

Genocidal Policies Towards Gaza and Other West Asian States Have Increased Solidarity Efforts with the Palestinian People

Part II of Pan-Africanism and Palestine Solidarity, Then and Now

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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[Pan-Africanism and Palestine Solidarity, Then and Now](#)

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#), March 01, 2024

When the Al-Aqsa Storm began on October 7, 2023, the corporate and government-controlled media in the United States and European countries utilized their resources to justify the Israeli genocidal assaults on the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank.

Israeli governmental and military spokespersons were given free reign by the television, radio and newspaper platforms to denounce the Hamas Resistance Movement and the Palestinian people as a whole.

Palestinians were referred to as “animals, sub-humans, murderers and rapists.” These comments made by the Zionist officials did not receive any rebuttal by the

western media outlets.

However, despite the demonization of Palestinians and their allies in the region by numerous news agencies such as the British Broadcasting Corporations (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN), MSNBC and many others, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to denounce the blanket bombing and later ground invasion into the Gaza Strip. From New York City to the West Coast, protest actions were organized on college campuses, in business districts along with vigils outside the homes of leading Congressional figures such as Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Although the majority of African American elected officials for both the Democratic and Republican parties tripped over themselves to express support for Tel Aviv, many rank-and-file activists issued statements and joined demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinians. **President Joe Biden** was quickly labeled as “Genocide Joe” for his unconditional support for the Zionist state.

[In an article](#) published by the Black Agenda Report written by radio host Jacqueline Luqman, she emphasized:

“It shouldn’t need to be said at this late date, but imperialism and settler colonialism are the pertinent issues to address in any discussion of Zionism. The foundational issue in the ongoing and existential conflict between Israeli settlers and indigenous Palestinians, not a continued and historical hatred of Jews, as many Zionists claim. But why do we make the distinction that opposition to Zionism is not automatically opposition to Jewish people? I believe that to understand this is to understand what Zionism is and the contradictions therein. First, Zionism itself is not entirely synonymous with Judaism. Although it is true that the Zionist movement was ‘officially’ organized by Theodor Hertzl in Austria in 1896 to establish a Jewish homeland in response to the bigotry and repression against Jews, it is important to understand that Hertzl was not himself an Orthodox, or ‘observant’ Jew; he was more secular than religious.”



Biden who has described himself as a “Zionist” traveled to Tel Aviv just hours after a hospital was bombed in Gaza City killing hundreds of patients and civilians October 17. Biden in a joint press conference with Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**, apportioned blame for the Al-Ahli Hospital massacre on the Palestinian resistance absent any investigation by any outside entity. He quoted **former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir** as saying that the Jewish people had nowhere else to go other than Palestine. Biden has expressed no sympathy for the plight of the Palestinian people who have been dislocated from their traditional homeland.

Weapons were immediately sent to Israel while the Pentagon deployed an aircraft carrier to the Eastern Mediterranean to bolster the military onslaught in the Gaza Strip. U.S. military drones enhanced their surveillance over Palestine while it was revealed that the White House would bolster its already existent military base in the Negev.

Black Clergy Begins to Break with White House Calling for Ceasefire in Gaza

During late January after the annual federal holiday honoring **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** and on the eve of African American History Month, one thousand African American members of the clergy issued a statement indicating that the White House under President Biden was jeopardizing its possibility of reelection by its unconditional support for the Israeli war against the Palestinians in Gaza.

This clear message sent to Biden and the Democratic Party in general has been ignored by the administration and many within the U.S. Congress.

[In a report published by the Root](#), a news website which is geared towards the African American community, it says in relations to these political developments:

“Black faith leaders from around the country are calling for an end to the Israel-Gaza war with an urgent message to President Joe Biden and Democratic leadership that inaction could cost them Black voters. According to The New York Times, a coalition of 1,000 Black pastors has launched a multi-tiered effort on behalf of their congregations, calling for a cease-fire and the release of Palestinian hostages in Gaza. In letters, ads and meetings with the White House, the pastors reportedly put Democrats in Washington on notice about where they stand on the issue. The Black faith leaders said their congregations feel a connection between the Palestinians’ struggle in the region and their fight for civil rights in the United States, and they are growing impatient with the president’s support for Israel. According to NBC News, an overwhelming 70 percent of all voters ages 18 to 34, disapprove of the way Biden is handling the war.”

The following month of February, yet another blow to the Biden administration took place when the Board of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ), two of the oldest Black congregations in the U.S. which can trace their origins to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made its opposition to the genocidal war in Gaza public. These two denominations combined represent 4.9 million members located across the U.S. and internationally.



Official Statement

Of The Board of Bishops Of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Calling for A Ceasefire in Gaza

*“And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”
(James 3:18 NRSVUE)*

Our faith and our heritage demand a consistent stand for the value of all life. Whenever we witness acts of violence and human suffering, we have no choice but to raise our collective voices in prayer but also in protest. It is in this spirit that the Board of Bishops of the AME Zion Church joins with other Faith Leaders, including Bishops of the AME Church, our sister denomination, to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the immediate release of all remaining hostages.

We categorically condemn the abhorrent attacks on innocent Israeli civilians that were conducted by Hamas and aligned groups on October 7, 2023. Many of the victims of this act of terrorism were peace activists who were working towards harmony with the Palestinian people. The more than 1,160 people killed and approximately 200 individuals taken hostage on that tragic day were each made in the image of GOD and are precious in GOD’s sight, but so are the more than 30,000 Palestinians killed since October 7th. Some 1.7 million Palestinians, nearly 80% of the population, has been displaced resulting in a continuing humanitarian crisis of epic proportions.

