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Onderwerp: International Appeal: Solidarity with the Palestinians Against Israeli Army Atrocities

Solidarity with the Palestinians Against Israeli Army Atrocities

This is neither a war of defence nor protection of its citizens that the State of Israel is carrying out. Israel is perpetrating a massacre in Gaza.

- Bombing the most densely populated zone in the world (*where half the inhabitants are children*) using illegal weapons such as white phosphorus, depleted uranium, cluster bombs or bombs using the new Dense Inert Metal Explosive;
- Exterminating entire families, burned alive and buried in the rubble of their houses destroyed by these illegal bombs dropped by F-16 fighter aircraft and U.S. Apache helicopters;
- Bombing schools, clinics, mosques, prisons, civilian infrastructure (roads, bridges, universities, residential blocks) ;
- Imposing food and energy embargoes in the middle of winter on one and a half million people confined like rats in a giant trap;
- Firing on United Nations and International Red Cross convoys and ambulances, and even killing doctors and health workers.

It is a slaughter, a massacre, with Hamas as its official target... but how on earth can anyone tell who is who? In these conditions, every Palestinian is a potential target.

Five years ago, the Israeli government defined the entire Gaza Strip, including women and children, as a « hostile entity » that it would be legitimate to eradicate. The present carnage shows that they were not speaking in metaphors – it was a plan of action. To talk of war implies that the Palestinians of Gaza have at least a minimal capacity for counter-attack. Yet all they have at their disposal is primitive weaponry of feeble nuisance value. This means that it is derisory to compare the bombing of Gaza and the rockets fired by a few militant groups. There have been five victims in Israel killed by rockets while the Gaza air strike of Saturday 27th December alone killed over 200 people. There is no military symmetry between Palestine and Israel, and even more importantly, there is no moral symmetry.

Gaza today is both the Guernica of the Spanish Civil War and the Ghetto of Warsaw. While journalists are denied access and prevented from reporting events, Israel is multiplying massive violations of human, civic, social, economic, political and cultural rights. Please wait outside, we're busy... killing.

In defiance of the Geneva convention, Israel is indeed committing war crimes and crimes against humanity with the active support or the knowing silence of the governments of the major powers.

- The European Union, on the initiative of Nicolas Sarkozy and Bernard Kouchner, has just reinforced its Treaty of Cooperation with Israel, despite the fact that the European Parliament had asked to have it suspended.
- Washington has continued to give active and criminal support (whether expressed by George W. Bush or Barack Obama).

We hereby denounce the indecency and the moral hypocrisy of placing the crude rockets fired by Hamas or other organizations on a level footing with the deluge of bombs being blitzed down on Palestine at this moment.

How many times does it have to be said: these rockets are not being fired, as certain

European diplomats would have us believe, as "*an inexplicable provocation*", but as a response – and rather a derisory one at that, let's face it – to the savage embargo imposed by Israel, over the last eighteen months, on the million and a half residents of the Gaza Strip, including women, children and the elderly, with the criminal collaboration not only of the United States but of Europe, too.

Just like their 2006 attack on the Lebanon, this Israeli aggression is part of the ongoing, all-encompassing preventive war waged by the neo-conservative strategists in power in Tel Aviv.

We support Palestinian resistance in the face of the systematic aggression they have been subjected to by the Israeli government and army. We firmly support the right of the Palestinian people to a State enabling them to live in peace on their territory.

A War to Seize the Natural Resources of Palestine

Added to the horror of the crime is the abjectness of the immediate motives: in less than two months' time, Israel will be holding elections and Palestinian casualties are so many electoral arguments. The martyrs of the Israeli attack on Gaza count in the media competition between Ehud Barak, Tzipi Livni and Ehud Olmert, where the winner is the one who proves themselves capable of most brutality. The war criminal who heads the Labour Party, or rather what is left of it, boasts four extra points in the opinion polls. On top of these electoral motives, there are also economic objectives.

For the entire length of the Gaza coast, not far off shore, within the limits of internationally-recognized State maritime sovereignty, lie immense deposits of natural gas. For years, they have been the object of negotiations between British Gas, Israel and the Palestinian Authority despite the fact that they belong to the Palestinian people. The potential profits from their exploitation have been estimated at over 4 billion dollars. They could also provide up to 10% of Israel's energy requirements, at a very low cost, since not only are the deposits close by, but the tariff would have been negotiated below market prices.

