

Israel Must Be Held Accountable For Its International Law Violations

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On June 25, the Palestinians responded to continued, unrelenting and unjustifiable Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) attacks against them by striking at an Israeli military post near Kerem Shalom crossing, southeast of Rafah, killing two IDF soldiers, injuring several others, and capturing (not “kidnapping”) a third. It set off a swift and deadly IDF response of daily killings and mass destruction in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) against defenseless Palestinians helpless in the face of the relentless IDF onslaught.

Events since escalated into a mass conflagration when Hezbollah resistance fighters captured (again, not “kidnapped”) two IDF soldiers who apparently illegally crossed the UN-monitored “blue line” into Lebanon as they’ve routinely done almost daily after withdrawing from the country in May, 2000. Again the IDF responded with overwhelming force by air and with a ground invasion in the south causing vast destruction over a wide area throughout the country including in Beirut, Tyre and Sidon (Lebanon’s three largest cities) and now extending to the north in Christian areas and up to the Syria-Lebanon border.

This scorched-earth blitzkrieg, primarily and willfully aimed at civilian targets of all types devastated Lebanon’s major ports, the Beirut International Airport, much of the country’s essential infrastructure including over 70 bridges, dozens of key roads, all the nation’s radars, electrical power plants, 20 or more gas and fuel stations and the Jiyeh power utility plant south of Beirut spilling about 14,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil (over one-third the size of the Exxon-Valdez spill) along over 90 miles of Lebanon’s and Syria’s Mediterranean Sea coast posing a serious threat to biodiversity as well as a heightened risk of cancer because this type fuel oil contains benzene which is categorized as a Class 1 carcinogen. Israel also imposed a land, sea and air siege on the country resulting in severe shortages of essential food, medical supplies, fuel and other necessities, and the IDF has bombed factories (including for food), warehouses, dams, civil defense centers, schools, radio and TV stations, mosques, churches, hospitals, ambulances, humanitarian aid convoys, the al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp at Sidon, an orphanage and funeral on August 8, and thousands of civilian homes – in total causing damage exceeding \$2 billion and rising daily. The outrageous stonewalling US-France proposed UN Security Council resolution on the conflict is nothing more than a mandate to “give war a chance” and let Israel finish the slaughter and mass destruction it’s now inflicting in violation of international laws as will be explained below.

It remains to be seen what final UN Security Council action will actually occur as strong Lebanese government and Arab League opposition to the proposed resolution now has

made France decide to back down and support an alternate plan requiring a full IDF withdrawal from south Lebanon. In reversing itself, France has now split with the US which still supports the original and unacceptable joint proposal supporting Israel's right to continue its assault.

That month-long assault also deliberately targeted and killed many hundreds of innocent Lebanese civilians (likely at least double the officially reported number that now exceeds 1,000), injured thousands more (many seriously), displaced as many as one million others (about one-fourth of the country's total four million population) including over 300,000 children fleeing north for their lives and being targeted and attacked in their cars as they do, and created a vast humanitarian crisis in the country as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) still under attack and occupation since June 25. Both assaults are so ferocious, it's clear they're intended to destroy Lebanon as a nation to prevent it from ever functioning again as it once did as well as forever ending the Palestinians' dream of ever having a viable sovereign state of their own. As will be discussed below, they also are intended to destroy the democratically elected Hamas government in the OPT and legitimate Hezbollah resistance that now has the overwhelming support of over 85% of the Lebanese people including most Maronite and other Christians, the majority Sunni and Shia Muslims that together comprise about two-thirds of the population, and Lebanon's once pro-Western Prime Minister Fuad Sinora. They all are now united against their common enemies - Israel and their complicit US ally.

The Assault on the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) Now Under the Radar

While world attention focuses on Lebanon, the daily killings and destruction go on unabated and now under the radar in the OPT. Since the unwarranted assault began against the defenseless Palestinians on June 25, Israel, against two countries, has deliberately and flagrantly violated international law stipulated in the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War including article 33 under it that prohibits reprisals against protected persons and property. Below is an account of what the IDF has done as of early August in the OPT in an undisguised act of illegal collective punishment:

-The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reports 200 Palestinians, mostly civilians, including about 44 children and at least 10 women have been killed through August 9. The Israeli human rights monitoring group B'Tselem reports the number killed in July in Gaza alone to be 163, and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society reports 210 Gaza and West Bank killings from July 1 through August 7. At least 6 of those killed were executed extra-judicially.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights on the ground in the OPT also reports:

-The IDF wounded nearly 800 Palestinian civilians (many seriously), including 218 children and 24 women through August 9.

