

THE ONGOING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA

Israel's war crimes in Gaza

During Israel's July 8 to August 26, 2014 bombardment of Gaza, has killed over 2137 Palestinians, including over 500 children. More than 10,000 are wounded, including over 3,000 children. 20,000 homes have been destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are displaced.

Thousands of people took to the streets in Vancouver – part of millions around the world – to express their outrage and horror at this brutal assault, which is supported by the Canadian government and elites. Palestinian resilience and resistance under the Israeli bombardment inspired the people of the world to take action and step up the campaign to Boycott, Divest and Sanction!

In December, 2008, Israel launched another devastating 22-day assault on Gaza that killed more than 1400 Palestinians according to Judge Goldstone's report to the UN – 80% of them civilians, including 430 children and women. Eighteen Gaza schools were completely destroyed and 48% of 122 Gaza health facilities were damaged or destroyed by Israel's attacks according to the World Health Organization. The Goldstone report found that **"deliberate and systematic policy on the part of the Israeli armed forces to target industrial sites and water installations... amounts to a war crime."**

Israel's attack on Gaza was "designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population." – Judge Goldstone, UN Report

Israel's illegal Gaza Blockade

Israel's ongoing illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip defies international law and has resulted in a humanitarian crisis for the 1.5 million residents of Gaza (53% of them children). "The Israeli blockade has meant that almost no reconstruction materials have been allowed to move into Gaza even though 60,000 homes were either damaged or completely destroyed" during Israel's 2009 assault said UN spokesman Chris Gunness. Richard Falk, the former UN special rapporteur on Palestinian human rights, has decried the "continued breakdowns of the electricity and sanitation systems due to the Israeli refusal to let spare parts needed for repair get through the crossings."

Israel's blockade of humanitarian goods for Gaza is "one of the greatest human rights crimes on earth" – Jimmy Carter, May 2008

This intentionally-created humanitarian catastrophe existed in Gaza long before this years barbaric bombardment. Since the 2007 free and fair democratic election of Hamas, Gazans have been collectively starved and denied water, electricity, fuel and basic medicine by illegal Israeli policies. Israel has consistently refused calls by the United Nations and other international human rights organizations to end the siege and open Gaza's borders.

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL

In July 2005 over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations called for an international campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. The BDS campaign demands that Israel fully comply with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality;
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes

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BOYCOTT ISRAELI SHIPPING! END ISRAELI APARTHEID! LET GAZA LIVE!

During Israel's massive 2014 assault on Gaza, its military machine killed more than 2100 Palestinians in 50 bloody days, including at least 500 children. Entire neighbourhoods were intentionally obliterated. In 2009, Israel bombed Gaza with hundreds of thousands of tons of munitions killing 1400 Palestinians in three weeks, including more than 300 children. Also on May 31, 2010 the Freedom Flotilla – a civilian flotilla bearing 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid for the besieged Gaza Strip – was illegally boarded and attacked in international waters by Israeli commandos who killed nine civilians on the Mavi Marmara, and wounded more than 50.

The Palestinian trade union movement issued a united appeal on June 7, 2010 to dockworkers worldwide to "refuse to load/off-load Israeli ships and airplanes, following the historic example set by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union in February 2009."

Dockworkers have been at the forefront of the international outcry against Israel's massacres, responding with actions in the USA, Sweden, Turkey, India and South Africa, showing "Solidarity to the Palestinians. Solidarity to the working class around the world," according to Clarence Thomas, of ILWU Local 10 in Oakland.

In August 2014, ILWU Local 10 and Local 34 rank and file refused to cross a labor community "Block the Boat" picket line of an Israeli Zim ship in Oakland for four days until the Zim Piraeus left without being fully unloaded or taking on cargo.

"We call on the international trade union movement... Now is the time for the world to stop words of pity and lamentation, but take action by doing to apartheid Israel what it did to apartheid South Africa when its policies were declared a crime against humanity." – Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

DOCKWORKERS AND TRADE UNIONISTS SUPPORT BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT & SANCTIONS OF ISRAEL

International

Israel's 2014 Gaza massacre as well as Israel's 2010 assault on the Freedom Flotilla have been condemned by the International Dockworkers Council (IDC), the International Transportworkers Federation (ITF), the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee (TWSC), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and UNITE, the largest British and Irish trade union.

