

Down with Netanyahu's government! Stop the imperialist-backed Zionist onslaught against Gaza!

**The International Committee of the Fourth International
9 October 2023**

1. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) unequivocally denounces the Netanyahu government's declaration of war on the Palestinian people following the uprising in Gaza against the Israeli occupation. The hysterical frothing of the Israeli regime, reminiscent of the Nazis, can be interpreted as nothing less than a call for the extermination of a large portion of the population of Gaza. The ICFI denounces no less emphatically the declarations of total support given by the Biden administration and the governments of the European Union to the genocidal campaign that is now being planned and implemented by the Israeli armed forces. The dispatch of an American aircraft carrier to the region is a vile display of imperialist solidarity with the massive attack on the Palestinian people.

2. It is the responsibility of the working class internationally, and in Israel itself, to defend the Palestinian workers and youth in their struggle against oppression. In the imperialist centers and throughout the world, there must be protests and opposition to the shipment of arms and financial support to the Israeli government. In every country, there must be mass demonstrations demanding an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank.

3. We appeal especially to the Israeli working class and all progressive elements among the Jewish population to reject the poisonous chauvinism of the regime. Israeli workers and youth must separate themselves from and denounce the criminal actions of the Netanyahu government, which does not represent their interests.

4. As has always been the case throughout history, every act of resistance from the masses evokes frenzied outrage from the ruling elites. Biden, Scholz, Macron and the rest can shout "terrorism" until they are blue in the face. But despite the relentless pro-Zionist propaganda, the sympathy of workers, youth and the oppressed throughout the world is with the Palestinians. It is understood that what is taking place is a mass uprising against a brutal occupation, and that by "terrorism" the ruling class means any manifestation of opposition to its interests and policies.

5. As with the war in Ukraine, the events in Palestine are, in the capitalist media, torn from their entire historical context. It is 75 years since the occupation of Palestine by the newly formed Israeli state and the expulsion of those living there from their homeland. It is 56 years since the Six-Day War in 1967, which began the Israeli occupation and annexation of the West Bank. It is 17 years since the 2006 Israeli war on Gaza and the ensuing blockade, which turned Gaza, in the words of Human Rights Watch, into an "open air prison." Over the decades, there have been innumerable killings and bombardments on the increasingly small slivers of land upon which the Palestinians have

been concentrated—as well as areas they have fled to, as in the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon.

6. Throughout all of this, Israel has been backed by the imperialist powers, above all the United States, for which Israel has functioned as the chief proxy in the Middle East. The United Nations has refused to enforce its own resolutions against annexations, while the Arab bourgeois regimes have cut deals with imperialism and Israel and left the Palestinian people to be massacred and beaten down. Despite everything, however, the Israeli state and its backers have not been able to suppress the strivings of the Palestinians for their democratic and social rights.

7. This is a decisive moment. For months, Netanyahu and his fascistic coalition partners, Religious Zionism led by Bazalel Smotrich and Jewish Power, led by Itamar Ben Gvir, have spearheaded an offensive by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). Police and settler groups have carried out near daily attacks on towns and villages in the West Bank, Gaza and in Israel itself, together with provocations at the Al Aqsa mosque.

8. The resistance of the Palestinian masses is a political debacle for Netanyahu, who is a criminal even in Israeli law. It is a fact of political life in Israel that this unscrupulous gangster clings to power in order to stay out of prison. It is also recognized by millions of Israelis that Netanyahu has staged provocations against Palestinians in order to provoke a violent response that could be used to distract domestic opposition. However, the Palestinian reaction to his criminal schemes has vastly exceeded Netanyahu's calculations.

9. Hamas has launched a military offensive involving thousands, despite being surrounded by enemy troops in a supposedly impenetrable ghetto and subject to constant surveillance and targeted assassinations. An operation on this scale could only have been planned and kept secret due to the overwhelming support of Gaza's two million inhabitants. It is a genuine popular uprising, undertaken against a massively armed oppressor, that evokes the example of the uprising of Jewish inmates of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 and the massive rebellion of the Warsaw working class against the German Nazi occupation in 1944.

10. The Israeli ruling class is now at the point where the reactionary perspective of securing an exclusivist Jewish state through the forcible expulsion of the Palestinians can only be maintained by mass murder and ethnic cleansing. Netanyahu has pledged to reduce the 43 kilometre-long and 10 kilometre-wide Gaza strip to "rubble," and tells its captive population to "get out of the way," knowing they cannot.

