

Human Rights Violations in Occupied Palestine

The United Nations Assessment

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, March 20, 2008

20 March 2008

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity, United Nations](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

John Dugard is The UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on Palestine and a rare public official. In January 2008, he assessed the situation in Occupied Palestine (OPT). It was detailed, inclusive and honest. This article discusses his findings in-depth. Most of them have been widely reported, but they bear repeating nonetheless. It's because, in this instance, they're from an agency of the 192 member states world body. It's hoped that source highlights their importance and adds to their credibility.

From September 25 to October 1, 2007, Dugard visited Gaza, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, Nablus, Qalqiliya and the Jordan valley and held extensive meetings with: Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, UN agencies, Palestinian and Jordanian officials, academics, businessmen, and independent interlocutors. He also went to Gazan factories and West Bank checkpoints and settlements and saw firsthand the situation on the ground.

For his efforts, Dugard is both praised and criticized. Extremists even condemn him. It's the price he and others pay for assessing conditions honestly. He addressed his critics and what they cite:

— that his reports are repetitious; he agrees because Israel repeats the same human rights and humanitarian law violations and has done it for over 40 years of occupation. They feature: "(Illegal) settlements, checkpoints, demolition of houses, torture, closure of crossings and military incursions...." More recently, add the separation wall (since 2003), "sonic booms, (stepped up) targeted killings, (using) Palestinians as human shields, and the humanitarian crisis" in Gaza since Hamas was democratically elected in January 2006.

— that he fails to address "terrorism;" he calls it a "scourge" with violations by both sides but with a huge disproportionate difference; for their part, Palestinians are conducting a national liberation struggle "against colonialism, apartheid (and) military occupation." He doesn't condone rocket attacks or suicide bombings but compares them historically to earlier "acts of terror" under military occupation - against the Nazis, South Africa in Namibia and in pre-1948 Mandate Palestine by Jewish terrorist groups in which two future Israeli prime ministers were leaders. Violence will continue as long as the Territories are occupied and Israel treats the population repressively; Israel understands this, yet continues its harshness, and does so for strategic reasons.

— that he fails to address Palestinian human rights violations; he cites the occupation that causes them on both sides and stopping them requires it "be brought to a speedy end;" further, his Special Rapporteur mandate is to report on the occupier's violations, not the people occupied, and he's doing his job.

Forty Years of Occupation

For Palestinians, occupation is their core issue and the reason violence continues. In its 2004 Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the International Court of Justice (ICJ or World Court) held the following: that Palestine (including East Jerusalem) “remain occupied territories and Israel has continued to have the status of occupying Power.” This requires its government to adhere to the Fourth Geneva Convention protection of civilians in time of war, and to the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It’s further argued that 40 years in charge increased Israel’s obligations. Its occupation now is more unlawful because it’s continued to violate international laws all this time.

The Occupation of Gaza

Dugard assessed conditions in Gaza in its earliest days under siege, excluding the intensified harshness in recent months.

He discounted the notion that Ariel Sharon’s 2005 “evacuation” changed anything. On September 19, 2007, however, it changed plenty when Israel declared Gaza a “hostile territory,” Secretary of State Rice concurred, and fuel, electricity and other essential supplies and services were severely cut.

Under international law, Dugard asserts that “effective control” determines whether a territory is occupied, not a physical presence on the ground. International law also requires an occupier to guarantee the civilian population’s welfare. By this standard, Israel violates its obligation, Gaza’s occupation never ended, and pretending otherwise is a charade. The following factors reflect conditions on the ground:

- Israel maintains control of Gaza’s six land crossings – Erez into Israel; Rafah into Egypt in violation of the November 2005 negotiated Agreement on Movement and Access between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel – brokered by the US, EU and the international community’s envoy for Gaza’s disengagement; Karmi that’s the main access for goods into the Territory; Karem Shalom and Sufa for goods as well and one other; the effects on Gazans have been “disastrous;”
- Israeli control through military incursions, “rocket attacks and sonic booms,” and declaring sections of Gaza “no-go” zones where residents entering will be shot;
- control of Gaza’s airspace and territorial waters; and
- control of the Palestinian Population Registry; it allows Israel to decide through a system of identity cards – who’s a Palestinian, who resides in Gaza and the West Bank, and who may or may not enter or leave either Territory.

