

BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO END ISRAELI STATE TERROR

- ▶ Stop the Israeli military's bombardment of Gaza!
- ▶ No more brutal force against Palestinians defending their homes and religious sites!
- ▶ Stop the home evictions of Palestinian families
- ▶ For democratically-organised action and defence committees in Palestinian communities
- ▶ For the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from the occupied territories
- ▶ For a mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for genuine national liberation
- ▶ For workers and communities in Israeli cities to organise against far-right violence and sectarian clashes
- ▶ For independent workers' organisations in Palestine and Israel
- ▶ For an independent, democratic socialist Palestinian state, alongside a democratic socialist Israel, with two capitals in Jerusalem and guaranteed democratic rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East

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STOP THE WAR IN GAZA

BUILD A SOCIALIST INTIFADA

The horrific Israeli bombardment of Gaza has been relentless for nearly two weeks, with terrible loss of life and devastation on the ground. The Gazan death toll has reached 227 (as we go to press), more than a quarter of them children. Residential buildings, hospitals and schools have been destroyed. Power and water infrastructure has been hit, adding to the humanitarian catastrophe.

The Socialist Party strongly condemns this massive state terror offensive, which is shocking working people worldwide.

The turn to this bloodshed by the Israeli regime followed weeks of brutal policing in and around Jerusalem's old city; and planned evictions of six Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem. Palestinian outrage was particularly raised by the storming of the al-Aqsa mosque - the third holiest site in Islam - by Israeli security forces on 7 and 10 May.

The failure of capitalist governments across the Middle East and internationally to aid the Palestinians includes the new US administration under Joe Biden. He hasn't demanded a ceasefire, instead saying Israel has "a legitimate right to defend itself" and meekly called for a de-escalation.

Outrage at the Jerusalem events and war on Gaza led to Palestinian eruptions of protest across the occupied territories and solidarity demonstrations in the wider Middle East and globally. Palestinian anger also broke out in cities across Israel. It was met by police repression, together with rampages by far-right Jewish activists - many coming from outside the mixed Jewish-Arab cities to whip up racism and violent clashes.

In the West Bank the expanding Jewish settlements have reduced the

Palestinian areas and further divided them into enclaves, destroying hopes for Palestinians of having their own state. Anger is at boiling point due to the brutal occupation, high unemployment, poverty and lack of services - including, at present, insufficient coronavirus vaccines and treatments.

None of the pro-capitalist Palestinian-based parties offer any solution to all this, including Fatah and Hamas. Instead, Palestinian struggle needs to be based on democratically organised, mass mobilisations - a new intifada.

Hamas forces and other Palestinian militias have fired over 3,000 rockets from Gaza, killing 12 people in Israel, two of them Palestinians and three of them Thai and Indian immigrant workers. These attacks on civilians show desperation but are not a way forward to achieve liberation from oppression. They draw ordinary Israelis closer to right-wing government ministers who respond with increased brutality against the Palestinians and with a vastly greater level of weaponry than the Palestinians have.

Socialists support the Palestinians' right to armed resistance against the Israeli army's brutality - defence which should be democratically decided and controlled. But they also need to aim to divide Israeli society along class lines - winning as many Israeli workers as possible towards supporting a socialist solution for national rights and decent living standards on both sides of the divide.

Palestinian mass protests last month in East Jerusalem succeeded in getting barriers removed next to the old city that were stopping gatherings during Ramadan. This month they managed to get a racist, provocative, Israeli nationalist march cancelled that had planned to pass

through the Arab part of the old city. In addition, protest action led to the postponement of a court case that was expected to ratify the evictions of the six Palestinian families.

An urgent task is to build democratically-run local committees across the Palestinian areas to organise further mass actions. Such committees, linking up with each other, would be important steps towards building a mass, independent, working-class led Palestinian party.

Working-class people in Israel also need to build their own party, independent of capitalist interests. A key factor behind the descent into conflict has been the inability of Israeli prime minister Netanyahu to form a new coalition government after failing to achieve a majority in each of four successive Israeli general elections. His Likud party and allied parties on the right and far right were willing to inflame division to suit their agenda of posing as the strongest defenders of 'law and order'.

However, security for the Jewish population will not be achieved by military means, nor will it be achieved by looking to any of the many brands of Israeli pro-capitalist politician for another solution. Israeli Jewish workers, together with the Palestinian residents of Israel who live and work alongside them, will need to build their own party, one that can challenge capitalist interests.

Challenging capitalism will mean politically adopting a socialist programme on both sides of the national divide: For a socialist Palestine alongside a socialist Israel, as part of a socialist confederation of the Middle East. On that basis it will be possible to lay the basis for bringing the capitalist nightmare of cycles of death and destruction to an end.