11. The brutal military response has already begun. The second day of “Operation Iron Swords” saw Israel mount attacks on 800 targets in Gaza, end its supply of electricity, stop the movement of goods in and out of the besieged enclave and pound hospitals and residential towers that are home to hundreds of defenceless civilians. Palestinians have flocked to UNRWA-run schools, seeking refuge from the aerial bombardment.

12. This is the stark reality behind the universal backing for Netanyahu’s declaration of war by the Biden administration in the United States, the leaders of all the world’s major powers and the mass media. At a time of mounting social unrest and strike activity throughout the world, the ruling class everywhere is terrified of the example that any manifestation of popular opposition will set.

13. The imperialist leaders and their media echo chamber are opposing not “terrorism,” but mass opposition to occupation and the terror inflicted daily by Israel. And they will do so up to and including supporting genocide against the Palestinians, and extending this to a regional war against Iran, Syria and Lebanon. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized:

And please no more condemnation of Israel’s “blockade” or “occupation”... the temptation at the White House will be to give Israel a week or so to respond with a free hand, and then lean on the Netanyahu government to stand down. That is always the US pattern, but it shouldn’t be this time. And if a wider war breaks out, the US will have to provide Israel with the arms and diplomatic support necessary to destroy Hamas and the military capacity of Hezbollah.

14. The media need fear no such retreat by the Biden administration. Yesterday, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed that the US will send a carrier strike group to the region, including the \$20 billion Ford aircraft carrier, and provide munitions “in the coming days.” This is not merely “solidarity” with Israel, but preparation to take part in war. In the full-throated support for Israel’s military response, not a word is said about the indiscriminate killing of Palestinians. There are no calls for restraint, let alone a ceasefire. The only concern now being expressed in imperialist circles is that the supply of munitions to Israel may lessen the supply of munitions required for the escalating US-NATO war against Russia over Ukraine.

15. In order to discredit any and all expressions of support for the Palestinian people, the imperialist governments and media inevitably hurl the accusation of “anti-Semitism.” This wretched slander is drenched with hypocrisy. When it serves their interests, the ruling elites have no problem allying themselves with Hitler apologists and neo-Nazis. The German government endorses efforts by right-wing academics to justify and whitewash the crimes of the Nazi regime. Less than two weeks ago, the entire Canadian parliament, along with Prime Minister Trudeau and the German ambassador, gave a rousing standing ovation for Yaroslav Hunka, a former member of the Nazi Waffen-SS, which participated in the massacre of Jews in the Holocaust.

16. The Netanyahu regime is capable of any crime. But it is not invincible. The bloodcurdling ferocity of its war cries cannot conceal the government’s fear and desperation. It faces not only the resistance of the Palestinian masses, but also the growing opposition of the Israeli working class. Throughout the year there have been mass

demonstrations of Israeli workers and youth against the Netanyahu government and its authoritarian measures. These demonstrations were undermined by the official leadership, which refused to raise the issue of the oppression of the Palestinians. Netanyahu’s declaration of war has also irrevocably exposed the main Zionist opposition leaders, Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid and Benny Gantz of the National Unity Party, who have predictably rallied behind the Israeli war plans. Intensive talks are underway to form a government of national unity with Netanyahu.

17. For the masses of workers and youth in Israel, it is not the Palestinians who are the enemy, but the Netanyahu government and the Israeli ruling class. The moves to overturn democratic forms of rule within Israel are connected to the extreme growth of social inequality and the intensifying assault on social programs.

18. The great historical and political paradox of the present situation is this: The Israeli working class cannot defend its own democratic rights without fighting for the democratic rights of the Palestinian people against Zionist oppression. And the Palestinians cannot achieve their aspirations for democratic rights and social equality without forging a fighting alliance with the Israeli working class. The only viable perspective is not a mythical “two-state solution,” but a unified socialist state of Jewish and Arab workers.

19. No matter how heroic the struggle of the Palestinians, the intolerable conditions they confront will not be resolved without the development of an international movement of the working class for socialism. This is no less true for the Jewish workers and youth in Israel. The danger posed by a renewed growth of anti-Semitism is very real. But it emanates not from the democratic strivings of the masses of Gaza and the occupied West Bank, but from the reactionary national chauvinism incited by capitalism and imperialism.

20. The uprising in Palestine is itself part of a developing eruption of anger and opposition in the form of mass strikes and protests throughout the world. It is this social movement, guided by a consciously socialist and revolutionary program and perspective, that must be mobilized to put an end to imperialist war, inequality and all forms of oppression. This is the perspective and program of the Trotskyist Fourth International, led by the International Committee.

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