

There Is No Escape for Israel from Growing Palestinian Power

We are not afraid, but clearly they are!

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There is no escape for Israel from growing Palestinian power. If nothing else, the upcoming [Conference](#) of the Alternative Palestinian Path in Madrid (Masar Badil in Arabic) will clearly and courageously embody that rising power on the world stage, at a time when Israel is increasingly fearful and unhinged by the surprising fact that Palestinians, even after decades of horrific colonial oppression, not only have yet to roll over and die as planned, but they are instead gathering more popular support worldwide than ever before.

Palestinians continue to resist their colonization at every turn. Right now, six Palestinian prisoners are on [hunger strikes](#) to demand freedom from arbitrary imprisonment without charge, “[putting their lives on the line for liberation](#).”

In Ramallah, young people are [affirming](#) the path for liberation, stressing that the Palestinian struggle is an existential struggle, and must therefore never be linked to “solutions,” even if such solutions are interim.

Israel is afraid and the Palestinian people, in Israeli prison and everywhere, are not afraid, because they are not alone today, as the lyrics of the civil rights anthem “We Shall Overcome” have it.

How is Israel responding? In tried and true fashion. Israel is expanding its oppression and lawfare manipulations, so as to isolate Palestinians from global support.

Only recently (October 19, 2021), the Israeli “Defense Minister” and war criminal Benny Gantz issued a military order declaring six Palestinian civil society organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to be “terrorist organizations.”

The groups are Addameer, al-Haq, Defense for Children Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees. According to [Human Rights Watch](#): “The designation, made pursuant

to a 2016 Israeli statute, effectively outlaws the activities of these civil society groups. It authorizes Israeli authorities to close their offices, seize their assets and arrest and jail their staff members, and it prohibits funding or even publicly expressing support for their activities.”



Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network: [“Putting their lives on the line for liberation.”](#)

Palestinians and their supporters are fighting back. Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, co-organizer of Masar Badil, is gearing up with the [following call](#): Israel’s “terrorist” designations aim to suppress Palestinian organizing: Confront them with action and resistance!

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is [calling on Israel](#) to reverse the designation of Palestinian rights organizations as terrorists, stating that the move is “a cynical assault on independent civil society and on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and association in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).”

Meanwhile, Israel is desperately entrenching the status quo “from the river to the sea” by

planning to construct housing units in the West Bank—i.e., by continuing its colonial, judaizing activities there.

Disregarding “calls for restraint” from the Biden administration (“The Israeli decision will likely cause tensions, and it could push the U.S. to air its criticism in public.”), Israel is set to [approve](#) the construction of 4,400 new Jewish housing units in the West Bank, 3,109 of which will be in existing Jewish colonies and 1,300 in the heart of Palestinian villages.

On the Masar Badil conference website are eight “principles of struggle,” with the last one stating, “Every attempt to block or suppress the progress of the Palestinian people’s struggle, in whatever form, constitutes complicity with and support for the crimes of Zionist colonialism that are committed daily against the Palestinian people.”

For a long time now, Ali Abunimah, co-founder of The Electronic Intifada and author of *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*, has been exposing European inaction and complicity, especially when EU governments issue statements regarding their “profound concern” over egregious Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people. He and Palestinian human rights defender Omar Barghouti both believe it is up to European civil society to bring an end to EU complicity in Israel’s crimes.

As I pack my bag to travel to Madrid to participate in Masar Badil, I am eager to find out how many European civil society organizations will heed the call of the conference to support a new stage of Palestinian struggle and mark the end of the Madrid-Oslo process.

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Featured image: Wall mural at the Aida Refugee Camp (Source: Caoimhghin Ó Croidhean)

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