-It fires hundreds of artillery shells and many dozens of air-to-surface missiles into the OPT daily against civilian and so-called military targets that are usually just ordinary buildings Israel without evidence claims are occupied by "militants."

-It conducts mock air raids, and its aircraft (US made and supplied advanced F-16 fighter jets) routinely break the sound barrier (often late at night) at low altitudes deliberately inflicting eardrum shattering and terrifying sonic booms against helpless people.

-It forced many families to leave or evacuate their homes in Rafah, Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia and elsewhere, some of them being warned in Gaza by phone their homes would be attacked.

-It made dozens of incursions into OPT areas killing civilians, destroying agricultural land, buildings, homes and infrastructure and expropriating land Israel intends to keep.

— It imposed a tightened seige throughout the OPT including curfews, greatly restricting movement and the Palestinians' access to food, fuel, medical attention and other essential goods and services and thus created a humanitarian disaster that's becoming worse.

-It destroyed the electricity plant providing about 45% of the electricity needs of the Gaza Strip and also repeatedly attacks electricity networks and transmitters in Gaza.

-It destroyed the main pipe providing water for the Nusairat and al-Boreij refugee camps.

-It destroyed 6 important bridges linking Gaza City with central Gaza thus preventing transportation from moving normally to provide essential goods and other needs to the people.

-It destroyed a number of key roads in Gaza.

-It destroyed the buildings of the Palestinian Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, National economy and government compound in Nablus as well as the office of the Palestinian Prime Minister.

-It uprooted many hundreds of donums of vital agricultural land and destroyed many dozens of homes used only as residences.

-Israel continued building its annexation/separation wall throughout this period and razed and expropriated Palestinian land in al-Sawhra as-Gharbiya village, east of Jerusalem, to complete one section of it in that area. It also razed other agricultural land in Jourat al-Shama village, south of Bethlehem, to construct another section southeast of "Efrat" settlement.

-The IDF arrested hundreds of Palestinian civilians and is holding them without charge. It also arrested eight government ministers, 26 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and now on August 6 besieged the home of Dr. Aziz Dweik, PLC Speaker, forced him to surrender and placed him under detention without charge. All this is part of an illegal attempt to undermine and destroy the democratically elected Hamas government because Israel can't control and co-opt it to serve its interests - meaning act as its enforcer and not as a legitimate government. Also, on August 6, unknown masked assassins shot and killed Major Mohammed Mousa al-Mousah, chief of Palestinian Military Intelligence, in the northern Gaza Strip.

Israel's Assaults on Lebanon and the OPT Were Planned Long Before They Began

It's now known that both Israeli assaults were jointly planned many months earlier with their US allies that aided the Israelis with their support, funding, supply and replenishment of weapons as needed, and satellite tracking and intelligence information from National Security Agency (NSA) intercepts. Retired US General Wesley Clark also revealed in his book *Winning Modern Wars* that in late 2001 (after 9/11 and the attack on Afghanistan began) the

Pentagon was planning to attack Lebanon as part of a five year campaign targeting seven countries beginning with Iraq, then going on to Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Somalia and Sudan.

It's all part of the US imperial plan to redraw the map of the strategically important Middle East and its vast oil and scarce water reserves, establish client states throughout the region, remove independent leaders standing in the way, and replace them with more receptive ones willing to sacrifice their nations' sovereignty in service to the de facto ruler of the world. Israel is part of the scheme as well and has its own imperial aims. It's the only country in the world without declared borders because it's plan is to extend them beyond where they are now to wherever it's able to lay claim and get away with it.

