheid and colonial policies against the indigenous people of Palestine, the EU was able in the past to advocate a semblance of respect for international law and universal human rights. That distinction effectively ended on December 9, when the EU Council decided unanimously to reward Israel's criminal disregard of international law by upgrading the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Israel clearly understood from this decision that the EU condones its actions against the Palestinians under its occupation. Palestinian civil society also got the message: the EU governments have become no less complicit in Israel's war crimes than their US counterpart.

The large majority of world governments, particularly in the global South, share part of the blame, as well. By continuing business as usual with Israel, in trade agreements, arms deals, academic and cultural ties, diplomatic openings, they have provided the necessary background for the complicity of world powers and, consequentially, for Israel's impunity. Furthermore, their inaction within the United Nations is inexcusable.

Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, President of the UN General Assembly, prescribed in a recent address before the General Assembly the only moral way forward for the world's nations in dealing with Israel:

*"More than twenty years ago we in the United Nations took the lead from civil society when we agreed that sanctions were required to provide a non-violent means of pressuring South Africa to end its violations. Today, perhaps we in the United Nations should consider following the lead of a new generation of civil society, who are calling for a similar non-violent campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions to pressure Israel to end its violations."*

Now, more than ever, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC), calls upon international civil society not just to protest and condemn in diverse forms Israel's massacre in Gaza, but also to join and intensify the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel to end its impunity and to hold it accountable for its persistent violation of international law and Palestinian rights. Without sustained, effective pressure by people of conscience the world over, Israel will continue with its gradual, rolling acts of genocide against the Palestinians, burying any prospects for a just peace under the blood and rubble of Gaza, Nablus and Jerusalem.

### **By the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee**

[The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) includes: Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine; General Union of Palestinian Workers; Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions; Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations' Network (PNGO); Federation of Independent Trade Unions; Union of Palestinian Charitable Organisations; Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition; Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI); General Union of Palestinian Women; Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU); Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW); Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI); National Committee to Commemorate the Nakba; Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ); Coalition for Jerusalem; and Palestinian Economic Monitor.]

\* From Links: <http://links.org.au/node/823>

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## **Socialist Alliance (Australia): 'Israel's killing must stop! End ties with the racist Israeli state!'**

**31 December 2008**

The below article a statement released by the Socialist Alliance. To get this statement in Arabic, download placards for rallies, to see a range of pictures and videos of solidarity actions, and for details of upcoming anti-war rallies and meetings, please visit <http://www.socialist-alliance.org>. For

further comment: Tim Dobson 0413 928 894

The Socialist Alliance condemns the Israeli massacre in the Gaza strip, which has left at least 300 people dead and 800 more injured. We call on the Rudd government to also condemn this slaughter and to break Australian economic, diplomatic, military and cultural ties with the Israeli apartheid state.

While Israel claimed that it targeted “terrorists”, the tonnes of bombs its aircraft dropped were mostly aimed at police stations in the middle of densely populated civilian areas. The attack, which was carefully planned at least several days in advance, also took place at the same time as children were going home from school, leaving many dead or injured.

The massacre comes on the back of two years of blockade imposed by Israel in an attempt to topple the democratically elected Hamas government. Many Gazans have already died due to lack of basic medical treatment, food, clean water and electricity.

The killing looks set to continue with large numbers of Israeli armoured vehicles massing on the border of Gaza. Israel has called up 6500 reservists and has announced that it will call up more over the next few days.

If the massacres are to stop international public opinion needs to let Israel know that its actions are unacceptable. In particular, Israel’s traditional supporters , who have clearly sanctioned this bloody operation, must be forced to withdraw

The Australian people need to stand up for the people of Gaza by making the Rudd government end its support for Israel’s ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Socialist Alliance urges its members, supporters and all supporters of the human rights of the Palestinian people to join the emergency protests that are being organised around the country against this latest crime of the Israeli state.

*\* From: Comment & Analysis, Green Left Weekly issue #777 3 December 2008.*

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## **Stop the War Coalition calls on Rudd to cut ties with Israel**

**30 December 2008**

**Statement by the on December 31.**

Stop Israel’s attacks on Gaza! Palestine must be free!

The Sydney Stop the War Coalition condemns the Israeli armed forces’ bombardment of the Gaza Strip in which more than 300 people, including women and children, have been massacred.

More than 700 people have been seriously wounded.

The peace coalition also condemns the Israeli government’s two-year economic blockade of Gaza following the popular election of the Hamas government. The siege has meant malnutrition, chronic unemployment and economic devastation for the people of Gaza who have a right to elect their own

government, and to expect their democratic choice to be respected.

Ominously, the Israeli armed forces are now being mobilised on a massive scale on Gaza's border: the killings will continue unless the world stands up and says no to Israel.

The Stop the War Coalition condemns the Australian government for its unstinting support for Israel — despite clear evidence that it is the aggressor and bully in this longstanding conflict.

The acting PM, Julia Gillard, does not speak for the majority of Australians. The Rudd Labor government, elected by a majority who were fed up with the wars of occupation in the Middle East, has yet to prove it is serious about supporting peace.

The Rudd government should act for peace and justice, condemn Israel's criminal slaughter in Gaza and break economic, diplomatic, military and cultural ties with the Israeli apartheid state.

The Stop the War Coalition calls on the Australian government to use its influence with the United States government to demand an end to Israel's siege of Gaza, and an end to the occupation of the Palestinians' historic lands.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza and urge all Australians to join the "Freedom for Gaza" rallies that are being organised around the country (see details below).

Contact: Pip Hinman 0412 139 968 or Anne Picot 0404 090 710

National protests in support of the people of Gaza have already occurred in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle, Adelaide and Perth. Details of further protests:

Brisbane - Sat Jan 3, 2pm, Queens Park

Melbourne - Sun Jan 4, 2pm, State Library

*\* From: Comment & Analysis, Green Left Weekly issue #777 3 December 2008.*

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## **P.S.**

\* Posted on [www.caiaweb.org](http://www.caiaweb.org), December 29, BDS News. From The Bullet, Socialist Project • E-Bulletin No. 171, December 29, 2008.