Israeli Actions Against Gaza and Their Consequences

Since dismantling Gaza’s settlements in 2005, Israel undertook a number of actions that are repressive and violate international law:

A. Military action

- even before the latest invasion and mass-killings, Dugard reported through late last year

- 290 Gaza killings of which at least one-third were civilians; on September 26 when he was in Gaza, IDF missiles killed 12 Palestinians; after the November 27 Annapolis meeting, over 70 Palestinians were killed (up to an unmentioned date), including eight in a “major military operation in southern Gaza” the day before the Annapolis session began.

— Dugard noted the frequency of targeted killings and other IDF international law violations; he further stated that Israeli security forces killed 668 Palestinians in Gaza in the “past two years (2006 and 2007)” and over half of them (359) were uninvolved in hostilities; 126 were minors; 361 were by missile attacks; and 29 were targeted killings; during the same period, Palestinian rockets killed four Israeli civilians and injured “hundreds;” four Israeli security forces were also killed.

B. Closure of crossings

An additional effect was to strand 6000 Palestinians on the Egyptian side with inadequate accommodations and facilities; they were denied their right to return home, and, as a result, 30 people died from neglect or inability to treat illness.

C. Reducing fuel and electricity

This action followed the September 19 declaration of Gaza as a “hostile territory;” ten Israeli and Palestinian NGOs petitioned Israel’s High Court to halt the action on humanitarian grounds and because it constitutes collective punishment against innocent civilians; nonetheless, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the action, and by last October, supplies were cut by more than half; since then, they continue being drastically reduced.

D. Terminating banking facilities

After September 19, the two Israeli commercial banks in Gaza (Bank Hapoalim and Discount Bank) suspended operations in the Territory; henceforth, they refused to clear checks, handle cash transfers or supply Israeli shekels that’s the official Occupied Territory (OPT) currency; it effectively halted Gaza’s monetary system.

E. Gaza’s humanitarian crisis

All the above actions produced a devastating humanitarian crisis, Dugard covered it through late last year, and conditions continue deteriorating:

1. Food

As of last year, over 80% of Gazans needed food aid – from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the World Food Program (WFP); what’s available is very basic and excludes fruits, vegetables, meat and fish; the aid is vital but extremely inadequate.

2. Unemployment and poverty

Border closures prevent exports and imports; the result is Gazan factories closed, construction halted and farm output was also affected; farmers have no income, 65,000 factory jobs were lost as well as 121,000 in construction-related projects; the Palestinian Federation of Industries reported 95% of Gaza’s industry was shuttered; Israel also banned coastal fishing throwing Palestinian fishermen out of work and cutting off a vital food source;

in addition, without resources, Gaza City's municipal employees haven't been paid since March 2007; over 80% of Gazans live below the official poverty line, and conditions are dire and worsening.

3. Health care

Here, too, the situation is dire; everything is in short supply or unavailable, including 91 "key" drugs; seriously ill patients are prohibited from leaving the Territory (with few exceptions) for care unavailable inside; the World Health Organization said that restrictions caused an increasing number of patients to die; the Israeli NGO, Physicians for Human Rights, reported 44 deaths since June 2007, and in November alone, 13 Palestinians died; also in November, Gazan hospitals couldn't perform surgery because Israel prevented the importation of anesthetics.

4. Education

Gazan children in UNRWA schools "lag behind refugee children elsewhere;" in addition, students are prevented from studying abroad, and in November 670 of them were denied permission for foreign study, including six Fulbright scholars.

5. Fuel, energy and water

Gaza depends largely on Israel for supply; with restrictions, power outages are frequent, and basic facilities like hospitals are severely hampered; insufficient power for pumping also affects the water supply; as a result, 210,000 people only have access to it one or two hours a day; sewage is also a major problem; facilities are in disrepair and overflows are frequent and cause severe potential health problems; Dugard called the situation "catastrophic" under Israel-imposed restrictions.

F. Legal consequences of Israel's actions

Israel calls its attacks defensive, but it's not how Dugard sees them; he questions their proportionality, the IDF's failure to distinguish between military and civilian targets, and their directly attacking civilians to inflict collective punishment; he further states: "It is highly arguable that Israel has violated the most fundamental rules of international humanitarian law, which constitutes war crimes in terms of Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 85 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949....relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts."

