

OPINION

Palestine and the Destruction of Civilization

by Donald Ramotar

Donald Ramotar is a former President of Guyana (2011–2015). Subheads have been added.

Nov. 9—Over the last month we have witnessed the mass slaughter in an indiscriminate way, of the Palestinian people. At the time of writing more than 10,500 Palestinian civilians have been slaughtered. Among them are five thousand children, some were newborn babies.

The Israel apartheid regime is committing genocide and ethnic cleansing; nowhere is safe in the Gaza Strip and in the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River. Hospitals are targeted and bombed, as are ambulances, schools, universities, and basic infrastructure. More than a million people are homeless since the attacks have been on residential homes.

Water is cut off from Gaza, electricity generating stations destroyed, and food is blocked from entering the besieged Gaza area. Even fuel for hospitals is not allowed in. No one is safe. At the time of writing, some 92 United Nations staff members have been killed and 26 injured. Journalists too have been targeted, so far 39 were either shot or died by the bombs raining down on Palestine.

These actions have all been recognized as illegal. They have violated UN Security Council resolutions and international law. Why are they allowed to get away with these fascist-like methods of ethnic cleansing?

The simple truth is that they are supported fully by the United States government and the countries of the European Union. The leaders of these countries have been making pilgrimages to Israel to demonstrate their full support for the apartheid state. The U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense have sat in on cabinet meetings of the Israeli regime.

Israel Is Continuing the *Nakba*

The chorus is that “Israel has a right to defend itself.” This has been the mantra for a while now, but more particularly since the Hamas led attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. In the process, some 1,400 Israeli civilians were killed and some two to three hundred, including some Israeli soldiers, were taken as hostages.

Those who condemn that action of Hamas refuse to consider that Israel created the conditions for what took place Oct. 7. Not only has Israel converted the Gaza Strip into a concentration camp, but they have held more than 5,000 Palestinians in their prisons for years without trial. These include women, many of whom have been abused and children who were also subjected to torture. The only way that Palestinians are released from the Israeli prisons is by an exchange of prisoners. That appears to have been the objective of the Oct. 7 attack, part of which went very wrong.

However, what is taking place is not a case of Israel defending itself. It is Israel and their western backers taking the opportunity to continue the *Nakba*, the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and lands which began in 1948 and has continued without letup.

This situation has exposed the double standards of the “Western democracies” and it has undermined international institutions, such as the United Nations and its bodies such as the International Criminal Court.

The world witnessed the issuance of a warrant for the arrest of the Russian President because the Russian government removed some children out of harm’s way from a war zone in the Ukraine. Now we see the Netanyahu regime killing thousands of children but only a deafening silence is heard on the part of the ICC.

So many civilians are being killed so quickly that places to bury them have run out. Yet no one is speaking of charging those responsible for those

horrendous crimes against humanity. In the meantime, there has been an outcry from the rest of the world for a ceasefire and for a lasting solution to the problem. The Russian, Chinese and many Arab states have called for the establishment of a Palestine state based on the UN resolution which recognized the borders of 1967.

It is apposite to note that the U.S. and EU countries have called for a two-state solution, but they have stayed away from mentioning that it should be based on the 1967 borders. This is troubling because they may be planning to hand over more of Palestinian lands to Israel. This would be creating conditions for further conflicts in the future.

A Permanent Solution

The time has come to find a permanent solution that is just and based on international law. The United Nations Organization must take the lead in this process. The United States, which had pushed out other participants over the years, has ruled itself out as the

only participant. It is not an honest broker; it is totally on the side of the apartheid regime in Israel.

There should be a return to a process which would involve the permanent members of the Security Council. Another option could be to add participants from Latin America, probably Brazil or Mexico and a state from the African Continent, possibly South Africa. To put Israel to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority alone would be a disaster. The people of Palestine have no confidence in Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, and his group in the West Bank. He is seen as an Israeli puppet.

Moreover, they are not equal partners. Israel has enormous power; on the other hand, the Palestinians are almost powerless. Therefore, the logical alternative to direct negotiations between the two contending parties is an international alternative as mentioned above.

International negotiations could lead to a viable two-state solution with the two peoples living side by side in peace. As time passes by, they could develop into friendly relations. Nothing else is likely to work.