Most important to the Israelis is their plan to include as part of Israel the ancient lands of "Judea" and "Summaria," the West Bank biblical parts of Israel comprising the OPT the Palestinians justifiably claim as their homeland. In addition, the most extreme Zionists in the country, who have great influence on policy, want all the land of "Eretz Israel," the total biblical Jewish homeland they believe God gave to the 12 tribes of Israel which includes all of present-day Israel and the OPT, Lebanon, most of Syria, part of Egypt and a large part of Jordan. Israel already controls the choicest parts of the West Bank including 50% of its fresh water resources and all of Gaza any time it chooses to enter and reoccupy it, the Syrian Golan Heights that supply it with one-third of its total water, and the 25 kilometer Shebaa Farms area of South Lebanon it never relinquished after seizing it as well in the 1967 war.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his Likudnik right-wing spin-off allies in his Kadima party apparently want still more territory seized and under its control well within the timetable they set to declare permanent Israeli borders in 2007. South Lebanon has long been one such area Israel covets. It seized and occupied this land for 22 years but failed to keep it and was finally driven out by a determined Hezbollah resistance that was born out of the second Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the oppressive occupation that followed.

Why Israel Attacked Lebanon

Israel claims this area is important to it for so-called security reasons, but its greatest value is as a source of fresh water from the Litani River in South Lebanon and also the Wazzani springs that feed directly into the Hasbani River which is a tributary of the Jordan River. The Hasbani flows into Israel two miles downstream from the Wazzani and runs into the Sea of Galilee that's Israel's largest source of fresh water. Lebanon wants to pump about 350,000 cubic feet of water daily from the Wazzini to supply its villages in the south which it has every right to do, of course, but Israel opposes that plan and now effectively stopped it since invading the country.

The prime motive of Israel's assault on Lebanon and invasion in the south is to seize, occupy and then annex the 20 mile stretch of territory into the country up to the Litani to be able to use for its own needs what now supplies a major portion of Lebanon's fresh water. The Litani's annual flow is estimated at about 920 million cubic meters. If Israel can incorporate and control South Lebanon up to the Litani, it would augment its annual fresh water supply by up to 800 million cubic meters or nearly 40% of its annual consumption. That amount would be in addition to the one-third of its supply now gotten from the Golan Heights Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 war, never returned for obvious reasons, and never intends to. And, as mentioned above, Israel also controls half the fresh water resources of the West Bank it uses for its own needs and denies them to the Palestinians for theirs.

There's no mystery about what the US interest is in the Middle East. In the words of its high-level officials in the 1940s, the energy resources there were seen as "a stupendous source of strategic power (and) one of the greatest material prizes in world history." But Israel also has an oil-related motive driving its current policy of aggression it and the US may extend next to Syria and Iran. Israel gets a large amount of its oil from the Caspian Basin which will be made all the easier by the opening of a new pipeline from that region to the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel needs the oil, and the US needs a strong military ally it can depend on in the Middle East to assure it maintains control of the oil there and from the Caspian and that US and European Big Oil giants are guaranteed handsome profits from it. It's all part of a new "Great Game" to dominate these two vital energy-rich regions that instead of pitting the old British Empire against Tsarist Russia that lasted nearly 100 years until the early 20th century (when the issue wasn't over oil) now finds the US with Israel's help challenging Russia and China.

As part of its plan to make it work, Israel (and the US) wants to depopulate South Lebanon to control it and likely eventually build permanent settlements there just as it did in Gaza and now continues to do illegally in the West Bank and the Golan. To do it, it's now warning the civilian population there to "ethnically cleanse" itself voluntarily or the IDF will terror-bomb it out forcibly which it's doing daily. It's all part of Israel's long-standing policy made clear by its leaders since its first prime minister David Ben-Gurion first stated it - that all means will be used including war to "redeem the land" occupied by the Palestinians and other Arabs in the way for "the chosen people." Current Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made that position very clear when he addressed the US Congress joint session on May 24, 2006 saying "I believe and to this day still believe in our people's eternal and historic right to this entire land." Unstated by the prime minister was exactly what he claims that "entire land" to be. World leaders though understand Israel's aims well enough and thus know what its assault against Lebanon and Palestine is all about. It's why they haven't challenged it, aren't likely to beyond the meaningless and customary pro forma disingenuous calls for "restraint on both sides," and thus are aiding the Jewish state accomplish its land-grab in the short run. Over time, however, it's quite another matter.

Israel tried before and failed in 1978 and again in 1982 to seize and permanently occupy South Lebanon hoping eventually to annex the territory as it did the Golan and the parts of the OPT it wanted. Now it's trying again in Lebanon and wants to annex more land in the OPT. It's plan is to seize this land, destroy the resistance in it, crush both nations politically and succeed this time unlike before when Hezbollah forced it out of South Lebanon and the Palestinian resistance in part prevented its annexation of all areas of the OPT it wants for settler development.

