

Egypt Complicit in Israeli Siege on Gaza

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Some of the fiercest attacks on Gaza have been Israeli attacks on the Egyptian-Gaza border crossing at Rafah. More than 100 Palestinians were killed in Rafah between Aug. 1 and 3, including 10 children at a well-marked school.

Even U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who has been supportive of Israel's fraudulent claims of self-defense, was forced to denounce the latest Israeli attack on the school, which sheltered 3,000 civilians, as a "moral outrage" and a "criminal act." Calling on those responsible for the "gross violation of international humanitarian law" to be held accountable, he noted that the "Israel Defense Forces have been repeatedly informed of the location of these sites." (The Guardian, Aug. 3)

The military dictatorship of Gen. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt is in every way complicit in the criminal Zionist war on Gaza and is heavily involved. Egypt's alliance with Israel was a major calculation in the Zionists' opening the war on Gaza. Israel assumed that because Hamas and all the resistance forces in Gaza had been politically isolated in the region, the elected Hamas government would collapse.

Egypt's cooperation with Zionism, especially the military operations on the border at Rafah, thoroughly exposes the dictatorship's unwillingness and inability to defend any form of Egyptian national sovereignty.

Egypt has aided Israel's military offensive on Gaza since Israel began the attack on July 8, claiming that Israel's military onslaught was to destroy tunnels. The Cairo coup government has poured troops into the Sinai Peninsula, and its security operation is openly involved in the destruction of the tunnels that are the lifeblood of Gaza. Through these tunnels food, essential supplies, fuel and weapons for the resistance are smuggled into the blockaded coastal enclave.

On July 27 AFP reported, "Egypt's army said [July 27] that it has destroyed 13 more tunnels connecting the Sinai Peninsula to the Gaza Strip, taking to 1,639 the overall number it has laid waste to."

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights said 520,000 people have been displaced by the fighting — more than a quarter of Gaza's population. Yet the Egyptian-controlled Rafah border has remained closed throughout the military operation, leaving the population of Gaza with its back to the sea.

Egypt has stopped several convoys carrying medical aid from entering Gaza, where the U.N. has warned that a severe humanitarian crisis is growing. Hospitals are struggling with more than 9,450 people injured by Israel's assault. But Egypt has permitted only 11 injured Palestinians to exit Gaza for hospital treatment. (Middle East Eye, July 25)

Six Israeli warships crossed the Suez Canal from Aug. 1 to 3, an Egyptian official in the Suez Canal Authority revealed. The warships were loaded with 19 tons of military equipment. (occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com, Aug. 3)

Gaza means resistance

Through Egypt's dictatorship and the absolute monarchies in the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, the U.S. is working hand in hand with Israel because Gaza represents resistance. The survival of the heroic resistance in Gaza to national oppression, enormous poverty and outright theft of resources is considered a threat to the established order.

The lockdown in Egypt today is in sharp contrast to the mass mood after the revolutionary overthrow of the Mubarak dictatorship in February 2011, when millions of people were in the streets.

In September 2011, the Israeli ambassador to Cairo was forced out of Egypt after thousands of outraged Egyptian protesters attempted to storm the Israeli embassy headquarters following the killing of Egyptian soldiers at the border with Israel.

In November 2012, Egyptians held explosive mass rallies in cities across Egypt in the first days of another Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip. Many activists were able to get into Gaza with emergency aid during the eight-day "Pillar of Defense" offensive. The offensive ended after Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi was able to broker a truce between Israel and Palestinians.

But now, under the Gen. Sisi military dictatorship, all demonstrations are stopped with live ammunition and heavy prison sentences.

Coup crushed mass movement

On July 3, 2013, claiming that the Egyptian military was taking temporary action to restore order, Gen. Sisi overthrew the democratically elected Morsi government in a military coup and suspended the Egyptian constitution. The elected government, the cabinet, elected members of Parliament, and hundreds of officials and popular leaders were rounded up. Thousands were killed in the opening weeks of the crackdown.

Almost a year ago on Aug. 14, Egyptian security forces raided two encampments of thousands of protesters, primarily from the Muslim Brotherhood, who were opposed to the coup and were supporters of ousted President Morsi. In a surprise attack, the two encampments, one at al-Nahda Square and a larger one at Rabaa al-Adawiya Mosque, which had existed for six weeks, were raided and set on fire by the military.

Videos and photos from the encampments showed horrific scenes of tents and bodies in flames. The mosque was burned with hundreds trapped inside. More than 2,600 died in the heavy assault.

Many forces in Egypt who had their own grievances with the Morsi government initially applauded the coup. But the Egyptian military has been for decades since the Camp David Accords a thoroughly corrupt collaborator with U.S. imperialism and Israel. The military has no interest in any form of democracy.

The Sisi dictatorship shut down all opposition. Since the coup, over 40,000 people have

been arrested. All forms of protest are violently suppressed. More than 1,200 people have since been sentenced to death in fraudulent, speedy, mass trials.

The U.S. government knew beforehand of Gen. Sisi's coup plans and approved of them. Afterward Washington continued military and economic aid, and the credits and loans since the coup are a signal of its approval and a way of strengthening the new regime. The absolute monarchies of the Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia, have also committed new funds to the coup government.

The Morsi government had attempted at every juncture to stay within the narrow confines of the Egyptian state structure. It did not put forth a radical program. Why then were Washington and the Egyptian military so opposed to its very existence that they would take such a drastic step as a violent coup against the overwhelmingly popular elected government?

The Muslim Brotherhood had deep roots among the poorest in Egypt, based on decades of providing basic social programs such as schools, food and health programs. More than 80 percent of the population lives in dire poverty.

With the overthrow of the Mubarak dictatorship and the opportunity to elect a democratic government, the expectations of the masses of people were aroused. Wall Street, the reactionary Saudi monarchy and the Egyptian military remained fearful that the mass support of the Brotherhood as a movement would always be a form of mass pressure on the government, pushing it in a progressive direction and away from accommodation with Wall Street's demands for cuts in subsidies and improvements in social programs and away from accommodation with Israel and its war on the Palestinian people.

Corporate power in the U.S. is suspicious of and fears any and every democratically elected government, whether in Latin America, Asia or Africa. This is not a calculation based on ideology. Again and again, the U.S. has aligned with the most corrupt absolute monarchies, such as in the Gulf States, and with thinly veiled military rule in Egypt or Colombia.

Despite a much less favorable regional and international situation than in past Zionist offensives, the entire resistance movement in Gaza, although massively outgunned, remains confident of their ultimate victory.

Hamas' bloc in the Palestinian parliament said in a statement that any unilateral pullout by Israel would mean that "it has failed to achieve any of its goals and would be a clear defeat for the occupation army and for its leaders. Gaza resisted, endured and will achieve victory." (Mail & Guardian, Aug. 3)

Break the siege on Gaza!

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