

Stop Israeli aggression in Gaza and Jerusalem

ONCE AGAIN Israeli warplanes are bombing the Gaza strip, the world's most densely populated area, packed with 1.5 million civilians, including more than one million refugees. At least 24 people, including 9 children have been killed and over 100 injured.

The excuse is retaliation for rockets fired into Israel by Hamas, which have injured 31 Israelis. The disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks are a form of collective punishment of Gazans.

For weeks residents of the East Jerusalem district of Sheikh Jarrah have been resisting attempts by police to evict Palestinian residents from their homes in favour of Israeli settlers. Police using stun grenades and water cannon injured dozens of protesters.

In a transparent provocation, organisers of the so-called 'Flag Day' march to celebrate the 1967 capture of Jerusalem by Israeli forces threatened to march through Palestinian areas of the city. Previous marches have seen participants abusing and assaulting Palestinians in what has become a notorious demonstration of Jewish supremacy.

Israel's Western allies, who prop up the state militarily and financially, have called for 'de-escalation' – but none of them will lift a finger to force the Israeli government to stop the illegal and bloody oppression of the Palestinian residents of Israel – let alone those living in the occupied territories.

A settler state

Between 2004 and 2016, 685 Palestinian homes in Jerusalem were demolished. 2,513 people were made homeless. The occupation authorities plan to build 200 settlement units from land clearances in Sheikh Jarrah.

Under the Donald Trump administration and its 'Deal of the Century', Jerusalem was officially recognised as the capital of Israel, an invitation to the Zionist government, authorities and courts, as well as right-wing settlers, to push ahead with the annexation of East Jerusalem – regarded by the Palestinians, and international law, as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

What is being concealed in Western media coverage of the 'Israel-Palestine conflict' is who the aggressor is. The relentless clearing of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem is only a part of the systematic expulsion and national annihilation

of the Palestinians from their ancestral homeland by a ruthless settler state. Those Palestinians who have not been driven across Israel's borders are second-class citizens in an apartheid state.

A legitimate resistance

Sporadic rocket attacks on Israel by Palestinian resistance organisations are desperate actions in an asymmetric war that offer nothing beyond a symbolic demonstration of the determination of the Palestinian people, whose dignity and existence are inextricably linked to resistance to the occupation.

This resistance is legitimate in all its forms and we clearly distinguish between the violence of the oppressors – the Israeli state and its army – and the oppressed. We stand in total solidarity with the resistance.

A new intifada is in the air. But the key question is how it can spread, how it can win. Settler expansion and Egypt and Saudi compliance have put the Palestinians in an increasingly desperate situation and exacerbated the crisis of political leadership within the fragmented PLO, the left and the working class.

Though the Palestinian Authority and Hamas both declare their support for the resistance in East Jerusalem, the collaboratorist PA remains an instrument of Israeli oppression of the Palestinians. Fearing a Hamas victory in the West Bank, it has postponed every election since 2006.

But Hamas also has no strategy for victory and offers a reactionary, religious perspective hostile to women, youth and secular Palestinians.

A new intifada

Caught between the collaborators of Fatah and the dead-end of Hamas' Islamist guerrillaism, it falls to the new generations of Palestinian youth to forge a new leadership, one with a strategy to broaden the youth uprisings into a new intifada that takes the form of a general strike in the workshops and in the fields and the cessation of any cooperation with the institutions of the occupation power.

The solidarity of the working class and oppressed in the countries of the Middle East will be critical in putting pressure on Israel and its military machinery through strikes and refusal to transport goods or carry out financial transactions. This, combined with mass solidarity demonstrations,

will expose the reactionary Arab regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia or the supposed friends of the Palestinians like Erdogan or Khamenei and make the working class the leading force in the struggle against Zionism.

This pressure can also undermine the cross-class unity between capital and the Jewish working class in Israel, opening up the perspective of a joint struggle of the Palestinian working class and peasantry with the Jewish working class against Zionism and for a common, multinational state recognising the right of return of all Palestinians.

Finally, the working class and the left in Britain and the other imperialist countries should take to the streets in solidarity with the Palestinian people and increase pressure on Israel to stop the air strikes on Gaza and the repression in East Jerusalem through strikes and boycotts of transport. Solidarity rallies and support for demonstrations on Nakba Day – May 15 – would be a first step towards this.

A democratic binational state

In the face of the expulsion, aggression and intransigence of the Israeli governments, the so-called two-state solution is proving to be not only reactionary, which it always was, but simply completely illusory.

The only possible democratic solution is the dismantling of the system of apartheid and the racist basis of the Zionist state, the right of return for all Palestinians and the establishment of a bi-national state based on full legal equality for all – Muslims, Jews, Christians.

The imperialist states such as the USA, Germany, Britain and the EU must be forced to bear the costs of this return and the construction of the necessary infrastructure and housing. For this to take place without further inflaming nationalist antagonisms, this democratic revolution must be combined with a socialist one – the expropriation of big capital and big landownership.

- End the blockade of Gaza! End the Occupation!
- Solidarity with the Palestinian resistance!
- For a binational state in which all citizens have equal rights regardless of ethnic origin, language or religion!
- For a socialist Palestine as part of the United Socialist States of the Middle East!