

Namibia Blocks Vessel Carrying Explosives to Israel

Ruling SWAPO party says it is upholding international law

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During late August the Republic of Namibia drew the attention of the international community by publicly announcing it would not allow a vessel carrying explosive materials to the State of Israel to dock at one of its ports.

The ruling South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) stated that its actions were in line with international law where Tel Aviv has been found guilty of violating the Genocide Convention of 1948.

Namibia's neighbor and longtime ally, the Republic of South Africa and its Government of National Unity (GNU) leading party, the African National Congress (ANC), has initiated a legal fight against the genocide being committed by the Israeli state since October 7. In December, South Africa took the Zionist entity before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest legal authority within the United Nations, demanding immediate action.

Both the ANC and SWAPO have been allies of the Palestinian liberation struggle for decades as all of them have a shared history of being dominated by settler-colonial regimes. The organized anti-colonial movements in South Africa, Namibia and Occupied Palestine have utilized mass demonstrations, general strikes and armed attacks in efforts to win their freedom from national oppression. Namibia gained its national independence in 1990 and four year later South Africa defeated the apartheid regime in 1994. However, the Palestinians are still fighting to break free from the Israeli state.

In January, the ICJ ruled that the charges of genocide leveled by Pretoria against Tel Aviv were plausible. Nonetheless, the settler-colonial regime occupying Palestine dismissed the ruling by the ICJ while continuing its shelling, bombing and killings in the Gaza Strip.

Since October 7, more than 40,000 people have been killed in the Gaza Strip as a direct result of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). With the backing of the United States and other western imperialist states, the government Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has destroyed residential areas, schools, hospitals, religious institutions and marketplaces in what could only be considered acts of genocide.

The entire population of Gaza, 2.3 million people, are imperiled by the U.S.-backed Netanyahu administration. No one living in Gaza can be considered safe from the atrocities being committed by the Occupation Forces. Since late August, the IDF has launched deadly raids into the West Bank under the same guise of combating "terrorism."

Although the White House under President Joe Biden says it does not support the aggression

in the West Bank, they have not halted the supply of arms to Tel Aviv. Just recently, Washington was reported to have approved the supply of an additional \$20 billion in military assistance to the Zionist state.

Since October the Palestine solidarity movement has grown exponentially. International agencies such as the United Nations and others have been tracking the activities of shipping firms which conduct lucrative business with Israel and its allies. Students and mass organizations operating on college and universities campuses have staged demonstrations and encampments calling for the full disclosure and divestment from entities linked to the Zionist regime.

[In an article](#) reprinted by Radio Havana Cuba from Press TV it reports:

“A United Nations human rights expert has warned that a Portuguese-flagged ship is carrying tons of explosives to Israel, reiterating calls for an immediate arms embargo against the occupying entity to prevent further genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip. UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory Francesca Albanese sounded the alert in a post on X on Saturday, warning that based on the received information, ‘the vessel Kathrin, flying with Portuguese flag, is expected to deliver 8 containers of explosives to Israel.’”

Imperialism Defies International Solidarity and Public Opinion

Despite the outrage exemplified by millions around the world against the genocide being perpetuated by the Israeli state and its supporters, the Zionist regime continues to operate with impunity. John Kirby, the National Security Advisor for the U.S., dismissed the legal actions taken by South Africa as being devoid of merit.

Biden along with Vice-President Kamala Harris have repeatedly said that they believe the Apartheid Israeli state has the right to exist. How can any government carrying out genocide within a settler-colonial state have any right to be accepted among the global community of nations and peoples?

The U.S. ruling class maintains that not only does this racist state have the right to exist they must be armed to defend themselves against the liberation movements seeking their overthrow. These liberation organizations such as Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in south Lebanon have been labeled as “terrorist” in efforts to justify the mass slaughter taking place within the communities in which they have emerged.

This same report quoted above went on to say that the weapons transfers to Israel represent a clear and present danger:

“These explosives are reportedly key components in the aircraft bombs and missiles that Israel is deploying against besieged Gaza and in its genocidal campaign against the Palestinians. As Namibia has rightfully denied port access to Kathrin, upholding international law, my hope is that Angola will follow Namibia’s example and not consent to harbor the ship. This could be a serious breach of the Genocide Convention,’ Albanese added. According to Vesselfinder ship tracking data earlier this week, the cargo ship, the MV Kathrin, which is sailing under the flag of Madeira, is currently anchored off the coast of Namibia, as the country in southwest Africa has refused to allow it to enter any of its ports. Madeira, an autonomous region of Portugal, is an

archipelago comprising four islands off the northwest coast of Africa.”

These efforts by Namibia not only coincides with developments on the campuses across North America, other efforts such as the attempts aimed at the blockade of Israeli-linked vessels in the Red Sea has also made a monumental contribution to solidarity with Palestine. The Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) have disrupted the flow of cargo in the region of the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

[Reports indicate](#) that the Israeli-controlled Port of Eilat has been negatively impacted by the operations conducted by the YAF. Even though the U.S. and the United Kingdom have conducted aerial strikes against the people of Yemen and their infrastructure over the last several months, it has not curtailed their determination to enhance politico-military pressure on Tel Aviv.

Namibian Justice Ministry Says Its Position Is Based Upon International Law

Although the U.S. and other imperialist states frequently claim that they are the genuine upholders of international law, their foreign policy towards Occupied Palestine proves otherwise. This also held true in regard to the former situation in South Africa, Namibia and throughout the sub-continent.

From the 1960s thru the 1980s there were numerous international decisions within the UN which gave credence to the struggle for the abolition of apartheid and settler-colonialism. However, it would take mass demonstrations, boycotts and educational projects conducted in conjunction with the struggle of the people of Southern Africa which turned the tide in favor of anti-colonialism and national independence.

Several months before, the now-deceased President Hage Geingob had denounced its former colonial power Germany for its unconditional support to the State of Israel. This declaration by Geingob was viewed as a means to compliment the legal efforts by South Africa while at the same time extending its historical legacy of international solidarity with all oppressed and exploited peoples around the globe.

The Minister of Justice of the Republic of Namibia articulated the reasoning behind its stance on Palestinian solidarity. She told the state-owned New Era newspaper that the refusal to allow the vessel to dock in Namibian ports was the only just decision in light of the existing laws and the political considerations in favor of the plight of the Palestinians.

Yvonne Dausab, the Minister of Justice [said that](#):

“Yes, I have asked Namport (Namibian Ports Authority) via the line ministry to consider the request to not allow the vessel MV Kathrin to dock in our ports. As such, it was necessary to engage authorities in Namibia on issues of concern to ensure our decisions and actions domestically are aligned with our obligations in terms of international law and our policy stance of many years on Palestine. I addressed a letter to Cabinet, international relations ministry, works ministry, as well as the safety and security ministry, advising and reminding them of our international obligations, not only under the Genocide Convention but also as articulated in the recent advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It is against this background that I requested the relevant authorities not to allow the vessel MV Kathrin to dock at the Walvis Bay port.”

These principled views of the Namibian government add to the diversity of tactics within the

Palestine solidarity movement. As in other national liberation struggles, this multiplicity of political forces and tactics have resulted in victory over injustice.

Irrespective of the incorrect policies of the imperialist states towards the Palestinian question, the masses of the people throughout the world are working feverishly on behalf of the colonized people. These contradictions will inevitably create the conditions which will prove favorable to the objectives of the Palestinians and other progressive forces throughout the entire West Asia region.

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