

Catastrophe in Jenin and Palestine, continued

Tuesday 18 July 2023, by [FINKEL David](#) (Date first published: 8 July 2023).

EARLIER THIS YEAR, we wrote: “The degenerative spiral in the so-called Israel-Palestine ‘conflict’ is nowhere near reaching the bottom yet.” (February 4, 2023, <https://solidarity-us.org/a-spiral-toward-catastrophe/>) It was true then, and now.

That article spoke of “the Jenin massacre by the Israeli military” — which might be confusing, because there have been so many. That particular invasion had taken place months after the Israeli sniper murder of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, and of course a short few months before the horror we’ve just witnessed. One can only take Israeli prime minister Netanyahu’s word that this is “not the end, just the first step.”

For the relevant background, readers can refer back to “A Spiral Toward Catastrophe.” There are some developments worth noting here as the disaster worsens. Something that stands out this time is the truly massive physical damage and infrastructure destruction in the Jenin refugee camp perpetrated by the Israeli army, to the horror of international observers and humanitarian organizations.

To some extent this may reflect the army’s confrontation with the unexpected (although strategically hopeless, of course) strength of armed resistance inside the camp. Destroying electric and water infrastructure is likely also a calculated, sadistic Israeli policy to show the Palestinian civilian population the price it will pay for resistance – and quite possibly, a well-videoed gesture to please the fascistic settler and far-right political forces on which Netanyahu’s governing coalition depends.

In fact, the violence of the Israeli military and repeated settler arson riots in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has reached a level where the United States government has to pretend to care about it. This is not to be confused with any U.S. intention to *do* anything meaningful, but Washington’s verbal distress opens a door for solidarity activist interventions supporting some initiatives in Congress.

These include Representative Betty McCollum’s “Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act” (HR 3103), and a Jamaal Bowman-Bernie Sanders letter to the State Department calling for investigation of U.S. military aid used in committing Israel’s human rights violations.

There are sound reasons, however hypocritical, for U.S. government concern. Notably, in the funerals for the martyrs in Jenin, dignitaries from the Palestinian Authority were unceremoniously booted out by the angry populace. The PA’s assigned role as a sub-junior police partner of the Occupation authorities has been an important pillar of the U.S. strategy for preserving West Bank “stability” — meaning enforced Palestinian subjugation in the face of rampant Israeli settlement expansion, land confiscation, forced removals and destruction of crops and orchards.

The disgusted repudiation of the PA leadership in Jenin is not only significant in itself, but reflects

explosive popular anger in Arab countries where the regimes are rapidly developing their U.S.-brokered partnerships with Israel. It threatens the imperial strategic objective of creating a regional “security architecture” where U.S. interests can safely dominate with less need for direct U.S. military forces.

At the United Nations Security Council, the United Arab Emirates used its position as the rotating chair to convene a special session on the crisis in Palestine where James Zogby, director of the Arab American Institute and longtime Palestine human rights advocate, was invited to speak. Zogby’s brief and powerful presentation is online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv4r71Cx4Tc>.

In the short term, the hopeful signs of shifting opinion in the United States, the Middle East and globally are not enough to interrupt the “spiral toward catastrophe.” Especially given Israeli settler violence escalating with impunity, if the Biden administration had any trace of a backbone it would *at the very minimum* impose visa bans on those government ministers like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich who openly advocate massive ethnic cleansing of Palestinian towns. Don’t hold your breath.

As always, it’s most important to hear the voices from the ground. Of particular significance is the article “In Jenin, Israel is unveiling the next phase of apartheid” (Amjad Iraqi, <https://www.972mag.com/israel-apartheid-jenin-gaza/>, June 30, 2023). It’s part of a set of featured articles on the +972 website at <https://www.972mag.com/topic/jenin/>. Read it and weep but, above all, organize.

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P.S.

• Solidarity. Posted July 8, 2023:
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