USA

ILWU rank and file from Local 10 and Local 34 respected a 4-day labor and community Block the Boat picket of an Israeli ZIM ship at the Port of Oakland (Aug 17-20, 2014). Despite the presence of hundreds of police to force the longshore workers to cross the picket lines and efforts to unload by deceiving union members, the ship left without fully unloading or picking up any cargo. On August 23, 2014, ILWU Local 13 canceled a shift at Long Beach port when more than 200 people picketed the unloading of the ZIM Haifa. In Tacoma on August 23 and Seattle on August 24, Block the Boat pickets delayed the unloading of the ZIM Chicago, until police pushed longshore workers through the picket line. In June 2010, ILWU Local 10 dockworkers and 800 allies delayed the unloading of an Israeli ZIM cargo ship in Oakland for 24 hours.

Sweden

Swedish Dockworkers Union help a week-long blockade of all trade with Israel in Juen 2010, with the aim of influencing the Israeli government to lift the illegal and inhuman blockade of Gaza, which has been going on for over three years.

India

Trade unions in Kerala, India held a protest rally in Cochin Port, near ZIM offices in 2010. The General Secretary of the Cochin Port Labor Union condemned the flotilla massacre and expressed the Port workers' solidarity with Palestine.

Turkey

The Liman-Is dockworkers union joined the boycott of Israel after the murder of 9 Turkish aid volunteers aboard a ship in the Freedom Flotilla: "Our union Liman-Is, has decided to boycott the ships from Israel, which has become a machine of death and torture. In the framework, no member of our union will give service to Israel in any docks where we are organized. Liman-Is union invites all unions and NGO's organized in our country and throughout the world to join this boycott and protest campaign."

**"During the South African anti-apartheid struggle, the world was inspired by the brave and principled actions of dockworkers unions who refused to handle South African cargo... Today, we call on you, dockworkers unions of the world, to do the same against Israel's occupation and apartheid. This is the most effective form of solidarity to end injustice and uphold universal human rights."
-Joint appeal from 15 Palestinian labour groups**

**"As a longshoreman, I know how critical international trade is to the economy... I think it is an appropriate action against those who have prevented the self-determination of the Palestinian people and to show solidarity with the people of Gaza."
- Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10**

"the Israeli government is going to have to be sent a message loud and clear, that their policies towards the Palestinian people are unjust and they're going to suffer the consequences." - Jack Heyman, Former ILWU Local 10 Executive

CANADA

In August 2010, and July 2011, solidarity activists and trade unionists held port education sessions at Deltaport BC to protest the arrival of Zim cargo ships and to alert dockworkers and truckers about the call from Palestinian trade unions to not handle Israeli cargo until Israel complies with international law.

CUPE BC RESOLUTION APRIL 16, 2011

CUPE BC WILL: Through CUPE National demand that the Federal Government pressure the Israeli and Egyptian Governments to end the illegal blockade of Gaza and open the borders so that goods and people may pass freely;

Condemn the Israeli attack on the Gaza relief ships on May 31, 2010 resulting in the killing of nine civilians; and
Support the Free Gaza Movement in their peaceful efforts to end the illegal blockade of Gaza...

VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL Resolution June 15, 2010:

...BECAUSE a peaceful relief convoy was attacked and boarded by Israeli Defence Forces resulting in the killing of nine civilians on board the relief ships, and

BECAUSE the action by Israel is illegal under international law and the blockade itself is tantamount to "collective punishment" which is illegal under the Geneva Conventions, and

BECAUSE governments and trade union organizations around the world have condemned Israel for these actions and are calling for a boycott and divestment from Israeli companies until these conditions are lifted,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL:

Condemn the Israeli attack on the Gaza relief ships in international waters on May 31 which resulted in the deaths of nine civilians on board the ships; and

Call for the total lifting of the illegal blockade of Gaza by Israel;

Support the call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel in support of these objectives.

Why ZIM?

ZIM is by far the biggest Israeli shipping company (and one of the 10 largest in the world) with 60 weekly services to 180 ports worldwide, including Deltaport. Unofficially known in the past as Israel's Merchant Marine, ZIM played a historic role in the colonization of Palestine and is now part of Israel Corporation - the largest private holding company in Israel. ZIM connects Israel and its products - including military and para-military hardware - to the world, and therefore is a key target in the international campaign of Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions against Israel.