Further, the siege "violates a whole range of obligations under both human rights and humanitarian law," including the right of everyone to "an adequate standard of living for himself and his family (that includes) adequate food, clothing and housing;" above all, "Israel has violated the prohibition on collective punishment of an occupied people" as covered in Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention; its government is guilty of using "indiscriminate and excessive....force against civilians and civilian objects" as well as denying all sorts of freedoms and essential needs.

Gaza is "no ordinary state;" It's "occupied territory in whose well-being all States have an interest....are required to promote (and are obliged) to ensure compliance by Israel (in accordance with) international humanitarian law....;" failure to do so makes other states complicit in the siege; they and Israel also violate international law.

Human Rights in the West Bank and Jerusalem

In the Fatah-controlled West Bank, Israel made “some (modest) gestures of rapprochement,” but did nothing to dismantle the occupation’s infrastructure. On the contrary, it continues to expand “the instruments that most seriously violate human rights – military incursions, settlements, the separation wall, (free movement) restrictions, the Judaization of Jerusalem, and the demolition of houses.”

A. Military incursions

Since June 2007, they’ve intensified in the West Bank; in November alone, the IDF conducted 786 raids, killed one person (plus at least two others he didn’t report), injured 67 others and made 398 arrests; in addition, public and private properties were damaged; curfews were imposed, and “countless innocent civilians” were terrorized by security forces and dogs; in all cases, these actions violate international laws that prohibit them.

B. Settlements and settlers

By Dugard’s count, there are 149 settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and despite promises to freeze their growth, the settler population increased by 63% since 1993 to its present (year end) size of 460,000. In addition, by late last year, new construction was under way in 88 settlements, and their average growth is 4.5% compared to 1.5% inside Israel. An additional 105 “outposts” are also in place – informal structures that precede new settlement activity that are unauthorized but still funded by government ministries. In the so-called “road map,” Israel indicated it would dismantle all outposts but never did, and at year end more than 38% of the West Bank consisted of settlements, outposts, military areas, nature reserves off limits to Palestinians, and connecting roads for Jews only.

In addition, under Article 49, paragraph 6 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, settlements are illegal. The International Court of Justice’s (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on the construction of the separation wall affirmed it. Dugard refers to “Israel’s contempt for international law,” and its actions confirm it. In December, shortly after the Annapolis meeting, Tel Aviv announced plans for 307 new apartments in the Har Homa settlement, but there’s more as well – an extensive new “E1” project with 3500 apartments, 10 hotels and an industrial park for 14,500 settlers near Maale Adumin. To complete it, Israel expropriated Palestinian land in Abu Dis, Sawareh, Nabi Moussa and al-Khan al-Ahmar for an alternate Palestinian road to Jericho that frees the area for “E1.”

The road is devious. It’s part of a larger scheme to replace territorial contiguity with “transportational contiguity” that will work like this – two alternate road and tunnel networks will be constructed, one connecting Palestinian cantons, the other for Jews only, and expropriated Palestinian land will be used for the project.

C. Checkpoints, roadblocks and permits that obstruct free movement

Dugard calls their existence “disastrous....for both personal life and the (Palestinian) economy.” In the West Bank, he cites 561 “obstacles to (free) movement.” They comprise over 80 manned checkpoints and much more:

- 476 unmanned locked gates;
- earth mounds;

- concrete blocks;
- ditches; and
- thousands of temporary checkpoints, called flying checkpoints, for limited periods that are sometimes only hours. In November 2007, there were 429 of them in the West Bank.

Palestinian travel is also restricted or prohibited with permits (like South Africa's "pass laws") required for transit between the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These restrictions violate Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the ICJ held that Israel is bound by this law in the OPT. Israel, however, cites "security" for having them, but Dugard states this "is difficult to accept." A more likely reason is they "serve the convenience of settlers, to facilitate (their) travel and to impress upon the Palestinian people the power and presence of the occupier."

