

NPK-info

Nederlands Palestina Komitee www.palestina-komitee.nl

Inhoud

Israel en haar staatsterreur ken geen grenzen.

The Palestine Monitor - www.palestinemonitor.org

LAST WEEK in PALESTINE

Sharon's bloodiest month in this conflict: step by step massacre 8 March 2002. Sharon's constant attacks on Palestinians continue unabated: more than 101 Palestinians have been killed in the first 8 days of this month. Since 1 March, Sharon has attacked refugee camps in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Tulkarem, Bethlehem and Gaza, as well as air strikes on other civilian areas

BADIL <http://www.badil.org/New.htm>

Palestinian Refugees Appeal to the United Nations: Stop the SharonGovernment, 2 March 2002

LAW <http://www.lawsociety.org/>

Israeli forces returned to the house of LAW's Director Khader Shkirat, 8 March 2002

MIFTAH <http://www.miftah.org>

- End the Occupation, March 06, 2002

PINA - <http://www.miftah.org>

Zie Amnesty <http://web.amnesty.org/> en

<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/COUNTRIES/ISRAEL/OCCUPIED%20TERRITORIES?OpenView&start=1&count=30>

- Israel/Occupied Territories: Inaction is complicity, 08/03/2002.

[pagina 2](#)

- In Buitenhof op 10-3 pleitte Hans van den Broek voor druk op Israel.

Zie <http://www.vpro.nl/programma/buitenhof/index.shtml?2785571+2848316>

- Midden-Oostenexpert Michael Stein [NRC] beweerde in dat programma o.a. dat Israel in 1967 werd aangevallen en dat nederzettingen niet het probleem zijn; herhaling op 11-3 om 14.30 uur.

- Deze maand komt de VN-mensenrechtencie bijeen in Geneve.

- De Kamercie bespreekt op 19 maart Nederlands positie.

Site <http://www.parlement.nl/ver/vci/hfdframe/vci001.htm>

Nadere informatie op <http://www.unhchr.ch/> indien die site weer toegankelijk is.

[pagina 3](#)

- Op 27 maart rapporteert Mr. John Dugard, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

- Rome: 100,000 demonstrate for Palestine's self-determination and against Zionist occupation.

[pagina 3](#)

- Another Turning Point in the Palestinian Struggle: Nearer the Boiling Point Nassar Ibrahim, Alternative Information Center, Dr. Majed Nassar, Health Work Committees February 2002

[pagina 4](#)

NPK/WL, 10-3-2002 ■

Israel/Occupied Territories: Inaction is complicity

AI Index: MDE 15/017/2002 Publish date: 08/03/2002

Amnesty International called on the international community to act immediately to save Palestinian and Israeli lives by insisting on an international presence in Israel's Occupied Territories.

Over the past ten days, at least 130 Palestinians have been killed. At least 18 wounded Palestinians have reportedly died because of denial of access of medical services. In the same period, at least 33 Israelis have been killed, including 17 civilians.

"No country should stand on the sidelines. Palestinian and Israeli children are slaughtered, ambulances carrying wounded Palestinians shot at, Palestinians homes are demolished and their towns and villages sealed off. Remaining silent amounts to condoning the escalation of killings, violence and retaliation," said Amnesty International.

"Now is the time to act."

"The international community has made many statements and sent many delegates, but these efforts have failed to prevent an escalating human rights crisis," added Amnesty International.

"AI has repeatedly called on the Israeli Government to halt unlawful killings and on Palestinian armed groups to cease killing civilians," said Amnesty International. "International monitors with a strong human rights component can help to stop unlawful killings, and the human suffering caused by the bombings, the siege and demolition of homes in Gaza and the West Bank."

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank, occupied by Israel in 1967, are governed by the rules of human rights and humanitarian law. Those living under occupation are protected by the rules of the Fourth Geneva Convention which describe as "grave breaches" acts such as wilful killing, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity.

"Yet grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and serious violations of human rights standards are daily currency in the Occupied Territories," Amnesty International emphasized.

The number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the current intifada in September 2000 has now reached more than 1000. The great majority of those killed, who include more than 200 children, were killed unlawfully when no lives were in danger. More than 600 houses have been demolished. In an act of collective

punishment villages and towns in the West Bank are consistently sealed off by barriers manned by soldiers or made of earth, concrete blocks or trenches. At the same time at least 300 Israelis have been killed, including at least 200 civilians, among them over 50 children.