It's using a new strategy in Lebanon this time calling for a robust international military force, likely a NATO one (under US control) to replace the ineffective United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) that's been there since 1978. It wants this force to serve as so-called "peacekeepers" once it's completed its land-grab, finished its assault on and destruction of the country, and it allows it to come in. Israel's earlier failed 22 year occupation cost it dearly in lives lost, shekels spent, and the reputation of its vaunted military machine with all its US supplied modern weapons tarnished by a determined Hezbollah guerilla resistance that finally drove it from the country.

Israel wants no repeat of that this time and thinks it can have the land it wants and avoid being expelled trying to hold on to it through a proxy force it can control - this time a NATO-led one it's allied with militarily and which it knows will serve its interests and not those of

the Lebanese people. It wants NATO there to act as its enforcers, engage Hezbollah or other resistance that may challenge it, have it do its killing and dying for it, and relieve Israel of the burden of funding a long and costly operation or being humiliated again if it fails, which almost certainly will happen in time.

Israel's Aim in the OPT

So far in the OPT, Israel is going it alone handling the dirty job of crushing a defenseless people, so it hasn't asked for an international military force to come in as its enforcers there. Once it ends its assault, Israel ideally wants the Palestinians to be their own enforcers as was the arrangement agreed to by Yasser Arafat under the 1993 Oslo Accords and later related agreements. The Israelis know current Fatah party leader and Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President Mahmoud Abbas is willing to take on the job for them as he proved his Israel-friendly bona fides at Oslo and in the 1990s. Will the Palestinian people and its Hamas leadership submit to their subjugation any more this time than in the past when they eventually resisted it? And will Hezbollah and the Lebanese people be any less resistant? There's little chance of it in both countries and thus every chance the carnage now ongoing may ebb and flow but will continue unending until the people of both lands win the freedom they're unlikely never to stop fighting for.

Israel Must Finally Be Held to Account For Its Criminal Acts

Israel's crimes so far have gone unchallenged because most world leaders have supported them overtly or tacitly. In so doing, these leaders and other officials are guilty criminal accomplices under Article 6 of the Nuremberg Charter that states: "Leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the....crimes (listed in Articles 6b or 6c of the Charter) are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan." By this standard, the entire US Senate and all but eight members of the US House are also criminal accomplices by result of their votes during the week of July 17 to unconditionally support Israel's "supreme international crime" of illegal aggression against Lebanon and Palestine unjustifiably claiming Israel has the right of self-defense guaranteed it under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

It's long past time that Israel no longer be allowed to get away with its crimes and for its officials responsible for them to be held to account for them. Since world leaders on their own won't act (especially as they're guilty co-conspirators), mass worldwide public protest and action must do it for them and demand either the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague indict and prosecute Israeli officials responsible for what they've inflicted on Lebanon and the OPT or the UN General Assembly must act in its stead to establish an International Criminal Tribunal for Israel. It has the authority to do it under Article 22 in the UN Charter and twice before used it for Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The ICC was established in 2002 in accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 1998. It's authorized by its signatories to act as a permanent tribunal to prosecute individuals for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity as defined by the 1945 Nuremberg Charter drafted by the US and its main WW II allies to try Nazi war criminals. The court was established to adjudicate in the kinds of cases Israeli officials should be brought to book for. However, while Israel signed the final act of the Rome conference creating the ICC, it voted against the statute to remain free of its authority. People demanding justice thus may have no other recourse than to have the UN General

Assembly act to establish a special International Tribunal for Israel that will use its authority to prosecute culpable Israeli officials in the Hague if they can be brought there or in absentia if they're not.

Israel has a long history of criminal and abusive acts. Long before the June 25 incident near Kerem Shalom crossing that began the current conflict, the UN Human Rights Commission held that Israel had violated nearly all 149 articles under the Fourth Geneva Convention that governs the treatment of civilians in war and under occupation and in so doing is guilty of war crimes according to international law. The Commission also determined Israel as an occupier in the OPT has committed "crimes against humanity" as defined under the 1945 Nuremberg Charter. By its actions since June 25 against the Palestinians and especially after July 12 in Lebanon, Israel has compounded its crimes by committing many more of them.

