

Palestinian uprising exposes Turkish political establishment's complicity with Israel

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The popular uprising in Gaza against the brutal Israeli occupation has quickly exposed the hypocrisy of the Turkish government of President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an and the bourgeois opposition parties, who are all complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people.

After the uprising, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's government declared war on the Palestinian people, killing hundreds and deploying 100,000 troops to the border of Gaza, to prepare a major ground invasion.

The Turkish ruling elite has reacted to this declaration of war and to indiscriminate attacks of the Israeli state on civilians by calling for "restraint" and compliance with international law. This is diametrically opposed to the attitude of the broad masses in Turkey, who sympathize with the Palestinians.

In his first statement on Saturday, Erdo?an said: "In light of events in Israel this morning, Turkey calls on all parties to exercise restraint and refrain from impulsive steps that could escalate tensions."

In his remarks on Sunday, Erdo?an claimed that "the region will attain tranquility, lasting peace and stability" based on UN resolutions and international law. However, Israel has never abided by these laws, and the imperialist powers that back Israel routinely ignore it. Nevertheless, Erdogan called for a "two-state solution."

Far from condemning Israel, Erdo?an made clear that his government was disturbed by and hostile to the uprising. Erdo?an said, "While we have always stood in solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters, we have also underscored that steps which could escalate the tension, cause further bloodshed and aggravate the problems in the region should be avoided."

Erdo?an reiterated this position last night on X/Twitter, arguing somewhat more bluntly that the Palestinians should simply peacefully adapt themselves to the Israeli regime's persecution and theft of their lands.

He wrote: "We call on the Israeli government to stop its bombardment of the Palestinian territories, especially Gaza, and on the Palestinians to stop their harassment of Israeli civilian settlements. This restrained step will also open the door to peace." In the past, Erdo?an and his government vocally condemned Israeli attacks and expressed support for the Palestinians. But now, apart from Erdo?an's calls for restraint and for talks overseen by Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, there is complete silence from the government.

"When it comes to killing, you know how to kill very well!" he shouted to then-Israeli President Shimon Peres at a panel of the World Economic Forum in Davos, in 2009, declaring that Israel was persecuting Palestine. After that, there was a crisis in diplomatic relations with Israel, and Erdo?an posed for a time as a "defender of the Palestinians."

Just two years ago, in 2021, Erdo?an went so far as to call Israel a "terrorist state," urging the "whole world, especially Islamic countries" to take "effective" action against Israeli attacks.

Despite all these tensions, Turkey, the first country in the Muslim world to recognise Israel in 1949, has always maintained trade and military ties with Tel Aviv as part of its comprehensive military-strategic alliance with US imperialism. More recently, the Turkish bourgeoisie re-normalized relations with the Netanyahu government, in line with its interests in exploiting oil and gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean.

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the head of Turkey's bourgeois opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), also declined to condemn Israel. Kılıçdaroğlu, who campaigned on a more pro-NATO stance than Erdoğan in last May's presidential election, was forced to make a statement on Saturday when journalists asked him about the issue, stating: "Palestine is a country that has been seeking its rights for a long time. We are always with the Palestinian people. We never want war. Within the framework of democratic measures, international society must intervene and ensure peace and the rights of Palestine."

There is another, even more important reason why the Erdoğan government and other bourgeois parties have been unable to give even token support to the Palestinian popular uprising. As the statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) explained, "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."

Anger among Turkish workers, who have suffered a massive decline in living standards amid rising living costs, has reached a boiling point. In recent months, opposition in different layers of the working class to these conditions has manifested itself in a new wave of wildcat strikes and a growing, international strike movement.

In previous years, after Israeli massacres, the Turkish government declared national mourning for the Palestinians and promoted anti-Israeli mass protests. It aimed to manipulate and exploit the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the Turkish population against the Zionist regime and imperialism.

In the current explosive circumstances, the Turkish ruling elites are aware of the dangers of statements of support for the oppressed masses, even if only in a token manner. The demonstrations in support of the Palestinians in the main cities of Turkey after the recent uprising were mainly carried out on the call of organizations close to the Islamist Felicity Party, which was part of the CHP-led bourgeois alliance against Erdoğan in the last elections.

The events have exposed the hypocritical approach of the Erdoğan government on Palestine, which is based on the close ties of the Turkish ruling class with Israel and imperialist powers. The official line of Ankara and

of the reactionary Arab regimes in the Middle East, who have worked for decades to improve relations with Israel at the expense of Palestinian lives and rights, is now indistinguishable.

However, Tehran, itself a target of Israel and US imperialism, did not join the chorus and made a statement of support for the uprising. This led the Israeli regime and the imperialist powers to make open threats against Iran.

The *Wall Street Journal*, which called on the Biden administration to fully support Israel's planned ground invasion into Gaza, claimed in another article that Hamas coordinated its military offensive with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran. Both US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Israeli army spokesperson Brigadier General Danny Hagari said there was no evidence to substantiate this claim, however.

Iran's foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, denied the allegation and warned: "The continuation of the Israeli regime's attacks on Gaza under the current circumstances will complicate the situation and increase the possibility of the spread of war."

As the US-led NATO powers escalate the war against Russia in Ukraine and give full support to Israel, the risk of war inflaming the entire Middle East is extremely serious.

The Sosyalist Eşitlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group) in Turkey, in line with the ICFI, strongly opposes the Israeli state's declaration of war on Palestine following the popular uprising. It calls on workers in Turkey, the Middle East and internationally to come to the defence of the Palestinians.



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