

*Press Release*

**"Stop the Massacre in Gaza – Boycott Israel Now!"**

*Occupied Ramallah, Palestine - 27 December 2008:* Today, the Israeli occupation army committed a new massacre in Gaza, causing the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including a yet unknown number of school children who were headed home from school when the first Israeli military strikes started. This latest bloodbath, although far more ruthless than all its predecessors, is not Israel's first. It culminates months of an Israeli siege of Gaza that should be widely condemned and prosecuted as an act of genocide against the 1.5 million Palestinians in the occupied coastal strip.

Israel seems intent to mark the end of its 60<sup>th</sup> year of existence the same way it has established itself – perpetrating massacres against the Palestinian people. In 1948, the majority of the indigenous Palestinian people were ethnically cleansed from their homes and land, partly through massacres like Deir Yassin; today, the Palestinians in Gaza, most of whom are refugees, do not even have the choice to seek refuge elsewhere. Incarcerated behind ghetto walls and brought to the brink of starvation by the siege, they are easy targets for Israel's indiscriminate bombing.

Prof. Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and international law expert at Princeton University, [described](#) Israel's siege of Gaza last year, when it was still not comparable in its severity to the current situation, as follows:

**"Is it an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not. The recent developments in Gaza are especially disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention on the part of Israel and its allies to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty. The suggestion that this pattern of conduct is a holocaust-in-the-making represents a rather desperate appeal to the governments of the world and to international public opinion to act urgently to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy."**

The most brutal episode of this "collective tragedy" is what we have seen today.

Israel's war crimes and other grave violations of international law in Gaza as well as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, could not have been perpetrated without the direct or indirect complicity of world governments, particularly the United States, the European Union, Egypt, and other Arab regimes.

While the US government has consistently sponsored, bankrolled and protected from international censure Israel's apartheid and colonial policies against the indigenous people of Palestine, the EU was able in the past to advocate a semblance of respect for

international law and universal human rights. That distinction effectively ended on December 9<sup>th</sup>, when the EU Council decided unanimously to reward Israel's criminal disregard of international law by upgrading the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Israel clearly understood from this decision that the EU condones its actions against the Palestinians under its occupation. Palestinian civil society also got the message: the EU governments have become no less complicit in Israel's war crimes than their US counterpart.

The large majority of world governments, particularly in the global south, share part of the blame, as well. By continuing business as usual with Israel, in trade agreements, arms deals, academic and cultural ties, diplomatic openings, they have provided the necessary background for the complicity of world powers and, consequentially, for Israel's impunity. Furthermore, their inaction within the United Nations is inexcusable.

Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockman, President of the UN General Assembly prescribed in a recent address before the Assembly the only moral way forward for the world's nations in dealing with Israel:

**“More than twenty years ago we in the United Nations took the lead from civil society when we agreed that sanctions were required to provide a nonviolent means of pressuring South Africa to end its violations. Today, perhaps we in the United Nations should consider following the lead of a new generation of civil society, who are calling for a similar non-violent campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions to pressure Israel to end its violations.”**

Now, more than ever, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee, [BNC](#), calls upon international civil society not just to protest and condemn in diverse forms Israel's massacre in Gaza, but also to join and intensify the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel to end its impunity and to hold it accountable for its persistent violation of international law and Palestinian rights. Without sustained, effective pressure by people of conscience the world over, Israel will continue with its gradual, rolling acts of genocide against the Palestinians, burying any prospects for a just peace under the blood and rubble of Gaza, Nablus and Jerusalem.

*\* The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) includes: Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine; General Union of Palestinian Workers; Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions; Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations' Network (PNGO); Federation of Independent Trade Unions; Union of Palestinian Charitable Organizations; Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition; Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI); General Union of Palestinian Women; Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU); Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW); Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI); National Committee to Commemorate the Nakba; Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ); Coalition for Jerusalem; and Palestinian Economic Monitor.*