

Statement of the Turkish supporters of the ICFI on the Israeli massacre of Palestinians in Gaza

Toplumsal E?itlik
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The Toplumsal E?itlik (Social Equality) group of Turkish supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) condemns the massacre carried out by Israeli troops against unarmed Palestinians in Gaza, and reiterates its support for their right to return to the homes and villages from which their families were violently expelled by Zionist forces 70 years ago.

The Gaza massacre has exposed not only the Trump administration, which flagrantly supports the Israeli government, but the complicity of all imperialist governments, including Berlin and London. They cynically call for an “investigation” or “independent commission” to be organized into the slaughter of unarmed Palestinians in broad daylight, while their regional allies issue cynical statements criticizing the Israeli government’s “disproportionate use of force.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, by contrast, have seized on the Gaza events to once again posture as defenders of the Palestinian people. They hope to manipulate the anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist sentiments of the masses, this time on the eve of the Turkish snap legislative and presidential elections.

On May 14, the Turkish government declared three days of national mourning to honor the Palestinians slaughtered in Gaza that day and recalled its ambassadors to the United States and Israel for consultations.

Speaking to Turkish students on May 15 in London, Erdogan said, “No matter from what side, whether from the US or Israel, I condemn this humanitarian tragedy, this genocide, and those who remain silent to it. Israel is conducting state terrorism. Israel is a terrorist state.

What Israel is doing is genocide.”

At a mass rally held on May 18 in Istanbul, Erdogan likened the actions of the Israeli government against the Palestinians to the Nazi persecution of the Jews in World War II. “There is no difference between the atrocity faced by the Jewish people in Europe 75 years ago and the brutality that our Gaza brothers are subjected to.” Then he added: “I will say openly and clearly that what Israel is doing is banditry, brutality and state terror.”

These statements reek of hypocrisy. They come from a government that has brutally suppressed domestic political opposition, especially on the part of the Kurdish people and Kurdish nationalist groups, while invading northern Syria. For years, thousands of members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), including its former chairperson and presidential candidate Selahattin Demirtas, have been behind bars.

Under the Turkish state of emergency, imposed shortly after the failed July 2016 US-backed coup against Erdogan, 150,000 people have been detained and nearly the same number sacked from their jobs. More than 120 journalists have also been detained and more than 180 media outlets closed.

Moreover, the horrific scenes in Gaza are not fundamentally different from those in the Kurdish provinces of Diyarbakir, Mardin and S?rnak, where 10,000 Turkish military and police forces launched operations supported by tanks and helicopters in late 2005. In military operations, mounted under the pretext of a “fight against terrorism” and targeting the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), thousands of homes were razed by heavy artillery, forcing some 200,000

people to flee their homes in just a few months.

While demonstratively claiming their support for the Palestinians, Turkish government spokespersons are conspicuously silent on whether Ankara will impose any sanctions against the United States and Israel. However, behind the scenes, economic relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv continue to grow. According to the figures on the TankerTrackers web site, Israel has received 1.5 million barrels of oil from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of Iraq through Turkey's southern Ceyhan Port, within the last 30 days.

No credence can be given to the Erdogan government's show of criticizing Israel. While beating the drum of Turkish nationalism and posturing as anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist to manipulate public opinion, the Turkish government in reality is continuously seeking a rapprochement with its imperialist NATO partners and their Mideast outpost, Israel.

The Turkish government supported the illegal missile strikes the US, Britain and France launched against Syria last month. Moreover, until they had a falling out over Washington's alliance with the YPG, the PKK's Syrian offshoot, the Erdogan government was spearheading the US-fomented war to overthrow Bashar al-Assad and impose a pro-US government in Damascus.

The hypocritical condemnations of the Zionist state's latest horrific crime by the AKP government and by its pro-NATO and pro-European Union opponents in the Turkish ruling class deserve only the contempt of workers and youth.

The Israeli state's brutality in Gaza is only another symptom of the crisis of the bourgeois nation-state structure in the Middle East, artificially created after World War I by the imperialist powers.

Encouraged by Washington's decision to relocate the US embassy to occupied Jerusalem, and Pentagon's escalating war drive in the Middle East, the Israeli slaughter is an urgent warning to workers and youth of the brutality that the bourgeoisie of all countries will resort to against class struggles for real peace, social equality and democracy internationally—that is, for socialism.

The only social force that can end the escalating imperialist-Zionist violence is the working class of the

Middle East, united across all national, ethnic, religious and sectarian boundaries, and allied with their class brothers and sisters in the United States, Europe and around the world.

For a successful struggle against imperialism and its regional allies, the Israeli, Arab, Turkish, Iranian, Kurdish etc. ruling classes, the workers and poor of the Middle East—Muslim, Christian and Jewish—need a clear socialist perspective and political program, based on all the historical and international experiences of the working class.

Only one political tendency provides workers and the youth of the Middle East with such an internationalist, revolutionary and socialist perspective and program, developed in decades of struggle against imperialism and its petty bourgeois nationalist and pseudo-left allies: the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Toplumsal Esitlik calls all workers and youth of the Middle East to follow, discuss and circulate the daily organ of the ICFI, the *World Socialist Web Site*, and participate in the struggle to found ICFI national sections, Socialist Equality Parties, in all countries across the region.

No to imperialist wars for the re-division of the world!

For the United Socialist States of the Middle East!



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