The International Court of Justice has issued a ruling calling on Israel to take all measures to prevent genocide and ensure access to humanitarian aid. We believe that line has been crossed.

According to UN human rights experts, much of the population in Gaza is starving and struggling to find food, drinkable water, healthcare, and fuel. Women and children are the disproportionate victims of this humanitarian crisis. It must be ended immediately.

The International Court of Justice has issued a ruling calling on Israel to take all measures to prevent genocide and ensure access to humanitarian aid. We believe that line has been crossed. According to UN human rights experts, much of the population in Gaza is starving and struggling to find food, drinkable water, healthcare, and fuel. Women and children are the disproportionate victims of this humanitarian crisis. It must be ended immediately.

We forcefully object to the United States continuing to provide military aid to Israel without any accountability for protecting civilians in Gaza, granting access to humanitarian assistance, and ending the displacement of Palestinians.

The peoples of Israel and Palestine deserve peace and the right to live their respective lives with security and self-determination. They deserve leadership better than they currently have.

We call upon President Biden and the members of Congress to issue a call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all remaining hostages, and reviving efforts towards a two-state solution where both Israelis and Palestinians can live with security, prosperity, and peace.

United in both prayer and protest for a just peace; we are the Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church - The Freedom Church:

Bishop George D. Crenshaw,
President of the Board of Bishops
Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Senior Bishop
Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.
Bishop Dennis V. Proctor
Bishop Mildred B. Hines (Deceased)

Bishop W. Darin Moore
Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr.
Bishop Hilliard Dogbe
Bishop Uduak Effiong
Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr.
Bishop Eric Leake

Bishop Joseph Johnson (Retired)
Bishop Marshall H. Strickland (Retired)
Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett, Jr. (Retired)
Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr. (Retired)
Bishop Samuel Chuka Ekemam, Sr. (Retired)
Bishop Warren Matthew Brown (Retired)
Bishop George Edward Battle, Jr. (Retired)

DONE THIS THE 27TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2024

AMEZ official statement calling for ceasefire in Gaza

[The official statement](#) issued by the AMEZ Church emphasized:

“Our faith and our heritage demand a consistent stand for the value of all life. Whenever we witness acts of violence and human suffering, we have no choice but to raise our collective voices in prayer but also in protest. It is in this spirit that the Board of Bishops of the A.M.E. Zion Church joins with other Faith Leaders, including Bishops of the A.M.E. Church, our sister denomination, to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza

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The International Court of Justice has issued a ruling calling on Israel to take all measures to prevent genocide and ensure access to humanitarian aid. We believe that the line has been crossed. According to UN human rights experts, much of the population in Gaza is starving and struggling to find food, drinkable water, healthcare, and fuel. Women and children are the disproportionate victims of this humanitarian crisis. It must be ended immediately.

Undoubtedly, the bulk of the AME and AMEZ members along with other clergy in opposition to the Biden policy on Palestine are participants in electoral politics as consistent voters. These events and other policy decisions of the Biden White House could easily lead to the Democratic Party losing control of the executive branch as well as the Senate.

The lawsuit filed by the African National Congress (ANC) government in the Republic of South Africa against the Israeli regime at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has drawn support worldwide. Former ANC leader and the first democratically elected President Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) stated repeatedly that the people of South Africa cannot be completely liberated until the Palestinians are freed.

As the struggle against apartheid in South Africa during the 1980s was an issue which mobilized millions around the globe, the same situation is developing in regard to the Free Palestine movement. African Americans and peoples of African descent will continue to play a critical role in these efforts.

Electoral Challenge Through the Uncommitted Primary Vote

In the state of Michigan, activists led by young people within the Arab American community launched the “Abandon Biden” and “Listen to Michigan” campaigns. This protest action operating in the electoral arena encouraged voters in the primary to mark “uncommitted” as a rebuke of the White House policy on Palestine.

The call resulted in 101,000 voters casting their ballots as “uncommitted” sending a powerful message to the Democratic Party and the Biden administration. Michigan is considered a “swing state” where, as in 2016, its loss due to the negligence of the Hillary Clinton for president campaign, resulted in the victory of Donald Trump.

A mass rally held at the Dearborn Manor on February 25 by the Michigan Task Force for Palestine featured a panel composed of Maureen Taylor of the Welfare Rights Organization in the state as the chair; Nina Turner, former State Senator from Ohio; Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud; Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib; Gabriela Santiago-Romero of the Detroit City Council; Atty. Julie Hurwitz of Jewish Voice for Peace and the National Lawyers Guild; Rev. Ed Rowe, Pastor Emeritus of the Central United Methodist Church; Rev. Robert Smith, Jr., Senior Pastor of the Historic New Bethel Baptist Church; and Jay Makled, Financial Secretary of the UAW Local 600. Such an alliance of diverse forces is reflective of the growing support for not only a ceasefire in Gaza it represents a repudiation of the longstanding U.S. policy towards Palestine.



Dearborn rally for Palestine chaired by MWRO Chair Maureen Taylor, Feb. 25, 2024

Biden's poor showing in recent polls indicates that his reelection is by no means certain. African Americans and their progressive leaders will continue to play an important role in the Palestine solidarity movement both inside the U.S. and around the world.

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Featured image: Detroit Palestine solidarity march mobilized thousands on Oct. 28, 2024 / All images in this article are from the author

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