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Palestine

Urgently reinforce the solidarity movement

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The recent offensive conducted by the Israeli army against the Gaza Strip is set in the continuity of the Zionist politics of destruction of the Palestinian resistance. The dramatic balance sheet of three weeks of intensive bombing (more than 1300 deaths and more than 5000 wounded) shows the violence of the Israeli army, who used devastating weapons and are guilty of many war crimes.

<http://internationalviewpoint.org/local/cache-vignettes/L168xH112/rafah1-0eb7e-e9faa.jpg> **Viva Palestina convoy supported by British socialists entering Gaza**

The offensive, planned long ahead, was not intended to "stop the rocket firings" or "impose respect of the cease fire". The rocket firings caused fewer than 20 victims in 10 years while the cease fire signed between Israel and Hamas in June 2008 was never respected by Israel, who maintained the blockade against Gaza and killed Hamas militants last November. In these conditions, the Palestinians have the right to defend themselves and to resist the occupation, including by armed force.

Israel's objectives are, once more, to show the Palestinian population and the resistance movements that Israel is the only master of the game: the only "peace" possible will be the one imposed on the conditions fixed by the Zionist State, which means denial of the Palestinians' national rights, and anyone who tries to oppose to this logic will be subjected unlimited repression by the Israeli army.

Recent events confirm it: the Zionist state will not tolerate Palestinians unless they renounce their national rights and accept living in isolated parts of Palestine or in refugee camps outside. Israel only wants to negotiate with Palestinian representatives if they are prepared to surrender to "peace" conditions that do not contradict Zionist objectives and interests.

The imperialist countries, first of all the European Union, have openly or implicitly supported Israel. The United States, in the transition period between two administrations, didn't put any pressure on the Israeli army to stop its offensive. The Arab League States, divided and for the most part submissive to imperialism, were unable to adopt a common position whilst Egypt again played its role as a partner of Israel and of the imperialist powers.

There were nevertheless many reactions condemning Israel and supporting the Palestinian people. All over the world, demonstrations rallied tens and even hundreds of thousands of people. Some states, such as Venezuela and Bolivia, expelled the Israeli ambassador. Everywhere, even at the General Assembly of the United Nations, appeals for a boycott and sanctions against Israel were put forward.

The Fourth International reaffirms its unconditional support of the Palestinian people and the struggle for its rights: the right to self-determination without any external interference; the right of return for the refugees or compensation for those who demand it; equal rights for the Palestinians of 1948. Furthermore, we reaffirm the necessity of the emancipation of the Arab peoples, of the dismantling of the Zionist state, which represents a racist and colonialist project at the service of imperialism, in favour of a political solution in which all the peoples of Palestine (Palestinian and Israeli Jewish) can live together in full equality of rights.

In order to achieve this objective, we must urgently reinforce the solidarity movement with the Palestinian people, concentrating on five central and unifying demands on which everyone agrees also within the Palestinian national movement: unconditional, immediate and total retreat by the Israeli army from the territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem; the dismantling of all colonies built since 1967; destruction of the separation wall; liberation of the 11 000 political prisoners held by Israel; immediate and unconditional lifting of the blockade of Gaza.

Urgently reinforce the solidarity movement

We should also be especially concerned for the demands by the Palestinians from 1948; they demand full equal rights and free access to land and water. The recent Israeli elections and the high score obtained by Lieberman, an open advocate of the expulsion of the Palestinians from 1948, constitute a major risk for this population, to which the solidarity movement has the duty to respond. We must also support the Israelis who are fighting against the occupation, war and Zionist policies in general.

Finally, it seems essential for us to step up the Boycott-Divestment-Sanction (BDS) campaign, initiated in 2003 by more than 170 NGOs, associations and Palestinian parties. The demand for BDS provides the opportunity to develop the solidarity movement with the aim to denounce the complicity of the governments and the major capitalist groups. The recent and coming successes of the BDS campaign can play a part in weakening the Zionist State and create the conditions to strengthen the Palestinian and anti-imperialist camp. In this struggle, it is necessary to combat, at the same time, all racist, anti-Semitic and islamophobic tendencies.

(23rd February 2009)