

Africa, the Palestinian Question and the Ongoing Siege of Gaza

Shared historical circumstances of colonialism and forced removals led to a longtime alliance between liberation movements in Palestine and the African continent.

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Since November 1, western-based media outlets have spent considerable time focusing on the events surrounding the limited openings of the Rafah Crossing on the border between the southern Gaza Strip and Egypt.

Since the beginning of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, the State of Israel has pledged to eliminate the Hamas resistance movement from Gaza which has been designated as the most densely populated area in the world.

In addition to the characterization of high density, Gaza has been labelled as the largest open-air prison in the world. These circumstances are not the result of decisions made by the Palestinian people or of neighboring Egypt. These draconian conditions emanate from the domestic and foreign policies imposed on the Palestinians by Tel Aviv along with their backers in the United States and their allies.

The blanket bombing of Gaza over the last three-and-one-half weeks has been accompanied by the demands of the Israeli government of **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** for Palestinians to leave the northern region of the Strip and head towards the South. Such utterances have coincided with the aerial strikes on residential neighbors, refugee camps, hospitals, mosques, civilian convoys and churches which have killed nearly 9,000 people and injured tens of thousands more.

These attacks on the people of Gaza would be designated as war crimes by the United Nations if the U.S. and other imperialist states did not maintain veto power over the administrative conduct of the Security Council. The U.S. has consistently voted against all resolutions aimed at declaring an immediate ceasefire and the

resumption of aid to meet the needs of the Palestinians in Gaza. Instead, the position of Washington is that Israel, a settler-colonial state, has the right to defend itself against the liberation movements among the Palestinians seeking to end the occupation and create an independent state.

Obviously, the orders to evacuate and the targeted bombing of civilians, are designed to force the Palestinians out of Gaza and into Egypt. Many have described the current policy of the Israeli state and the U.S. as an attempt to initiate another Al Nakba (the catastrophe), where in 1948 after the recognition by the then United Nations of the State of Israel, at least 750, 000 Palestinians were forced from their homes.

Prior to the advent of the Camp David Accords of 1979, brokered by the U.S. administration of **President Jimmy Carter**, and signed by the then Egyptian **President Anwar Sadat** and Israeli **Prime Minister Menachem Begin**, the North African state had played a leading role in supporting the liberation of Palestine and the halting of the expansionist imperatives of Tel Aviv. Although limited concessions were granted by Israel and its imperialist financiers such as the removal of Israeli troops out of the Sinai, the Zionists soon renewed the building of settlements for the Jewish population confiscating even more land than what had been taken during the wars of 1948 and 1967.

During the recent crisis, the Egyptian government has expressed reluctance to allow more than two million Palestinian refugees to cross over into its territory. There are sound reasons for this view on the part of Cairo. **The removal of the Palestinian population from Gaza into Egypt would in essence liquidate the Camp David Accord. Even if the Palestinians were forced into Egypt they would continue to organize for the reclaiming of their historic homeland.** Consequently, the Israeli Defense Forces would inevitably launch bombing operations and possibly ground incursions inside of Egypt against the Palestinians and their organizations.

African Union and Arab League Issues Joint Statement on Gaza Siege

In the aftermath of the wars cited above and the acquisition of independence by the majority of African states, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the African Union (AU), took a clear position in support of Palestine and other states which fell victim to the imperialist-instigated seizure of land by Israel. The African liberation movements formed solid alliances with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which was formed during the 1960s.



A controversial decision in early 2022 which was soon suspended, where the AU Commission Chair, **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, granted the State of Israel observer status within continental organization, drew the ire of numerous governments. A debate over the decision at the next AU Summit threatened to split the continental body. Strong objections to Mahamat's decision by Algeria and South Africa resulted in the maintenance of the existing status-quo where the State of Palestine would continue to enjoy its observer designation within the AU.

The Abraham Accords initiative fostered by the U.S. has also impacted AU member-states. The former U.S. **President Donald Trump** pressured then interim-Prime Minister of the Republic of Sudan, **Abdalla Hamdok**, to illegally recognize Tel Aviv in blatant violation of its own Israel Boycott Act of 1958. The Abraham Accords are designed to undermine international solidarity for the Palestinian movement by the signing of documents that purportedly give legitimacy to the settler-colonial project in Palestine.

However, as a result of the offensive by the Palestinian resistance forces on October 7, the AU has issued two statements which condemn the actions of the State of Israel. The first [AU statement](#) was issued on October 7 saying:

“The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, expresses his utmost concern at the outbreak of the current Israeli-Palestinian hostilities, causing grave consequences for the lives of Israeli and Palestinian civilians in particular, and for peace in the region, in general. The Chairperson wishes to recall that denial of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, particularly that of an independent and sovereign State, is the main cause of the permanent Israeli-Palestinian tension. The Chairperson urgently appeals to both parties to put an end to military hostilities and to return, without conditions, to the negotiating table to implement the principle of two States living side by side, to safeguard the interests of the Palestinian people and the Israeli people. The Chairperson further calls on the international community, and the major world powers in particular, to assume their responsibilities to impose peace and guarantee the rights of the two peoples.”

Despite the mentioning of a “two-state solution”, the AU Commission Chair placed the onus of the conflict on the refusal of Israel and the U.S. to move towards a genuine political settlement to the Palestinian question.

The failure of the Oslo Accords of 1993 revealed clearly the unwillingness on the part of the Israeli state and successive U.S. administrations to allow an independent Palestinian state.



The only real prospects for peace in Palestine center around the creation of a unitary state where full equality and self-determination for the Arab population would serve as its cornerstone. Under such a dispensation, all Palestinians and their descendants forced from the homeland since 1948 would be granted the “right of return” to fully participate in the internal politics of an independent and sovereign state.

Later, on October 15, the AU and the League of Arab States issued a joint statement on the situation in Gaza. [The statement read in part that:](#)

“The General Secretariate of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the African Union Commission (AUC) call for the immediate cessation of hostilities in Gaza, and a concerted international effort to provide basic assistance and urgent humanitarian aid to 2.2 million Palestinians. Both organizations express grave concern over the Israeli order for more than one million Palestinians to leave their homes, contrary to international law. Therefore, they call on the United Nations and the international community to stop a catastrophe from unfolding in front of us, before it is too late. They both stressed the pressing need to avoid escalation, underscoring that an Israeli invasion would undoubtedly entail a huge number of civilian casualties, including women and children, which could lead to a genocide of unprecedented proportions. Calling on the international community to live up to the shared principles of humanity and justice, both LAS and AUC underscored the imperative of collective action to immediately prevent a protracted aggression against the Palestinians.”

With specific reference to the Republic of South Africa, **President Cyril Ramaphosa** proposed the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force to Occupied Palestine as a measure to potentially calm the current crisis. However, such a force would not be effective particularly considering the disproportionate influence of the U.S. within the framework of the UN.

On a mass level, there is overwhelming support for the Palestinian cause among the peoples of Africa, Asia and throughout the world. The political implications of this solidarity even inside the imperialist states carries the potential for upending the unconditional support for Tel Aviv among its staunchest allies.

During each week since the siege of Gaza began, millions continue to demonstrate in the streets for an immediate ceasefire and the liberation of Palestine. The increasing isolation of the U.S., its allies and the State of Israel related to the Palestinian question is a welcome development within the broader movement to end imperialist war throughout the globe.

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