

Israel: International Anger Mounts

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Global Research, July 23, 2014

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Councillor Hugh Lewis takes down the Israeli flag in Dublin, Ireland. (Independent.ie)

—
“[You](#) take my water

Burn my olive trees

Destroy my house

Take my job

Steal my land

Imprison my father

Kill my mother

Bomb my country

Starve us all

Humiliate us all

But ... I am to blame: I shot a rocket back.” (Placard first seen in Gaza, 2012.)

The “most moral army in the world” from “the only democracy in the Middle East” has attacked hospitals, a home for the disabled, a geriatric hospice, demolished five mosques, razed entire neighbourhoods, erased entire families – the youngest – so far – just three days old if you do not count the unborn, as in the case of twenty nine year old Samar Al Hallaq (1) killed with her two sons, aged four and five, other members of her family and carrying her third child. Her husband was critically injured.

Yet again a war is declared against children and the young. Forty three percent of Gaza’s population is aged 0-14 and just under twenty one percent, 15-24. (Index Mundi, 2013.) Thus sixty four percent, 0-24.

As Israel trades on eternal victim status whilst murdering neighbouring, fellow Semites with seeming legal impunity, stealing land, obliterating homes, nullifying history preceding even the coming of Christ in the land of his birth, the UN bleats weakly, as ever, of “concern” and “regret” some countries have had enough.

Ecuador has recalled their Ambassador from Israel, Chile has suspended their free trade agreement negotiations. Bolivia's President Evo Morales and Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro have called the assault on Gaza genocide and "extermination", with Maduro demanding that the UN address the: "systematic violation of the Human Rights of the Palestinian population in Gaza by the State of Israel and adopt the necessary measures to halt those violations." (2.) Venezuela severed all relations with Israel after its last massacre, "Cast Lead" over Christmas and New Year 2008-2009.

As Prime Minister David Cameron calls the onslaught on the 1.7 million people of Gaza in their forty mile long ghetto "not disproportionate", President Maduro stated: "It is clear you cannot morally compare occupied and massacred Palestine with the occupying state, Israel, which also possesses military superiority and acts on the margins of international law."

Meanwhile, amid massive protests in South Africa, the African National Congress in Parliament (who suffered their own long years of apartheid) is calling for the Israeli Ambassador to leave with "immediate effect" and for the South African Ambassador to Tel Aviv to be immediately recalled.

The ANC Chief Whip, Steone Sizane, MP., in a blistering address said: "The office of the UN SecretaryGeneral issues statements which have no effect. The UN Security Council must stand up and act to support vulnerable Palestinian people at the time when they need their protection.

"The situation involving Palestine and Israel is an undeclared war, in which the aggressor, Israel, has destroyed the Palestinian economy, robbed people of their land, unilaterally changed borders, and unilaterally built a wall of exclusion to keep Palestinians out of their land. When it feels provoked, it unleashes the most sophisticated military hardware on a defenceless people. Palestinians have been reduced to cheap labour for the Israel economy.

"This relentless destruction of the Palestinian territory and its people by Israel must be stopped. The international community needs to act in unison on this matter."

Mr Sizane's call is backed by a host of political and civil bodies including faith groups, the Young Communist League, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, seventy two leading South African Jews and many others. (3)

In Europe, the Norwegian government is resisting pressure to expel the Israeli Ambassador from pro-Palestinian and human rights organizations with the leader of the Joint Committee for Palestine (*Fellesutvalget for Palestina, FuP*), Anna Lund Bjørnsen telling Norwegian Broadcasting (NRK): "Norway can not uncritically maintain close diplomatic relations with a state that does not show respect for human life, international treaties or UN conventions."

Even the resisting Foreign Minister Børge Brende acknowledges: "the suffering you see in Gaza and the West Bank", and cites Israel's particular responsibility in driving the peace process because its illegal settlements were the key to the conflict.

Labor Party MP and Chairwoman of the Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee in the Norwegian parliament, Anniken Huitfeldt is widely backed by seven left leaning parties in her call for boycotting products manufactured by Israel in the occupied territories "without wasting time."

