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The Palestinian resistance

The people of Rafah already face a catastrophe of unspeakable proportions. They lack facilities, infrastructure and the most basic of services. Many live in tents. Insects and insect-borne diseases are rampant. Food, water, medicine and fuel have run out. These acute, life threatening lacks are the direct consequence of the long-standing Israeli blockade of Gaza, a policy that took on genocidal proportions since 8 October.

How do we make sense of this slaughter? How do we explain the limp, deceitful requests from Western leaders to temper it? Why have we been unable to stop it?

Palestine is a fulcrum in the international system. It is not just a central node in the regional struggle for sovereignty and self-determination — without a free Palestine, with Israeli warplanes routinely bombing its neighbors, there can be no talk of establishing a basis for regional development or integration. Palestine is also the prism through which nearly every global contradiction comes into focus.

As Max Ajl has [written](#), the Palestinian resistance “bring[s] the relief of the world system into clearer view: the impotence of the United Nations; the imperialist contempt for international law; the complicity of the Arab neo-colonial states with Western capitalism; the fascist racism at the heart of modern European and US capitalism, as murderers and maimers operate in Western capitals; the neo-colonial structures of the Arab and Third World; and the hollowness of Western liberal democracy and its constellation of civil society institutions.”

The dehumanisation and destruction of the Palestinian people has been a repeat feature of the world system since the 1948 Nakba. In the last 20 years alone, Palestinians have suffered a never-ending stream of deadly Israeli military assaults, most of which barely break into global public consciousness: Operation Forward Shield, Operation Days of Penitence, Operation Summer Rains, the 2006 Gaza beach explosion, the 2006 Beit Hanoun shelling,

Operation Autumn Clouds, the 2008 Beit Hanoun incident, Operation Hot Winter, Operation Cast Lead, the assault on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, Operation Returning Echo, Operation Pillar of Defence, Operation Protective Edge, the killing by sniper fire of 223 Palestinians and wounding of over 9,000 as they marched, almost entirely unarmed, to the Gaza prison fence as part of the Great March of Return, Operation Breaking Dawn and now Operation Swords of Iron, this latest invasion of Gaza, accompanied by incursions in the West Bank. Each one of these operations contains oceans of human tragedy that should drown our common humanity.

Joining these operations are the daily harassment and dispossession of Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with the clear aim of replacing one population with another. This ceaseless oppression generates resistance — and that resistance brings the terrible rot in the imperialist system into view.

That system has been plain to see to a great number of people in the South for decades. But today, it is made additionally legible by its evident frailty. That is why the fight for Palestinian freedom is uniting so many disparate struggles all over the world, while injecting new confidence and determination into popular movements from Sana'a to Columbia University.

In the Global North, the imperial elites are rapidly losing the people. Polls show majorities in the US, UK and Germany now want to end arms sales to Israel. The average Brit, German or US American can see that in the imperialist world system, a Palestinian life is worth immeasurably less than an Israeli life. For most people, this grotesque injustice is intolerable. In universities and cities across Europe and the US, students are now occupying institutions in protest against their complicity in the genocide. Direct action campaigns are rising and throwing sand in the wheels of the war machine. As the repression mounts, the battle against it grows stronger. The Palestinian resistance has brought the rebellion to the North.

As the movement for Palestinian liberation and global justice gathers steam, it is our task to help move it from global sympathy for the Palestinians and the oppressed into active solidarity with them. If we do, Israel and its elite backers in the political-media class of the North will no longer be able to pretend that it is a normal state, that it is the victim.

From there, we build outwards: from Palestine to the world. The imperialist system doesn't start and end in Palestine. It runs through the cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the special economic zones of Honduras, the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, and the entire planet, jolted out of climatic stability by imperialism's relentless drive to siphon the wealth of the many into the hands of the few.

Our world is undergoing rapid and great change. This process is accompanied by tremendous imperial violence — both against the South and the opposition in the North. But these are the death cries of an expiring system. And that system can be overcome.

We can turn these violent howls into the first cries of a newly birthed world. But we can only do it if we deepen the mutinies in the North and South into a united, global anti-imperialist front. [In the words of Peter Mertens](#), if we can “get the mutiny of the North to lend a hand to the mutiny of the South, and vice versa, we can turn the world around, in the democratic, social and ecological direction this planet needs.”

In solidarity,

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