

Stop the Massacre of the Palestinian People!

Declaration of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

Sixty years ago, the partition of Palestine was imposed by the United Nations with the approval of imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy. This partition was basic to the birth of the State of Israel in 1947-1948. Now, sixty years later, 1.5 million Palestinians locked up in Gaza are again the victims of horrendous massacres.

For three solid days now, the Israeli army bomber planes, helicopters, and guided missiles have been ceaselessly bombing the Gaza Strip. There are hundreds and hundreds of dead and injured. As of the morning of Tuesday, December 30th, the count was 360 deaths and 1,700 wounded, with more 300 grievously hurt. Among them, children, women and old people had been hit inside their homes, targeted by relentless aircraft bombings.

In *the* daily newspaper *Haaretz* on December 29th, Israeli journalist Amira Hass wrote, "*It is not Hamas but all the Palestinians that are targeted by the bombings on Gaza*".

The first wave of bombings was launched when Palestinian schoolchildren were leaving their schools to walk back home. When the aircraft dropped their bombs, there were thousands of children in the streets.

The few press correspondents on location in Gaza -- the State of Israel has forbidden access to any new journalist since the beginning of the military assault -- report the horrifying sights. "*Corpses are lying on the ground with their identity cards in full view to enable their families to recognize them. That was what met the eye in the middle of the day at Al-Shifaa hospital in Gaza, where things were a regular pandemonium,*" reports the correspondent of French newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche* on December 28th. "*In the middle of maimed bodies, wounded people are lying on makeshift stretchers, families are crowding the hospital to try to identify a corpse or find a relative reported missing, doctors are scrambling to cope with whatever means they have*". Essentials are direly scarce because of the blockade imposed for months by the Israeli State. The lack of medicines, blood, anaesthetics and surgery equipment dooms the more seriously wounded to certain death. One of the doctors at Al-Shifaa bitterly remarks: "*We can only try to save those who have a chance to survive*".

From the very onset of the attack, the Israeli army decreed that the borderline sector along Eastern Gaza Strip was a "*closed military zone*". Traffic is banned on all the roads except with a special army permit, and only the residents of Israeli townships are permitted access. The AFP press agency reports: "*Such measure usually herald military ground operations*" -- that is, ground operations that will cause still further deaths and massacres.

So, for sixty years -- since the partition in 1947-1948 and the brutal and bloody expulsion of the Palestinians, turned out of their own land, of their villages and homes; from the massacre perpetrated by the Jordanian army during Black September to the one committed by the Israeli army at Sabra and Shattila in

Lebanon in September 1982 -- there has been an endless string of massacres. The Palestinian people have been victims of the horrendous consequences of an international consensus agreed on by all the major imperialist powers -- among which U.S. imperialism ranks first -- and the Stalinist former Kremlin bureaucracy with the blessing of the United Nations and the complicity of bourgeois Arab governments. This has been a consensus based on the negation of the right of a people, the Palestinian people, to live free and sovereign on their own land.

And once again, those who for sixty years, from "accord" to "accord", from Camp David to Oslo, have imposed and implemented a reactionary policy that has spelled disaster for the Palestinian people and all the peoples in the region are doing their utmost to prepare the inevitable follow-up:

In Washington: "*President Bush had been informed in advance*", French newspaper *Le Figaro* reports, and he made sure "*not to ask the ally of the United States to immediately interrupt its attacks*" considering that "*Israel is entitled to defending itself*". The population of the Gaza Strip is indeed being bombed with U.S.-made bombs dropped from F16 fighter planes.

As for the president elect, Barack Obama, his main adviser, David Axelrod, has just reaffirmed that "*the special relations between the United States and Israel will continue*," declaring "*that for the time being, there is just one president speaking on behalf of the United States and that is current President, George, W. Bush.*"

At the United Nations: the emergency session of the Security Council which gathers all the "major powers", the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain, Germany ... and most of the other countries of the European Union agreed on a "*non-binding text that everyone may freely interpret as soon as it is published.*" (*France Soir*)

In Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan, people are massively taking to the streets to shout their anger in front of the slaughter once again inflicted on the Palestinian people and against their own governments' complicity.

Even inside the borders of the State of Israel, a thousand young Israelis challenged the ban set by the "national unity" and marched against the intervention while the Palestinians "of the interior" organised strikes and demonstrations marking the unity of the Palestinian people.

But the facts cannot be evaded: The editorialist of *Le Figaro* had to be acknowledged: "*The sound of weapons have been the leading voice heard in the Middle East for sixty years and words have finally become nonsense. From attack to response, from escalation to conflagration, the same words are being repeated again and again, ever delaying the hope of a durable peace.*"

"*The hope of a durable peace.*"! That is beyond doubt what the Palestinian people and what peoples around the world crave for as they are aware of the heavy threat posed to humanity by the crisis that rocks the system of exploitation based on the private ownership of the means of production.

Stop the massacre now!

For its own part, the Fourth International has ceaselessly affirmed that there is one single way to avoid being caught in the trap of endless war spreading to the whole

region and to finally bring peace founded on the respect of the rights of peoples: It is to reconsider the partition of Palestine imposed by force, imposed in 1947-1948 by the United Nations and all the governments.

There will be no peace as long as the Palestinian people are doomed to stay in exile in refugee camps scattered across the region, to be cooped up in those open-air prisons that go by the name of Gaza and the West Bank, or to be second rate citizens within the borders of the State of Israel.

The right of the Palestinian people to return to their lands is incontrovertible. This right will never be able to exist and be abided by within the borders of either of the so-called Palestinian "state", in Gaza or the West Bank, fenced in by a 12-foot-high security walls and barbed wire, dotted by Israeli army check-points and relentlessly moth eaten by new plantation colonies. The right to return is a right that is incompatible with the existence of a theocratic Israeli State founded on terror and on the determination to recognize that only Jews are entitled to live in Palestine -- a State that keeps within its borders 1.5 million of its inhabitants as second rate persons, deprived of rights because they are Arabs.

The position of the Fourth International was articulated in 1947-1948; it is today more than ever urgently relevant: There is no other solution, consistent with the basic precepts of democracy, than to affirm the right of all the oppressed peoples to freedom, independence and sovereignty, which means rejecting the partition. This means *"the fight for a united, independent Palestine, in which the masses will sovereignly determine their own fate by electing a Constituent Assembly"* (*La Vérité/The Truth*, November December 1947).

The Fourth International calls on all the workers, on all who support democracy and the rights of peoples to self-determination, to join forces together across the world to demand:

- The right to return for all the Palestinian refugees!
- Sovereign Constituent Assembly!
- One single State, that is, a free, democratic and secular Palestine comprising the Jewish and Arab components with equal rights!

Stop the slaughters in Gaza Now!

Stop the bombings!

No to ground intervention!

Lift the blockade Now!

Down with military occupation!

Paris -- December 30, 2008