

# **Fascism in India has found a role model in Israel**

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**I stand here in fullest solidarity with the suffering people of Gaza and the cause of Palestine's liberation from the cruel colonial occupation of Israel. The genocide being relentlessly perpetrated by Israel on the unarmed people of Gaza and the growing toll of Palestinian children, women, doctors, journalists, writers being killed every day are the most brutal and violent reflection of the world today.**

It is important for us to see where India stands in the mirror of this ongoing genocide. We all applaud the courageous role South Africa has played in this context, securing a historic indictment of Israel and a significant interim verdict against the ongoing genocide from the International Court of Justice. Just as South Africa, which had to wage a protracted battle to defeat the apartheid regime, could feel the pain of Palestine, it should have been possible for India to do so too. In fact, as a country which had to face centuries of racist colonial rule and brutal military repression by the colonial rulers, India should have boldly championed the Palestinian cause and mobilised the international community against Israel's genocidal campaign. That would have been in keeping with the legacy of India's own freedom movement and the current claim of being a leading voice of the Global South.

Yet India under Modi today stands at the other end of the global spectrum. India is today perceived as being in league with Israel and complicit in the ongoing genocide. This is not just because of India's repeated refusal to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in various international fora, but also because of the involvement of Indian corporates like the Adani group in Israel's armament industry and trade and Indian state's growing strategic convergence with Israel. Worldwide, Adani is being condemned for the group's complicity in the genocide in Gaza. Among the many demonstrations of international solidarity with Palestine, we could see children and parents demonstrate in the London Science Museum against Adani's sponsorship of the so-called 'Green Energy Gallery', because Adani has the blood of the children killed in the Gaza genocide on his hands.

We can see how the Modi government uses Israeli surveillance tools to stifle dissent and persecute its political opponents. It is not just the Modi government which has developed close ties with the settler colonial regime of Israel headed by Netanyahu, various BJP-led state governments also collaborate with Israel and imitate the Israeli model of repressive governance. In 2018 a delegation led by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar visited Israel to draw lessons from the Israeli assault on the Great March of Return protests. Today we can see those lessons in action in Haryana with the Haryana government attacking protesting farmers with drones, showering tear gas shells, firing pellet guns and even bullets, and blocking roads with concrete barricades, barbed wire fences and nails. From the bulldozer model which started from Uttar Pradesh and has now become the universal BJP template of governance, to this emerging Haryana model - the Israeli imprint is now unmistakable and ubiquitous.

The Indian state has now taken it upon itself to ensure the supply of Indian workers as replacement for expelled Palestinian workers to serve in the construction sector in Israel. Taking advantage of mounting unemployment in India, BJP-led governments of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh are playing the role of labour exporters. The colonial era phenomenon of indentured labour is back in Modi's new India to serve Israeli interests. It is therefore time we stop treating the question of India's strategic convergence with Israel as just a foreign policy question. It is very much a matter for our domestic concern. India's trade union movement must rise forcefully against the disastrous implications of India's strategic subservience to the US-Israel war machine. It is encouraging to see the construction workers' federation and now the port workers take the call and refuse to serve the US-Israel war machine and the genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people.

In the not-too-distant past, India used to make common cause with national liberation movements in any part of the world. The memories of Vietnam and Bangladesh solidarity actions are still very much alive. Today whole new generations across the world are rising against the horror of the genocide in Gaza and in support of the Palestinian people's right to a free Palestine. In Delhi and many other cities of India, BJP-led governments are stopping Indians from expressing their solidarity with the Palestinian people. Indeed, Hindutva and Zionism are operating as ideological twins and Indians are being mobilised to identify with Israel and vocally support the genocide.

Zionists conflate every criticism of Israel with antisemitism, likewise the Hindutva brigade dubs every criticism of the Modi regime an anti-national anti-Hindu act. Just as academics and writers around the world opposing the genocide and supporting the Palestinian cause are being accused of antisemitism, overseas Indian citizens opposing the Modi government's policies and the Sangh brigade's fascist aggression are being charged with anti-India activities and Hinduphobia and being stripped of their OCI status. Fascism in India has found an ideological and strategic role model in Israel, and opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestine and especially the current phase of the genocidal campaign in Gaza must therefore be considered not only our international duty but an integral part of our task of defeating fascism in India.

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**P.S.**

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