It remains for an international court of law to name those individuals culpable for these crimes and to state the specific charges. But the one accusation above all others should be that Israel violated the most important of all binding international laws under the UN Charter to which Israel is a signatory. The Charter authorizes a nation to use force only under two conditions: when authorized to do it by the Security Council or under Article 51 that allows the "right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member....until the Security Council has taken measures to maintain international peace and security." In other words, necessary self-defense is permitted.

Israel's extreme responses following the capture of three of its soldiers, known in both cases to have been planned well in advance awaiting only convenient pretext to initiate them, are no acts of self-defense. They're acts of premeditated illegal aggression and, as such, are what the Nuremberg Tribunal that tried the Nazis called "the supreme international crime." The Nazis found guilty of it were hanged and justice was served. Under Article 6b of the Nuremberg Charter, Israel also committed the flagrant war crimes of "plunder of public (and) private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, (and) devastation not justified by military necessity." Under Article 6c, it's guilty of the "crimes against humanity (of) murder..., deportation and other inhumane acts committed against (the Lebanese and Palestinian) civilian population(s), before (and) during the war."

The Nuremberg Tribunal set a high standard which it followed based on the principles of the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact signed by 63 nations after WW I to renounce war as an instrument of foreign policy. The Pact didn't prevent WW II, but what it stipulated formed the basis for "crimes against peace." The Nuremberg Charter described those crimes as "the planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a premeditated war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties." It prosecuted the Nazis for what they did including the ones charged with this supreme crime. The UN is surely authorized to act to establish an international criminal court just as the victorious US, UK and USSR allies acted on their joint authority during and after WWII to establish the Nuremberg Tribunal to try Nazi war criminals.

Israel also has a long and disturbing record of flagrantly violating or ignoring international laws and norms. In its past conflicts as well as the current ones, besides committing "the supreme international crime" of illegal aggression, it's using weapons banned under the Hague Convention of 1907, the 1925 Geneva Protocol and succeeding Geneva Weapons Conventions that outlaw the use in war of chemical, biological or any other "poison or poisoned weapons. In the 1973 war and currently, Israel is using depleted uranium (DU) weapons that are radioactive and chemically toxic and thus clearly fit the definition of poisonous weapons banned under the 1907 Hague Convention.

It's also suspected of using other illegal weapons including chemical agents, white phosphorous bombs and shells against civilian targets that burn flesh to the bone and can't be extinguished by water that only makes the burning worse when used, cluster bombs, and a terror weapon called "flashettes" which explode and shoot out 1000s of nails in all directions. In addition, the IDF is reportedly testing in real time some new terror weapons (using the helpless Lebanese and Palestinians as their lab rats) including a thermobaric solid fuel-air explosive bomb able to penetrate buildings, underground shelters and tunnels creating a blast pressure great enough to suck all the oxygen out of spaces struck and the lungs of all those in the vicinity. All these weapons are either questionable or illegal under Hague and/or Geneva international law.

All the above actions clearly warrant Israel's criminal prosecution by an international court. Yet there are still others to be added to them. Israel ignored the World Court in the Hague that ruled 14 - 1 in 2004 that the annexation/separation wall it's building is "contrary to international law" because it "destroyed and confiscated" property, greatly restricts Palestinian movement, and "severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of (the) right to self-determination." As a result, the Court ordered construction to end at once, the existing portion of it built to be taken down, and Palestinians adversely affected by its construction to be compensated for their losses. Israel ignored the ruling, continues building the wall, and thus is violating international law. In addition, over the last half century, Israel has been a serial abuser of UN resolutions flagrantly and willfully ignoring over five dozen of them that condemned or censured it for its actions against the Palestinians or other Arab people, deplored it for committing them or demanded the Jewish state end them.

Like its US ally, Israel is also know to be a serial abuser of torture as a means of inflicting punishment or trying to elicit information from the 10,000 or more Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners it forcibly abducted and now holds in its prisons. According to Amnesty International, Israel is the only country in the world to effectively legalize torture (now, of course, the US has as well). Many of those Israel holds in custody are political prisoners held administratively without charge, and Israeli human rights monitoring group B'Tselem reports Israel's use of torture is flagrant, widespread and routinely used against them. Such practice is clearly a violation of international law that bans the use of torture or degrading treatment under any circumstances. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlawed it in 1948. The Fourth Geneva Convention then did it in 1949 banning any form of "physical or mental coercion" and affirming detainees must at all times be treated humanely. The European Convention followed in 1950. Then in 1984, the UN Convention Against Torture became the first binding international instrument dealing exclusively with the issue of banning torture in any form for any reason. Israel ignores these and all other international laws and norms but has never yet been held to account for its actions. It's way past time that injustice be addressed and corrected. World public opinion overwhelmingly demands it.

