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**Communist Party
of Great Britain
(Marxist-Leninist)**



Hands off Gaza!

Victory to the resistance!

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The Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) resolutely condemns Israel's despicable and cowardly military onslaught against the people of Gaza, and it reaffirms its unre-served solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Israeli brutality and arrogance

Since the start of Israel's bombing campaign, on 23 December 2008, several hundred Palestinians – including many children – have been killed, and thousands more have sustained critical injuries. Israel claims that its targets have been exclusively military, but this is manifestly false. For example, more than 50 people (including an entire family of seven young children) were killed when, on 7 January, Israel bombed a UN school being used as a refugee centre.

In the past few weeks, Israel has clamped down even further on supplies of medicines, food and electricity, further exacerbating the already vast humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. This is not 'targeted action'; it is collective punishment.

Israel has rejected international calls for a truce, and refuses even to let foreign journalists into Gaza. It wants to hide its brutal Nazi aggression from the rest of the world. Having for so long painted itself as a little Jewish David in a sea of Arab Goliaths, Israel does not want the world to see the true nature of its "struggle for existence" – that is, murder and criminal occupation.

Israel to blame for breakdown of the ceasefire

Predictably, Israel has claimed that its actions are a legitimate response to Palestinian rocket attacks since the collapse of the ceasefire in late December. This sentiment has been implicitly (and in some cases explicitly) backed by the self-appointed 'international community', which has long relied on Israel as its policeman in the Middle East. As hi-tech bombs were raining down on Palestinian civilians, George Bush thought it appropriate to say: "I understand Israel's desire to protect itself and that the situation now taking place in Gaza was caused by Hamas". His successor, Barack Obama, stated on a recent visit to Sderot (an Israeli town near Gaza): "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that, and I would expect Israelis to do the same thing."

As we have said before, one cannot equate the violence of the oppressed with the violence of the oppressors. Israel is not under siege; it is not an occupied country; its citizens (at least its Jewish citizens) are not denied their basic human rights; its water, electricity and medical supplies have not been cut off; it is not in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, Gaza has over the last two years been effectively turned into a giant concentration camp. Gazans cannot move in or out of their country; the supply of food, electricity, water and medicines has been cut off; frequent Israeli bombing raids take place; the unemployment rate exceeds 80 percent and the people are living a miserable existence well below the poverty line.

Are the Palestinian people expected to simply give up their right to existence? The right to resist occupation is enshrined in international law, and the Palestinian military resistance to Israeli occupation is legitimate and laudable.

Still, one does not need to accept the legitimacy of the Palestinian rocket attacks in order to condemn the massacre that is taking place in Gaza. According to detailed information released by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a grand total of 15 Israelis have died as a result of Qassam rocket attacks since these were first fired over seven years ago (in October 2001). Meanwhile, over 500 Gazans have been killed by the Israeli military in the last two weeks alone. These lopsided figures alone are enough to give lie to Israel's claim that it is simply protecting its citizens from rocket attacks.

If Israel genuinely wanted to stop the Qassam rocket attacks, it could have done so very easily by complying with the terms of the ceasefire, under which it was supposed to lift the blockade against Gaza in order to end the humanitarian crisis there. However, deliveries from aid agencies have been all but completely blocked for several months. Observers from the Red Cross have noted the spread of malnutrition across Gaza. Israel completely failed to respect the ceasefire terms, and therefore should not be surprised that the ceasefire has collapsed. As has happened many times before, Israel has violated the terms of a ceasefire and used the Palestinian response to 'justify' the unjustifiable.

Regime change

Israel's real agenda is clear enough: not happy with the democratic choice of the Palestinian people, it is seeking regime change in Gaza (having already effected regime change in the West Bank). Recently, Foreign Minister Livni stated: "The state of Israel, and a government under me, will make it a strategic objective to topple the Hamas regime in Gaza. The means for doing this should be military, economic and diplomatic." It would be difficult to be clearer than that. Israel and its imperialist backers (including Britain) want to see a Palestinian administration that is willing to squash the struggle for an independent Palestine and that will accept a Palestinian 'state' composed of multiple disconnected Bantustans whose borders are controlled by Israel.

From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free

With its military attacks and its continued settlement activity in the West Bank, Israel has made the two-state solution unachievable. In so doing, it has created the conditions for a one-state solution, and with it the end to the whole racist idea of an ethnically cleansed Jewish state.

We reiterate the call of Khaled Meshaal, leader of Hamas, for a renewed intifada against Israel. Only through the intensification of the Palestinian resistance will Israel be forced to recognise the right of the Palestinians to freedom from colonial occupation. We have full confidence in the ability of the Palestinian resistance to deal a heavy blow to the Israeli military. As the armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine put it in a recent statement: "We will get out from underneath the rubble and fight until the last breath."

As Marx once wrote, "the nation that oppresses another nation forges its own chains". The British working class must do everything within its power to support the cause of Palestinian liberation.