Checkpoints humiliate Palestinians on their own land. They deepen hostility, and "do more to create insecurity than to achieve security." Further, Yedioth Ahronoth (Israel's largest circulation newspaper) reports that one-fourth or more of all IDF soldiers say they witnessed abuse against Palestinian civilians at checkpoints.

D. The wall

Dugard bluntly states that: "The wall that Israel is....building....is clearly illegal." The ICJ affirmed it and ruled that Israel is obligated to discontinue construction and dismantle sections already built. Israel ignores the ruling but "abandoned its claim that the wall is (for) security." It now concedes that one of its main purposes is to "include settlements within Israel."

Its planned length is 721 kilometers. Ten percent or more of it is on confiscated Palestinian land. Through late last year, 59% was completed, 200 kilometers were built after the ICJ ruling, and when construction is finished around "60,000 West Bank Palestinians (in) 42 villages and towns will reside in the closed zone between the wall and the Green Line" separating Israel from Palestine. Moreover, its route may be altered to include up to 13% of Palestinian land, including "many of the West Bank's valuable water resources and its richest agricultural lands."

The consequences for Palestinians are devastating. They're cut off from work, schools, universities, medical facilities, and their overall "community life is seriously fragmented." Most often, farmers on the wrong side of the wall can't get permits to reach their land, harvest their crops or graze their animals.

In addition, the opening and closing of gates (in the wall) is "highly restrictive." The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) surveyed 67 communities near its location. It showed only 19 gates were open to Palestinians for daily or year round use, but it's worse than that. Thousands of Palestinians have been displaced, and the IDF abuses and humiliates Palestinians able to enter or leave the closed zone.

Dugard cites the village of Jayyus. He was there on September 30 and saw what their people endure:

- the wall separates its 3200 residents from their farmland;

- 68% of the village’s agricultural land and its six wells are in the closed zone between the wall and the Green Line and are off limits without a visitor’s permit;
- scores of greenhouses are in the closed zone; they produce tomatoes, cucumbers and sweet peppers that need daily irrigation; and
- only 40% of Jaiyyus’ residents have permits to access their farms, and gate opening times are limited and arbitrary; as a result, by August 2004 (one year after the wall’s construction) local fruit and vegetable production fell from seven to four million kilograms. Since then, things have deteriorated further.

Within the Jerusalem Governorate (one of 16 Palestinian Governorates in the West Bank), the wall covers 168 kilometers. In the Jerusalem municipality, many Palestinian villages are outside the wall and separated from the city. In places like Abu Dis and elsewhere, the wall runs through Palestinian communities, separating neighbors and families. Overall, it cuts off about 25% of the 253,000 East Jerusalem Palestinians. They can only enter the city through checkpoints and are thus impeded from accessing hospitals, schools, universities, work and holy sites, including the Al Aqsa Mosque.

E. House demolitions

Home demolitions are a “regular feature” of Israel’s occupation for the following claimed reasons – military necessity, punishment, and failure to obtain a building permit. Dugard condemns them as “discriminatory” actions “to demonstrate the power of the occupier over the occupied,” and here’s what Palestinians are up against.

In East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank (comprising 60% of the Territory), permits must be obtained for construction. But they’re hard to get, bureaucratic procedures for them are cumbersome, and in practice few are granted. Palestinians need homes, so they build them anyway, and it gets them in trouble. Throughout the Territory, Arab structures are demolished but not Jewish ones, and what’s affected are homes, schools, clinics and mosques on the grounds that permits weren’t obtained.

The numbers are revealing. For the two year period up to May 2007, 354 Palestinian structures were destroyed as well as those of Bedouin communities. One was the Jordan Valley Al Hadidiya village that’s regularly targeted for removal with a committed aim – to cleanse the area for expanded Roi, Bega’ot and Hamda Jewish settlements at the expense of its Arab residents. In September 2007, the IDF hit it hard. It destroyed the structures of about 200 families in violation of Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention that prohibits the destruction of personal property “except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.” That wasn’t the case in this instance. Nor was it when homes were destroyed in the Qalqiliya Naqar neighborhood the previous month, or in nearly every other case of indiscriminate demolition.

F. Humanitarian situation

Dugard cites the dire effects on “the economy, health, education, family life and (overall) standard of living (from) the wall (construction), expansion of settlements, restrictions on (free) movement, house demolitions and (repeated) military incursions.” And since Hamas’ 2006 election, the situation seriously deteriorated. Through year end 2007, West Bank humanitarian conditions showed no material improvement even under Fatah control.

