

Irish Anti War Movement



Happy New Year ?

LIFT THE HORRIFIC BLOCKADE OF GAZA END THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE

More than two years have passed since the land and sea blockade on Gaza's 1.5 million inhabitants began, and one year since the deadly Israeli attacks in which 1,415 Palestinians were killed, over 5,000 were injured and 325,000 lost their homes. The military assault, which started just after Christmas 2008 showed up the brutal and militaristic nature of the Israeli state, as pictures of dead and wounded defenseless civilians, many of them children, were broadcast to the world.

One year on from this horrific bombardment, no homes or schools have been rebuilt, hospitals are still lacking medicine and equipment, the water and sewage systems have not been repaired and people, especially children and the elderly, are still dying as a direct result of the blockade. According to the UN, Public Health Services are dangerously lacking, children die of basic illnesses such as diarrhea and the population as a whole suffers from malnutrition.

The siege of Gaza by Israel is designed to starve into submission or annihilate totally the 1.5 million Gazans, half of whom are under the age of 18 years. Meanwhile, in the West Bank the land grabbing by the Israelis continues, including house demolitions, expulsions of people from their homes and the building of the wall sealing off Palestinian areas from each other. Assassinations continue: the most recent was on December 26th 2009, when six Palestinians were arbitrarily killed by the Israeli army as people around the world were still celebrating Christmas.

The UN Security Council, the EU and the new US Obama Administration have done nothing to sanction Israel for its actions. Soon after the military assault a year ago, Europe's leading politicians met and laughed with Israeli leaders. The EU continues to grant Israel favourable trading rights. Obama stayed silent throughout the military assault and has done little to alleviate the suffering of Gaza since then. Although a UN fact-finding mission found Israel guilty of war crimes, and most UN member states endorsed the mission's report, the US, predictably, voted against it in November 2009.

To stop this ongoing misery, the siege of Gaza must end and the borders must be opened. Governments have failed to act - we must act instead. We stand in solidarity with the 1300 Peace Activists, including a holocaust survivor, who have converged in Egypt to join the non-violent Gaza Freedom March to the Gaza/Israeli border on New Year's Eve, and demand that they be allowed to enter Gaza.

The Israeli state is now effectively an apartheid state. It should be isolated as South Africa was isolated when it was an apartheid state. World leaders will do nothing but go along with the US and Israel. It is up to people across the world to force governments to take action to sanction Israel and to help the people of Palestine gain their human rights.

The Irish Anti War Movement calls on the Irish public to:

- Support the campaign for an economic and political boycott of Israel
- Demand of the Irish Government to call for the suspension of the Euro Med Association agreement that allows Israel favoured trading status with European countries
- Demand that the Irish Government cease all diplomatic relations with Israel until Israel ends its apartheid policies towards the Palestinians
- Demand that the Irish building company CRH disengages from helping to build the Wall and illegal settlements in the West Bank
- Demand that the Egyptian government opens all the border crossings with Gaza to allow humanitarian aid in and people out, especially those in need of urgent medical assistance

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