Two parties supporting the boycott, the Labor Party and the Center Party, are demanding a review Norway's policy of selling arms to third-world countries, which resell those arms to Israel.(5)

In neighbouring Sweden calls are mounting by those involved in academic and cultural boycotts for all collaboration between Swedish and Israeli institutions to cease, with abstention: "from participation in EU funded projects in which Israel is involved. A letter was also addressed to the Board of the Royal Institute of Technology, which has a comprehensive cooperation program with the Technion University in Haifa."(6)

In Ireland, Dublin City Council unanimously called on the Irish government to enforce an arms and trade embargo on Israel (7) and seventeen EU governments have now: "published online guidance warning their citizens and businesses about risks involved in trade and other economic links with illegal Israeli settlements." The latest twelve to issue warnings did so last week, after the start of the assault on Gaza. They are: Portugal, Austria, Malta, Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Greece, Slovakia, Belgium and Croatia, "in a move coordinated at EU level." France, Italy and Spain issued similar guidelines the previous week.(8)

Across the world in the Maldives the government has scrapped three agreements with Israel and discussions are gathering pace to prohibit the import of Israeli goods. The tropical nation of 1,200 islands, at some potential cost to the economy has said they will also reject investors from Israel, noting international condemnation of Israel's current actions. (9)

On 19th July, the Guardian published a letter signed by six Nobel Laureates, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Adolfo Peres Esquivel, Jody Williams, Mairead Maguire, Rigoberta Menchú and Betty Williams and numerous academic, intellectual, artistic and signatories from many countries, including João Antonio Felicio, the president of the International Trade Union Confederation, and Zwelinzima Vavi, the general secretary of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions calling for the UN and governments to impose a military embargo on Israel.(10)

The letter underlines starkly the culpability of the international community in Israel's ongoing genocidal actions: "Over the period 2009-2019, the US is set to provide military aid to Israel worth \$30bn, while Israeli annual military exports to the world have reached billions of dollars. In recent years, European countries have exported billions of euros worth of weapons to Israel, and the European Union has furnished Israeli military companies and universities with military-related research grants worth hundreds of millions."

It concludes: "Governments that express solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza, facing the brunt of Israel's militarism, atrocities and impunity, must start with cutting all military relations with Israel. Palestinians today need effective solidarity, not charity."

One Nobel Laureate's signature was not on the letter, President "Change we can believe in" Obama.

As the death toll exceeded five hundred and serious injuries three thousand two hundred Norwegian Dr Mads Gilbert stated on Democracy Now: "This was truly a massacre, and the injuries were just horrible ... Children came in without heads and totally dismantled by the shelling of the residential areas."

On the same day (Monday 21st July) Obama merely said weakly that he had: “serious concerns.” Pathetic.

Israel too now has “serious concerns” of another kind. Hours after US airlines Delta, United and US Airways cancelled all flights to Israel on Tuesday 22nd July, the US Federal Aviation Authority issued an advisory banning all US carriers from flying to Tel Aviv. Air Canada has also cancelled their flights. The European Aviation Safety Agency has followed suit issuing a “strong recommendation” that airlines avoid travel to Israel until further notice. Air France, EasyJet, Germany’s flag carrier Lufthansa, and the Netherlands’ KLM were among European airlines that had already cancelled services.

The financial implications for Israel can only be imagined. Having spent two weeks telling the world of the mortal danger the country faced (in spite of crowds of residents picnicking in the open, standing on car roofs to watch the destruction of Gaza) the Transportation Minister and Prime Minister Netanyahu declared that flying to the country is “safe” and that: “There is no reason whatsoever that American companies would stop their flights and hand terror a prize.” Somewhat contradictory all round.

Further, last year 3.5 million tourists visited Israel, boosting the economy by over twelve Billion \$. This year Yahoo Travel cites Leon Avigad, the developer of Browns Hotels, a chain of boutique hotels in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem who says the conflict was already: “devastating us economically ... We are losing tons of money by the minute. The entire profit from the summer (to date) is wiped out.” In the south of the country: “Hotels are completely empty ... almost everything is closed.”

Surprisingly, even Israel’s loyal friends, the US State Department have been advising against all but most essential travel to Israel since February.

Especially courageous are the stands across the world by Jews themselves. Ten thousand orthodox Jews demonstrated in support of Gaza in New York, and across the world they, with other Jewish denominations have taken a visible and courageous stand.

Jewish Voices for Peace statement by their Rabbinical Council perhaps encapsulates what many believe. Headed “Stop the Bombing. Hold Israel Accountable” it reads in part:

“We are currently amidst ‘the three weeks’ – the annual Jewish period of quasi-mourning that leads to the fast day of Tisha B’Av. This is the season that bids us to look deeply into the soul of our community and examine the ways that our sinat chinam – baseless hatred – has led to our communal downfall.

“Driven by the spirit of this season, we cannot help but speak out in response to the horrific loss of life currently taking place in Gaza, at the hands of the Israeli military. We deplore the Israeli government’s military crackdown in the West Bank that led to its lethal, military onslaught on the people of Gaza. We mourn the deaths of hundreds of innocent people, including children.

“We condemn Hamas’ rockets attacks on Israel and the anxiety, injury and death they have caused. But we cannot view this as a war between two equal sides. Israel has unlimited hi-tech weaponry; it dominates Gazan airspace, its borders, its utilities and economy...

“We can not stand idly by as the Jewish State acts with such wanton disregard, with such sinat chinam, for the humanity of the mothers, fathers, sons,

daughters, brothers, sisters, children and elders of Gaza.

“As Jews, we abhor the abuse of human rights that are standard practice of our fellow Jews in the Israeli government and Israeli military. This is not the path of justice.” (11)

Also grieving is NATO Member Turkey, declaring three days of mourning for Gaza this week.

Yesterday activists from Jewish Voices for Peace were arrested for a peaceful demonstration at the Friends of the Israeli Defence Forces on New York’s Broadway.

In Israel, Peace Now and Hand in Hand participants are being “shouted down or physically attacked” for their principled stance. Last week, in Tel Aviv: “about 250 Jewish protesters were set upon, punched and pushed by a well-organized group of right wingers in an attack that left several people with bruises, black eyes, or other injuries. Another (of) about 1,000 people, was also attacked” with eggs and plastic bottles.(12)

Perhaps it is time for President Obama to earn his Nobel Peace status.

This week Dr Mads Gilbert addressed a passionate appeal to him, writing:

“Mr Obama, do you have a heart? I invite you, spend one night – just one night – with us in Al Shifa’a [Hospital](#). I am convinced, one hundred per cent, it would change history. Nobody with a heart and power could ever walk away from a night in Shifa’a without being determined to end the slaughter of the Palestinian people.” If only.

The last word goes to increasingly intellectually challenged Prime Minister David Cameron, who declared on July 21st: “We can’t stand by when a strong nation bullies a weak one.” Indeed. Sadly, he was talking about Russia, who, for those fully bolted down, seems to have bullied no one.

Notes

1. <http://pht2012.wordpress.com/2014/07/21/a-devastating-loss-to-the-tapestry/>
2. <http://rt.com/news/174144-south-america-gaza-genocide/>
3. <http://www.bdssouthafrica.com> (subscribe, contact, site temporarily under construction.)
4. <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2014/07/16/calls-to-expel-israeli-ambassador/>
5. <http://en.shafaqna.com/international-news/item/30340-middleeastmonitorcom/-norwegian-mp-calls-for-boycott-of-israel-over-its-gaza-offensive.html>
6. <http://psabi.se/?p=621>
7. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/palestine-campaigners-welcome-dublin-city-council-motion-callin-g-for-end-to-attacks-on-gaza-and-for-arms-embargo-trade-sanctions-on-israel-12332#sthash.98WcoSgL.dpuf>
8. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/17-eu-members-take-action-against-corporate-complicity-1220>

[0#sthash.xN7vcoes.dpuf](#)

9. <http://www.sun.mv/english/23670>

10. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/nobel-celebrities-call-for-military-embargo-12316#sthash.BlqKTzg0.dpuf>

11. <http://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/campaigns/end-the-bombing-hold-israel-accountable>

12. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/israeli-peace-movement-members-shouted-down-and-physically-attacked/5392698>

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