Palestinian resources are inadequate; the occupation continues; human rights violations are commonplace; poverty and unemployment “are at their highest levels ever;” military incursions undermine health, education and general welfare; the wall and checkpoints are repressive; and the overall “social fabric of society is threatened.”

G. Conclusion

The situation in the West Bank isn't as dire as in Gaza, but it's just “a matter of degree” under conditions of collective punishment. Throughout the OPT, Israel violates international law, and it must be held accountable for its actions.

Israel's Treatment of Arrested Persons and Convicted Prisoners

Dugard estimates since 1967 over 700,000 Palestinians have been imprisoned. Through year end 2007, Israelis held 11,000 or more prisoners, including “376 children, 118 women, (and) 44 Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) members.” In addition, there are “some 800 (or more) ‘administrative detainees’ ” (other estimates place the figure much higher) against whom no charges were made and who are held for renewable six month periods. Israel calls them “terrorists.” Palestinians say they're “political prisoners who have committed crimes against” an illegal occupation.

A. Arrested and detained persons

Prisoners are subjected to “humiliating and degrading treatment.” They're stripped, interrogated, beaten, tortured and deprived of their basic needs. The treatment of children is equally disturbing, according to the Palestine Section of Defence for Children International. It states that children are detained for between eight to 21 days before being brought to court. They're denied the presence of a parent or lawyer during interrogation, cursed, threatened, beaten and kept in solitary confinement throughout their ordeal. This type treatment terrifies adults. Imagine what it does to young children.

B. Convicted prisoners and administrative detainees

Prison conditions are harsh. Many prisoners are housed in tents that are extremely hot in summer and cold in winter. Overcrowding is serious, food is poor and anaemia among prisoners is common. This violates the letter and spirit of various Fourth Geneva Convention provisions that govern how an Occupying Power must treat prisoners.

The role of prison medical doctors must also be questioned. They witness inhumane treatment – wounds, swollen limbs, signs of violence – but remain silent and ignore the torture taking place. This raises serious ethical questions about their behavior.

Self-Determination

This is a legal and humanitarian right that's recognized by the Security Council, General Assembly, ICJ and even Israel. It applies to everyone, but for nearly 60 years, it's been denied in Occupied Palestine. It's even worse since the West Bank and Gaza were separated and are under different authorities.

Dugard stated that it's “a matter of deep concern (to him that he sees) no immediate prospect of reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah.” He said it should also concern the Quartet (the US, Russia, EU and UN) and other international institutions, but what matters

most is how they show support. It should not be for one faction over another. It should reconcile differences between both sides and unite them for self-determination within the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. So far, however, no efforts are being made, and divisive policies are being pursued that support one side while isolating the other.

International Law, the International Court of Justice, the Quartet and the UN

On December 8, 2003, the General Assembly asked the ICJ for an advisory opinion on Israel's separation wall. The Court's ruling "answered many legal questions that have been raised over the past 40 years." Principally, they were as follows:

- Palestinians are entitled to self-determination; the wall's construction violates it;
- Israel is legally required to comply with Fourth Geneva Convention provisions;
- under Geneva's Article 49 (6), settlements are illegal;
- Israel is required to abide by international human rights law in the OPT;
- Israel's closed zone (between the wall and Green Line) violates Palestinians' free movement rights and their right to work, health, education and an adequate standard of living;
- destroying property for the wall's construction (including in and around East Jerusalem) violates international law; Israel must halt construction, dismantle portions built and make reparations for the damage done;
- all UN member states are legally obliged to recognize Israel's non-compliance with Fourth Geneva Convention provisions;
- the UN (especially General Assembly and Security Council) should address actions required to end the illegal situation resulting from the wall's construction;
- on July 20, 2004, the General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted Resolution ES-10/15; it called for Israel to comply with the ICJ's Advisory Opinion;
- since 2004, the Security Council ignored the Advisory Opinion while the General Assembly and Human Rights Council affirmed it; inaction by the Security Council is because the US continues to block it in support of Israel and also prevents the Quartet from implementing the Opinion; as a result, the Quartet never acknowledged it ;
- the ICJ's Advisory Opinion is "an authoritative statement of the applicable law," but it's not legally binding on States; however, the ICJ is the UN's judicial organ, and the General Assembly overwhelmingly approved the Opinion; it's thus now UN law and the Secretary-General or his representative is obliged to enforce it - to ensure that member States are in compliance; and
- for over 40 years, UN member States, its political organs and individuals have accused Israel of "consistent, systematic and gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the OPT;" in 2004, the ICJ agreed; it stated these violations can't be justified on grounds of self-defense or necessity; the UN is obligated to act; failure to do so "brings the very commitment of the United Nations to human rights into question."