Of course these negotiations are at an impasse at the moment. In the water above these natural gas deposits, which could contribute to restoring a little social and economic well-being to the Palestinians, there is no sign of rigs exploring or extracting the natural gas, nor any sign of pipelines being built. The only thing to be seen is the Israeli Navy incessantly bombing the Palestinian civilian population.

Peace and Justice First

We have been denouncing the crimes committed by the State of Israel against Palestine and the Lebanon for a long time. Now, more than ever, we **join** the worldwide outcry which is demanding an immediate end to the criminal aggression of Tsahal against the Palestinian people, the withdrawal of its troops who have lost all human morality, the immediate lifting of the blockade imposed on a million and a half people, and freedom of movement at the Egyptian border.

Once these first fundamental measures have been taken, let us **demand** a total and absolute embargo on arms sales to the State of Israel and an international cultural and economic boycott like the one decreed by the United Nations in the 60s against the racist state of South Africa.

Following the example of Venezuela, let us **call upon** the nations that call themselves civilized to expel all Israeli diplomats present on their soil and upon the European Community to suspend all economic agreements with Israel immediately.

Let us demand the immediate formation of an International Commission of Enquiry into the crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated on Palestinian territory. Let us

demand that this be accompanied by the deployment of a force with the means of arresting and placing in preventive detention the military and political leaders and others who may be held liable for these acts and charged, with a view to their judgment by the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court or an *ad hoc* international tribunal (since Israel does not recognize the competence of the ICC).

For permanent peace, let us **do our utmost** for Israel to be made to dismantle all its colonies on the West Bank as well as the Wall of Shame, to return all the land stolen from the Palestinians and to compensate them for all the hundreds of thousands of olive and fruit trees cut down, for the thousands of farms and wells destroyed and for the environmental damage inflicted.

The Palestinian People Owe Nothing

We must bring to bear our experience and capacity for analysis, to investigate and denounce the economic crimes suffered by the Palestinian people over decades. We must help ensure that debts for which it would be illegitimate to demand repayment, but which certain creditors would nevertheless like to recover, are correctly qualified as odious debt, war debt, environmental debt, historic debt or colonial debt accordingly.

Let us ensure that Palestine shall not pay a penny claimed as debt repayment if it is not fully justified.

The Palestinian People are Net Creditors

Let us also ensure that the State of Israel be considered as owing the sums required to fully repair the immense war damage inflicted on the Palestinian people as well as to pay for the reconstruction of Palestine through a fund supplied by the Israeli Treasury, just as Germany paid compensation out to Israel for decades after the Second World War.

Let us demand loud and clear that the United States should participate in financing this Fund in recognition of their military and criminal complicity with Israel. Over 90% of the Israeli army's equipment is either manufactured by the U.S. or uses their technology. As part of the reparations package, there should be a section covering the return of refugees and their compensation. The Fund should be entirely managed by and for the Palestinian people.

But the most urgent matter today is to stop the massacre.

We appeal to all trade unions, political parties, local and territorial authorities, companies and citizens of the world to denounce the criminal activities of the world's 4th most powerful army against an entire people, and to commit themselves to supporting the Palestinian people.

Without justice there will be no peace.

We are all Palestinians.

Provisional list of signatories :

CADTM Belgium; CADTM France; Reseau National Dette et Developpement (RNDD-Niger) ; VAK India ; CADTM Pakistan ; Cercle d'auto Promotion pour le Developpement Durable (CADD-Bénin), ATTAC Togo, CADTM - Switzerland, FNDP (Costa de Marfil), ROAD (Réseau Ouest Africain pour le Développement), ATTAC-CADTM Marocco, CERIDA (Guinée – Conakry), Plateforme haïtienne de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Alternatif (PAPDA) Haïti, Solidaires-Pointe-Noire (Congo Brazzaville), CADTM Lubumbashi (AMSEL- RDC), APASH Brazzaville (Congo Brazzaville), RAID ATTAC Tunisie, CADTM Tunisie, Coalition des Alternatives Africaines Dette et Developpement (CAD-Mali) APASH Brazzaville (Congo Brazzaville), Red venezolana contra la deuda (Venezuela), ATTAC Argentina

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