

Israel's criminal interception of the Sumud aid flotilla and the struggle to stop the Gaza genocide

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The imperialist-backed Zionist regime's illegal blocking of the Sumud flotilla from delivering aid to the genocide-stricken Palestinians in Gaza has produced a wave of global outrage. Since the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) began intercepting the 42-ship convoy late Wednesday, demonstrations have erupted in numerous European and other countries, including Spain, Switzerland, Britain, France, Germany, Brazil, Argentina, and Turkey. On Friday, more than two million workers in Italy joined a one-day general strike called by the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL).

Israel was enabled by the imperialists to carry out what amounted to piracy on the high seas. The IDF seized control of the vast quantities of aid carried by the ships and detained over 400 activists for the "crime" of assisting the Palestinians as they face extermination. Ships from the Italian and Spanish navies, which had made a show of accompanying the flotilla but in reality sought to divert it from Gaza, were carefully withdrawn or stood down to facilitate the IDF's dirty work. The activists will be deported to Europe, while Israel will withhold the aid so that Gaza's population continues to starve.

The response to this latest war crime perpetrated by Israel reveals the vast gulf that exists between the rulers in the North American and European imperialist centres and the working class. Israel's systematic denial of aid to millions, while the IDF's daily slaughter of Palestinians goes on unabated, meets with revulsion among the vast majority of the population. Meanwhile, the imperialists back the starvation of Gaza by continuing to supply Israel with military equipment and by organising brutal attacks on the spontaneous protests and strikes that have broken out in support of the flotilla.

In Italy, up to 100,000 people demonstrated in Milan as

part of the one-day strike. Ports were blocked in Genoa and Livorno. The Italian authorities deemed the strike "illegal," with far-right Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini stating, "Those who organise illegal strikes must pay for the damages."

Police violently attacked demonstrators in Barcelona, where 15,000 people gathered Thursday. On the same day, police charged demonstrators in Bologna, Italy, and over 100 were arrested in Marseilles, France after they tried to block access to an arms firm shipping equipment to Israel. On Friday, workers at the port of Piraeus, Greece walked off the job and declared in a union statement that they refused to be "cogs in a war machine."

Workers and young people are horrified by the massive crime against humanity being carried out in Gaza. In the past six weeks, some 446,000 Palestinians have been ethnically cleansed from Gaza City during the IDF's ground offensive, more than 10,000 per day, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). "In Gaza City, hundreds of thousands are encircled by shelling, drones and ground troops, denied aid, and ordered to move without safe passage. Life has been reduced to a fight for water and bread," said NRC head Jan Egeland on Thursday.

Across the enclave, over 65,000 deaths have officially been recorded since Israel's onslaught began in October 2023, but estimates suggest the real death toll is many multiples of this figure.

The Zionist regime's horrific crime, comparable to the brutality of the Nazi Holocaust of European Jewry, has taken place with the active collaboration of the imperialist powers from the beginning. Led by the US and Germany, they have supplied huge quantities of weaponry to Israel. This military hardware has been used to massacre men, women, and children indiscriminately, and to enforce the

criminal naval blockade of Gaza that has been imposed continuously since 2007.

US President Donald Trump's so-called "peace plan" would continue the imperialist powers' complicity in the genocide by establishing a colonial-style administration in Gaza. Trump stated Friday that Hamas has until Sunday to accept the total abrogation of the Palestinians' rights or "all hell" will break loose.

That is to say, Trump is preparing to give the war criminal Netanyahu the green light to escalate the genocide, all in the name of "peace." Trump and leading consultants of US imperialism have bluntly insisted on the need to clear Gaza of its inhabitants so it can function as a key part of an economic corridor—dubbed the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor—dominated by the US and its allies throughout the Middle East. The securing of this trade route, and an accommodation between Israel and the despotic Arab regimes, none of which have done anything to halt the genocide, would enable American imperialism to achieve its goal of unchallenged regional hegemony by sidelining China, Russia, and Iran.

Far from being an aberration, the imperialist powers' readiness to sanction the Gaza genocide in pursuit of their interests across the Middle East corresponds to the turn by the ruling elites in all the major powers towards world war and dictatorship. These are regimes accountable only to the financial oligarchy, which prioritises the accumulation of vast wealth at the expense of the working class of every country and its national competitors above all else.

As a new re-division of the world intensifies, like those that produced the two world wars in the last century, the financial oligarchs and their spokesmen in government will resort to anything to secure access to raw materials, markets, labour for exploitation, and geostrategic influence—including risking the very survival of humanity in a third world war fought with nuclear weapons.

The global eruption of outrage to the blocking of the Sumud flotilla, especially the strikes by workers in Italy and Greece, points to the social force capable of putting a stop to this madness: the international working class. But the working class must first establish its political independence from all of the social democratic, Stalinist, and trade union bureaucracies that have tied it to the bankrupt strategy of protest politics for the past two years. The imperialist powers will not be persuaded to change course by moral appeals. As German Chancellor Friedrich Merz admitted in June, "Israel is doing the dirty work for all of us."

Single-day strikes, like Friday's called by the CGIL, are by themselves inadequate. What workers need are new organisations under their control—rank-and-file committees—so they can plan and direct a mass movement capable of stopping the machinery of imperialist war and genocide in its tracks. Workers in logistics, transportation, and manufacturing, as well as others throughout all economic sectors, should take up this fight with the following demands:

- **An immediate halt to shipment of all weapons to Israel.**
- **The boycott of all trade and other economic activity with Israel.**
- **US, European and other corporations assisting Israel in carrying out the genocide must be indicted and prosecuted.**
- **The arrest of Israeli officials for war crimes.**
- **The end of repression of the opposition to the Gaza genocide.**
- **The immediate and unhindered access to Gaza for the supply of aid via all available land crossings and the ending of the 18-year-old naval blockade.**

These demands must be linked with the broader movement already developing in the working class internationally against austerity, war, and the destruction of jobs. The same criminal governments that funnel weapons of death to the Zionist regime are erecting dictatorial forms of rule at home to suppress popular opposition to oligarchic rule, military rearmament, and world war.

The fight to stop the genocide necessarily requires a movement committed to ousting the financial oligarchy from power and the overturn of capitalism, the root cause of imperialist barbarism that finds its most appalling expression in Gaza. This means setting out to establish workers' power to carry through the socialist transformation of society.



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