Peace Talks

Dugard noted that it's not within his mandate to address what's "essentially a political process," except as it relates to human rights. On that basis, he stated that Oslo failed the Palestinian people by paying inadequate attention to international law and human rights issues. He hoped the Annapolis process would correct this, but early indications suggest otherwise.

A joint November 27 statement highlighted the problem. It said participants would negotiate on the 2003 "road map," not on the ICJ's Advisory Opinion that detailed Israel's human rights violations. Any hope for peace, however, requires they be addressed and resolved, but so far they're being ignored.

Dugard calls the "road map" inappropriate and unhelpful for the following reasons:

- it's outdated: it ignores ICJ's Advisory Opinion; doesn't recognize Hamas' democratic election; doesn't address Israel's Gaza withdrawal; or the June 2007 Gaza and West Bank separation;
- Israel attached 14 reservations to the "road map" that call into question its commitment; and
- Israel's language shows a further lack of commitment by stating the initiative is "a performance-based and goal driven roadmap."

International law under Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention is one of many serious matters at issue. It affirms that persons under occupation retain their legal rights under any agreement "between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power (and) any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory." This means that any recognition of Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine is illegal under international law. It also highlights the dangers of negotiations between unequals with Israelis controlling everything and Palestinians at their mercy.

An equitable agreement is impossible under these conditions, and Dugard states the only way negotiations should proceed. They must take place "within a normative framework, with the guiding norms to be found in international law, particularly international humanitarian and human rights law, the (ICJ) Advisory Opinion, and Security Council resolutions." The effort cannot proceed as an exercise in "political horse-trading." Doing so guarantees failure, but more is at stake as well.

Creating a Palestinian state won't heal 60 years of conflict that's gone all Israel's way and inflicted great harm and suffering on the Palestinian people. At some point, real peace is only possible if a supreme effort is made toward true reconciliation between the two sides. That entails addressing events, actions and past sufferings fully and honestly. Dugard suggests a South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission for an open airing by both sides. Unless it happens in good faith, tensions will remain and peace won't be possible. Up to now, it appears Israel wants it that way.

A Final Comment

Ahead of Israel's 60th anniversary and worldwide commemoration events, the Canada - Palestine Support Network (CanPalNet) will run one or more full-page ads in protest. It's

headlined: "We Cannot Celebrate," and below is the text.

"Around the world, plans are being made to mount major celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. But this year also marks 60 years since 750,000 Palestinians were brutally expelled from their homeland in what they refer to as the Nakba or "catastrophe." Given this history, and the deepening conflict in the region today, we believe there are no grounds for celebration.

We cannot celebrate

while Israel starves and bombs the people of Gaza.

We cannot celebrate

while Israel extends its apartheid wall.

We cannot celebrate

while Israel builds Jewish only settlements on roads on stolen Palestinian lands.

We cannot celebrate

while Israel continues to violate United Nations Resolution 194, refusing to let Palestinians return to their homes.

We cannot celebrate

while Israel continues to promote wars and expand its nuclear arsenal.

We cannot celebrate

as long as the policies of Israel's leaders fuel a conflict in which innocent lives on both sides are lost.

We can and will continue our efforts to end these injustices, upholding international law, human rights and United Nations resolutions. This is the only road map to peace."

Global Research Associate Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to The Global Research News Hour on RepublicBroadcasting.org Mondays from 11AM to 1PM US Central time for cutting-edge discussions of world and national topics with distinguished guests.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=8355>

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Stephen Lendman](#), Global Research, 2008

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca