

US media's silent complicity in Israeli massacre in Gaza

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Major American media outlets, led by the *New York Times*, are treating the Israeli military's mass killing and wounding of unarmed, peaceful Palestinian protesters in Gaza as a non-event.

On Friday, as tens of thousands of Palestinians gathered near the militarized border with Israel to protest Israeli expropriation of Palestinian land and demand the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, Israeli troops and sharpshooters opened fire, killing at least 16 people and wounding some 1,400 more.

Millions around the world reacted with shock and horror at the scenes of deliberate murder, using live ammunition. One video showed a young man running away from the border fence who was shot in the back and killed by Israeli troops. Another showed that at least two of those killed were unarmed as they walked slowly towards the Israel border.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) deployed troops and more than 100 snipers to shoot unarmed protestors demonstrating in the towns and cities of the tiny enclave as well as the thousands who gathered at the border with Israel.

According to Hamas, the bourgeois Islamist group that controls the Palestinian enclave, only five of those killed on Friday belonged to Hamas's military wing, the rest being civilians.

The US intervened at the United Nations Security Council to block a resolution put forward by Kuwait calling for an independent investigation into the mass shooting, and Israeli spokesmen flatly rejected any such probe, congratulating the Israeli soldiers for "defending Israeli sovereignty."

Israel's chief military spokesman, Brigadier General Ronen Manelis, warned that the IDF would step up its violence on the Gaza border. He added that the IDF had

restricted its actions thus far to the border fence, but it was prepared to "act against these terror organizations in other places too," that is, within Gaza.

In line with the full support for the Israeli slaughter from the US government and both major parties, the *New York Times* published a perfunctory news story on the massacre in its Saturday edition and completely dropped the issue in its Sunday edition and on its website. This is despite the fact that the IDF and the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, emboldened by the muted response from Western governments and the media, continued the attack Saturday on a smaller turnout of demonstrators, wounding scores of protesters.

The same Sunday edition of the so-called "newspaper of record" featured a long article on alleged atrocities by the Syrian government and another article bemoaning the illegal poaching of abalone in South Africa.

The Israeli massacre was barely mentioned on the Sunday television interview programs and has evoked no editorial statements by major media outlets.

Friday's demonstration was announced as the beginning of six weeks of peaceful protests, called the "March of Return," to conclude on May 15, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel, which the Palestinians commemorate as Nakba (Catastrophe Day), when the US is set to open its embassy in Jerusalem. The transfer of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, announced last year by President Donald Trump, is a massive provocation, as the Palestinians claim Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

The massacre on Friday was the deadliest day of violence since Israel's 2014 war on Gaza, which killed 2,250 Palestinians, the majority of whom were

civilians. This followed criminal assaults on the besieged and impoverished enclave in 2008-2009 and 2012, killing 1,217 and 147 people, respectively, overwhelmingly civilians. All these war crimes were backed by Washington.

Israel has enforced a blockade on Gaza since 2007, joined by Egypt, which, along with the destruction of infrastructure by the Israeli military, has devastated the territory and its 1.9 million inhabitants. Power cuts have led to water shortages and untreated sewage, wages for thousands of public-sector workers have been cut or eliminated, and the Trump administration has withheld funding for food aid and for the United Nations Relief and Work Agency, which supports some 1.2 million people in Gaza.

One can only imagine the outraged editorials, commentaries and news exclusives that would flood the print and broadcast media if anything similar were carried out by Syrian or Russian forces. When Alexei Navalny, the far-right, anti-immigrant opponent of Vladimir Putin, is arrested, it immediately becomes front-page news.

For weeks, a completely manufactured scandal over the alleged poisoning of former Russian spy and British double agent Sergei Skripal and his adult daughter, based on entirely unsubstantiated allegations of Russian government involvement, has been used as the pretext for a massive escalation of the diplomatic and military offensive led by Washington against Moscow.

But the same media outlets take as a matter of course that Palestinians are shot down and murdered, as if they were insects.

The social media corporations, in line with their crackdown on freedom of speech on the Internet, are doing their part. Under Israeli and US pressure, Facebook last week shut down the page of a major Palestinian news outlet, the Safa Palestinian Press Agency, which has 1.3 million followers. Facebook defended its action as a move against “hate speech” and “incitement.”

Israel’s criminal and provocative actions against Gaza, with its promise of stepped-up action in the run-up to May 15, must be seen in the context of Tel Aviv and Riyadh’s mutual determination to wage war on Iran, with the blessings or direct participation of Washington. Netanyahu, by igniting a broader response from the Palestinians and workers throughout the

region, is set on creating the necessary conditions for a massive intervention by the US against Iran and its regional allies.

The silence of the US media is an act of complicity in war crimes. It speaks for the international bourgeoisie, which stands aside in either open or tacit support for the homicidal policies of a gangster regime. For all the cynical blather in the capitalist media about “human rights”—when it serves as a cover for neo-colonial wars for regime change and plunder—the old saying holds: All morality is class morality.

The international working class must be warned: The events in Gaza are a sign of things to come. Reaction, militarism and the drive to dictatorship are sweeping across all of the major powers in response to the deepening of the world capitalist crisis and the growing signs of working-class resistance. An essential part of the working-class response is to come to the defence of the Palestinian masses and fight for the unity of all workers, across all religious and national lines, in the Middle East and internationally.



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