



# End the war on Gaza!

More than 700 Palestinians have been slaughtered in Gaza in this latest war of impunity waged by the Israeli state. Israel is attempting to undermine the reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah – the two Islamist Palestinian organisations – that could have seen a national unity government emerge.

Israel wants to keep the Palestinian territories divided in order to prevent even the possibility of a united struggle against Israeli oppression. The Israeli regime has cynically used the murder of three Israeli teenagers as the pretext for the collective punishment of Gaza to disguise their real agenda.

The overwhelming majority of Palestinian casualties are civilians, including children, the sick and elderly. Civilians are being killed not only in streets but in their homes, shelters and hospitals. One air strike wiped out an entire family of 17 people during an attack of Al Aqsa hospital in the town of Deir el-Balah. That the invasion of Gaza is taking place during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan makes it all the more deplorable as an act of cowardice and cruelty.

The Palestinians have no army, navy or air force compared to the Israeli military, funded by the US to the tune of R50 billion a year. The Israeli regime has justified the killing of civilians and children by claiming that

Palestinian militants are using them as human shields. However, the one-sided nature of the war is also shown by the low number of fatalities on the Israeli side. The deadliest day for Israel was on the first day of their ground invasion of Gaza which resulted in the deaths of 13 Israeli soldiers. Despite an increase in rockets launched against Israeli towns and cities, Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system has intercepted most rockets. The IDF is also destroying the tunnels through which many of the arms and ammunitions, but also crucial food and medical supplies, are smuggled into Palestine in defiance of the Israeli imposed blockade.

Even before this latest assault, Palestinians were being denied the right to their own state, dispossessed of their land and homes – which are being demolished to clear the way for Jewish settlements – subjected to oppressive Israeli rule and military occupation with humiliating checkpoints, regular assassinations and the detention of over five thousand Palestinians in Israeli jails.

The Palestinians have no alternative but to struggle and resist this repression, including through armed resistance. But indiscriminate rocket attacks that can kill Israeli civilians are counter-productive and give the Israeli regime the pretext to claim that they are acting to defend Israeli citizens from the 'terrorists' of Gaza.

Moreover, such acts, led by individuals and groups not under democratic control, substitute themselves for the Palestinian masses and reduce their role to that of spectators in their own struggle.

We have no illusions in any US brokered peace deal or in any role for the United Nations. UN resolutions against Israel have been consistently vetoed by the US and other major western powers.

Freedom can only be won by the collective struggle of the Palestinian masses, through their own mass democratic organisations. This possibility was demonstrated in the first 'intifada' (uprising) of 1987 that forced the Israeli regime to concede to the Oslo peace process as US imperialism tried to stabilise the situation for their own geo-political reasons. Again in early 2008, a mass offensive by Gazans succeeded in breaking the Israeli siege, forcing open the Rafah crossing point into Egypt for a period of eleven days.

These are both clear demonstrations of the effectiveness of mass action and what could be achieved. Such methods must be used to fight land seizures, the separation wall isolating the Palestinian territories, as well as to organise grass roots defence committees to place arms under democratic control.

*(continued overleaf)*

In this way, the Palestinian masses will reveal their organised power as the masses of Tunisia and Egypt did in the overthrow of the hated dictatorships in those countries.

Such methods will also show the way-forward to the Israeli working class who have no fundamental class interest in the continued oppression of Palestine and are themselves exploited and suffering from a regime of capitalist austerity. The Arab Spring gave rise to the 'tent city' movement in Israel against housing

shortages and the social injustices of Israeli capitalism which saw the mass occupation of public spaces and demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of Israelis in 2011

This would echo the way the black working class of South Africa in the 1980s was able to break sections of the white working and middle classes from the apartheid regime through the formation of an independent, mass and a socialist trade union movement. It was the formation of Cosatu in 1985 that was decisive in

the demise of the apartheid regime.

The Workers and Socialist Party is calling on organised labour and all those who oppose the Israeli state's war on Gaza to join in an international movement of solidarity with the 1.8 million people in Gaza. WASP calls on trade unions and the working class movement to take the lead in building a mass campaign of solidarity with the people of Palestine to isolate the Israeli regime.

**This campaign we believe should take as its starting point, support for the demands of the Palestinian masses to:**

- End the onslaught and blockade of Gaza and Palestine
- Withdraw the Israeli military from Palestinian territories
  - End the check-points, demolish the separation walls
- Evacuate all Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories
- For national self-determination for the Palestinian people
  - For a socialist confederation of the Middle East

**To this end the solidarity movement in South Africa must:**

- Escalate anti-war and pro-Palestinian demonstrations
- Trade union led boycott of South African companies that trade with Israeli companies in the occupied territories, Israeli arms companies, or benefit from the repression of the Palestinian masses
- Boycott Israeli goods from occupied territories and companies that benefit from the repression of the Palestinian masses; appeal for international coordination between South African, Palestinian and Israeli trade unions and labour federations to co-ordinate and control such actions
- Demand termination of diplomatic relations with Israeli regime and the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador; for international working class solidarity; no confidence in the imperialist and capitalist governments, including the South African government

## Join the Workers and Socialist Party today! Contact us.

### WASP's manifesto

- **ECONOMY.** Nationalise under democratic worker and community control the banks, the mines, the commercial farms, the big factories and big business. A publicly owned and democratically planned socialist economy to meet the needs of all and not the profits of the capitalists. For a working class state and a socialist government.
- **THE MINES.** Struggle for 100% nationalisation of the mining industry immediately and placed under democratic workers' control; united struggle for a living minimum wage of R 12 500; end all retrenchments and re-employ retrenched mineworkers; end labour broking and make all contract workers permanent; massive investment in mining communities.
- **THE LAND.** Nationalise the 36 000 commercial farms that control 95% of agricultural land; support for small and subsistence farmers; cancel the debts of the small farmers; democratic community committees to determine the use of non-agricultural land – home-owner occupiers and small business premises exempt.
- **WORK.** Decent jobs for all – end unemployment; struggle for a living wage of R12 500 per month for all full-time workers; create employment and socially-useful jobs through a mass public works programme including the building of houses, roads, schools and hospitals; for a 35 hour working week without loss of pay and the sharing out of work to address unemployment, workers' quality of life and as the basis for workers control of the economy; for a basic income grant of R8 000 for all those not in work – unemployed, pensioners, disabled and war veterans.
- **SERVICE DELIVERY.** For free, sufficient and accessible public services for all; stop cut-offs and evictions; end homelessness with a mass public works programme to build decent homes for all those in need, roads and to provide free, accessible and sufficient electricity, water, sanitation, public transport and social services for all; scrap e-tolls.
- **EDUCATION.** For publicly funded, free, accessible and high quality education for all from nursery to university; education to benefit society not just the individual; cancel student debt.
- **HEALTH.** For publicly funded free, accessible and high quality health care for all run under the democratic control of patients, communities and health workers; nationalise the private health providers, insurers and pharmaceutical companies.