

After Tel Aviv Attacks, Israel Launches Police-State Crackdown

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The Israeli government deployed 600 additional combat troops to the West Bank Thursday, seizing on a shooting attack against the trendy Sarona market in Tel Aviv on the previous night to escalate its militarization drive and impose a package of police-state measures both inside Israel and in the Occupied Territories.

Hundreds of additional Israeli security forces will patrol Jerusalem beginning today. The government has revoked temporary internal passports for 83,000 Palestinians who sought to cross into Israeli sections of the city to visit relatives, including more than 200 relatives and associates of the suspected gunmen. On Thursday, Israeli courts imposed media bans on further coverage of the attack and its consequences.

In Yatta, the village of the alleged perpetrators of the Sarona attack, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) has imposed a general blockade, preventing anyone from entering or leaving, and conducted house-to-house searches. The IDF is now preparing to demolish the family homes of the assailants.

“Life in the Yatta village won’t carry on as usual. A village that has terrorists leaving from its midst will pay the price,” Assistant Defense Minister Eli Ben-Dahan told media.

Responsibility for the bloodshed in Tel Aviv lies not with the villagers of Yatta, now facing harsh reprisals at the hands of the IDF, but with the Israeli state itself, which is responding to the immense crisis of Israeli society by escalating its decades-long oppression of the Palestinian people, and preparing for mass repression against the Israeli working class.

The shooting is the latest in a wave of violence provoked by the decision, handed down by then Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon in December, not to prosecute or even detain the perpetrators of a firebombing attack against a sleeping Palestinian family in the village of Kafr Duma, despite clear evidence of involvement by the extreme nationalist Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

The attacks launched by Palestinians angered over the government’s response have been seized upon by the Netanyahu regime to implement a brutal crackdown and advance its longstanding agenda of collapsing the Palestinian authority and imposing direct military rule by the IDF over the West Bank.

Ominously, the Sarona attacks are being characterized in US and Israeli media as a “major test” for newly appointed Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, a fascistic demagogue

with well known links to Israel's ultra-nationalist milieu.

There can be little doubt that Lieberman, who assured media that he is "not going to settle for just talking," aims to use the Sarona attacks to implement new and far-reaching repressions against the Palestinian and Israeli working class.

His rise to the highest civilian office within the US-funded Israeli military apparatus is a sharp expression of the ever more fascistic trajectory of Israeli politics, and was calculated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to intimidate opposition throughout Israeli and Palestinian society.

In Israel, as in so many countries worldwide, extreme right figures are increasingly being welcomed onto the heights of power. The presidential candidacy of Donald Trump in the United States, the rise of the National Front in France and the ascension of Rodrigo Duterte to the Philippine presidency all give expressed to the same process.

The bourgeois establishment, faced with the growth of social inequality to levels not seen since the early 20th century, sees no other way of defending its privileges than the employment of the most vicious and degenerate social elements.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* noted in a July 2014 perspective, "The toxic crisis of Israeli society," written on the occasion of the burning to death of a 16-year-old Palestinian boy, Muhammad Khdeir in East Jerusalem, by a gang of Israeli ultra-nationalists:

"There is a close connection between the violence being carried out by the Israeli government against the defenseless population in Gaza and the emergence of fascistic elements within Israel capable of such bestial crimes. These events are symptomatic of an immense social and political crisis within Israel itself. The unending and escalating repression of the Palestinian people requires the mobilization of the most reactionary forces."

The pathological tendencies incubating within Israeli capitalism are so repugnant that they are openly commented upon by the more "liberal" figures within the Israeli establishment. Israeli Defense Force General Yair Golan remarked in May that present day Israel increasingly resembles Germany during the years immediately prior to the Holocaust. Former Prime Minister and IDF Chief of Staff Ehud Barak described Lieberman's appointment as "a red light for all of us regarding what's going on in the government," and warned that Netanyahu's government is "infected by the seeds of fascism."

These warning are accurate, but those making them have no solution to offer to the cancerous growth of fascistic forces in Israel and throughout world society. The drive toward openly dictatorial forms of rule and the mobilization of the far-right is the necessary outcome of the domination of society by capitalist oligarchies, a reality that is painfully evident in Israel, where a handful of billionaires rule by means of machine-gun checkpoints and endless miles of razor wire, as in every other country worldwide. Only through a unified movement of the Israeli, Palestinian and international working class, fighting for socialism on a world scale, can the return of fascism and the descent of society into barbarism be averted.

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