It now remains for an international court to place Israeli officials on trial, have them answer for their past and present crimes, and see to it they pay the price for them if found guilty. That must happen if those harmed by them are ever able to achieve the justice they seek and deserve. It's also crucial this action be taken soon to send a clear message to Israeli officials that world public opinion no longer will tolerate this behavior and that it forced the UN to act in its behalf to demand justice in a world court of law. Even if Israel doesn't accept the court's authority, as will likely happen, its establishment alone may send a message to the Jewish state strong enough to make it cease further aggression against its current victims. It may also deter it and the US from committing further acts of aggression against

Syria and Iran now in their plans based on credible reports quoting high-level officials in both countries. If it happens, it's part of the US and Israeli grand plan to destroy Iran's legal commercial nuclear capability, redraw the map of the Middle East, remove the Iranian, Syrian and Hamas independent leaderships in it (as well as destroy the legitimate Hezbollah resistance), and replace them with new regimes henceforth acting as subservient and reliable client states. Neither the US nor Israel must any longer be allowed to get away with their current wars of aggression or have world leader's support their right to extend them further in the region as they likely have in mind to do.

Further Action Against Israel Is Also Needed

In addition to halting Israel's current aggression and prosecuting its officials responsible for it, it's time to go still further and begin a concerted campaign calling for divestment, economic and political sanctions and a boycott of Israeli-made products. Throughout its history, Israel has been unresponsive to all efforts aimed at getting it to abide by international laws and norms, live peacefully with its neighbors and respect the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian and Lebanese people whose lands it occupies and is now in conflict with. Having no interest in voluntarily engaging in serious negotiation to reach an equitable settlement, the only recourse is for mass people-action to demand it through punitive measures. In the 1980s, these actions proved successful in the struggle to abolish the repugnant apartheid system in South Africa that began in 1948 (ironically the year Israel became a state) and ended officially in 1994. During its later years, it became clear this was a failed system that had to end, and the world community could no longer tolerate its existence. Civil unrest and township violence began growing, and the P.W. Botha government declared a state of emergency in 1985 that remained in place until the F.W. de Klerk government lifted the 30 year ban on the anti-apartheid and now ruling African National Congress and two other opposition parties previously banned. In 1990 Nelson Mandela was freed from prison after 27 years of incarceration, and by 1991 the legal apparatus of apartheid ended.

People of conscience and mass civil society worldwide are a potent force in big numbers. It must now coalesce and denounce Israel as a pariah state and begin a non-violent campaign to demand governments, businesses, institutions and other organizations impose economic and political initiatives with teeth including divestment, sanctions, boycotts and embargoes. They should remain in place long enough to isolate Israel, and, if necessary, bring it to its knees economically and politically if that's what it takes to prove world public opinion no longer will tolerate its actions.

As part of the campaign, a clear set of demands must be made. They must include an immediate cessation of Israel's current hostilities against the Palestinians and people of Lebanon; Israel's full withdrawal from the OPT to the pre-1967 war borders and the dismantlement of all settlements therein; return of the Golan and all occupied land in South Lebanon; abiding by all UN resolutions so far ignored; dismantlement of its annexation/separation wall along with full restitution to the Palestinian people affected by it; agreeing to the Palestinians' right to a free, sovereign and independent state and allowing the right of return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland as UN Resolution 194 affirmed and Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees to all displaced people; and agreeing to send its culpable officials to stand trial in an international tribunal in the Hague to be held to account to answer the charges levied against them. If Israel complies fully with these minimum demands and justice is served, the campaign of punitive action against it can end and the Jewish state can take its rightful place as a

member of the world community of nations in good standing.

Might any of this happen? With today's headlines in mind, it looks doubtful, but at one time the South African apartheid government had the full support of the US and the West. Nonetheless, in the end it fell because enough pressure was brought to bear against it to make it happen. If it could happen to that ugly regime, it can happen to Israel as well but only if enough responsible people demand it and turn up the heat until it does.

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