

How Propping Up Israel's Military Abets Apartheid Government ?

As 2021 comes to a close, the deepening hardships and vulnerabilities being endured by the Palestinian people as Israel escalates its violence on them, in tandem with its rising lawlessness, continues to be accelerated by America.

A bipartisan group of Congressional lawmakers pressured US president Joe Biden to support the \$1 billion supplemental Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system funding, in an appropriations bill before the end of the year. The Iron Dome Aerial Defense System is designed to intercept rockets midair, by targeting them and firing interceptor missiles to destroy them. As of November 2020, the US had provided \$1.6 billion for Israel's Iron Dome according to Congressional Research Service.

The \$1 billion in funding to replenish the Iron Dome was removed from a spending bill by progressive Democrats, but reintroduced by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) as standalone legislation that easily passed in the House, but not yet by the senate due to a perceived lack of votes. The legislation specifically provides funding to replace missile interceptors that were used during Israel's 11-day attack on Gaza in May this year.

Gaza's Health Ministry said nearly 300 Palestinians lost their lives as terrorizing bombs rained down on them, including 66 children and 39 women, while nearly 2000 were wounded. The number of Israelis killed was 13 including a soldier and two children.

Children in Palestine, or Israel, or anywhere else are protected under the 4th Geneva Convention and other provisions of international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signatory. Therefore, like all children throughout the world, Palestinian children have the right to live a safe, secure and peaceful childhood. With absolute impunity and international inaction, heavily armed Israeli soldiers are accustomed to indiscriminately firing at and killing Palestinian children with zero consequences. Israel's routine killing of these children should remind the international community that they are duty-bound to protect them.

The Israeli onslaught destroyed 1,148 housing and commercial units and partially damaged 15,000 others, leaving more than 100,000 civilians displaced in United Nations-run schools and other hosting communities. Many Palestinians today find themselves once again forced to reconstruct their shattered homes, which has been the norm for the last 12 years. Gaza residents have had to endure rebuilding their homes in the besieged enclave.

Double standards

Israel receives \$3.8bn in US military aid each year as part of a 10-year commitment made by President Barack Obama in a MoU signed in 2016. The deal marked a \$700m annual increase from a previous bilateral agreement, where "Israel must always have the resources it needs to defend itself from incoming rockets."

This is illogical! America cannot be talking only about Israelis' need for safety, while the Palestinians are living under a violent apartheid system and are dying from what Human Rights Watch described as war crimes, orchestrated by Israel.

It's unconscionable that even as Israel uses US weapons to target children, women, elderly, medical workers and others, and given the human rights violations in Gaza, Sheikh Jarrah, and ever-growing settlement expansion, the US continues to provide Israel with more weapons to carry out such violence! During the Gaza attacks, the *Washington Post* reported that the Biden administration planned to sell \$735m in weapons to the Israelis. The least to say is that the US is complicit in Israel's massacres and atrocities against Palestinians.

What the US should be doing is ensuring that its \$3.8bn annual contribution to Israel is not used to

perpetuate rights abuses, because propping up Israel's military merely serves to aid and abet its human rights abuses and apartheid government.

A report by Human Rights Watch earlier this year said Israel is guilty of the crimes of apartheid and persecution based on its overarching "policy to maintain the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians" in a context of systematic oppression. It renewed calls to make any arms sales and military and security assistance to Israel conditional on Israeli authorities taking concrete steps towards ending their commission of those crimes.

The problem will not be solved through rebuilding the Iron Dome, well knowing that everything built will be destroyed again as long as the war continues. The problem will be solved through accountability for Israel's war crimes, recognizing Israel as an apartheid state hence treating it accordingly.

What the Iron Dome does is allow Israel to freely bomb Gaza without having any consequences of its actions. The more Israel is supported and sustained, the more belligerent and intransigent it becomes to making any concessions.

The talk about Israelis' need for safety and blatant disregard of Palestinians' need for security from Israeli attacks – when they are living under a violent apartheid system and are dying from what Human Rights Watch said as war crimes – could only happen in a morally inverted universe. Its illegal policies in Palestine are clearly part of broader efforts to drive the Palestinians from their homes, including, inter alia by way of forced displacement, home demolitions and residency revocations amounting to ethnic cleansing and imposition of a two-tier system of laws that blatantly discriminate against Palestinians.

This wholesale violence against helpless Palestinians must be countered with measures befitting acts of aggression and protecting human lives.

Inaction by the United Nations Security Council exacerbates injustices at the expense of millions of people suffering in occupied territories of Palestine, whom UNSC is duty-bound to protect. The Security Council must rise to its responsibilities and show the international community that the need for accountability outweighs the appeasement policy, which continues to exempt Israel from being held under the same laws as other nations.

All available legal mechanisms, diplomatic and political means ought to be explored by the international community, to assert international law as a source of authority on the question of Palestine, in order to hold the apartheid government accountable for its systematic human rights violations, acts of state terrorism and war crimes against the Palestinians.

References

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