The Commission of Inquiry established by the UN Commission on Human Rights called in March 2001 for an effective international human rights monitoring presence to be "established immediately and constituted in such a manner as to reflect a sense of urgency about protecting the human rights of the Palestinian people".

A year on, this urgent call remains unheeded. Respect for human rights and humanitarian law is the only viable path towards lasting peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Armed Palestinian groups have also an obligation to respect the Geneva Conventions which forbid the targeting of civilians. "But breaches in humanitarian law by an armed group can never justify a state's breaches of fundamental principles of human rights and humanitarian law it has solemnly sworn to uphold".

Background

Since 27 February Israeli troops have entered Palestinian refugee camps allegedly in order to arrest members of armed Palestinian groups. After raids in Balata refugee camp in Nablus and Jenin refugee camp, they also entered Aida and Deheishe refugee camps in Bethlehem, camps in the Gaza Strip and Tulkarem camp. In these camps, which house Palestinians exiled from their homes after 1948 and have a high density population, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) have used hellfire missiles from Apache helicopters, tank rounds and bullets from heavy machine guns mounted on Merkava tanks. This represents a disproportionate use of lethal force and endangers the lives of ordinary people in the camps. In addition, the IDF in its action over the past three days has frequently targeted ambulances, killing five Palestinian medical workers including the director of a hospital in Bethlehem and the head of Jenin emergency services, while preventing or hindering ambulances from carrying away wounded Palestinians.

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <<http://www.amnesty.org>> ■

Agenda vc Buitenlandse Zaken

Laatste wijziging: 08-03-02, 08:35 uur

dinsdag 19 maart 2002

Algemeen overleg: 15:30 tot ca. 17:30 uur in de Groen van Prinstererzaal 's-Gravenhage, 14 februari 2002

Aan: De leden en plaatsvervangende leden van de vaste commissie voor Buitenlandse Zaken

i.a.a.: de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken Vergadering van Uw commissie op: dinsdag 19 maart 2002 van 15.30 tot ca. 17.30 uur

Agenda:

Algemeen overleg met de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken over de instructie voor de Nederlandse delegatie naar de jaarlijkse bijeenkomst van de Commissie voor de Mensenrechten van de VN (20 maart tot 27 april a.s. in Genève). De Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken is verzocht om de instructie voorafgaande aan het AO aan de Kamer toe te zenden.

Griffier: T.J.E. van Toor ■

Rome: 100,000 demonstrate for Palestine's self-determination and against Zionist occupation

Despite heavy rain and the boycott by the big mass media as well as by a big part of the pacifist left, 100,000 people demonstrated yesterday, March 9, in Rome in solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada. This was, in fact, the biggest demonstration in support of the Palestinian cause ever in Italy. Moreover, there is no doubt that this was also the biggest mass manifestation in support of Intifada that has ever taken place in a western country.

The idea to hold this demonstration was launched in October last year by the Forum for Palestine. Thanks to the efforts of a united basis committee (part of which was the Italian section of the Anti-imperialist Camp) this idea could become reality. The call for this demonstration included five points:

- Withdrawal of the Israeli army from the occupied territories;
- Dismantlement of all Zionist colonial settlements;
- Right to return for the Palestinian refugees;
- Foundation of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital;
- International observation against Israeli violence.

Finally, the call included the request to the Palestinian National Authority to release A. Saadat, secretary of PFLP, as well as all other militants of Intifada who have been arrested due to Israeli, US and European pressure.

Today, March 10, many newspapers have tried to distort

this marvellous demonstration describing it as one of the usual pacifist marches, which call for equal distance from both the Zionist butchers and Palestinian victims, which condemn any form of violence "from any side". This is a lie. Yesterday's demonstration had a clear anti-imperialist character. It called for the legitimate right of Palestinians to use whatever means they consider appropriate in order to free Palestine. It confirmed that whoever struggles for liberation from occupation and oppression can not be considered a terrorist. To the contrary, the US and NATO are terrorists since they carry out a strategy of permanent war in order to maintain their imperial supremacy by heinous means like bombing of Yugoslavia and Afghanistan as well as imposing criminal embargos on Iraq and Cuba.

The extraordinary success of yesterday's demonstration represents a big step forward for the whole international anti-imperialist movement. It gives us momentum to continue our common struggle, to intensify the campaigns in solidarity with Intifada as well as with all peoples who demand an end to the wars of oppression and capitalist globalisation.

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Another Turning Point in the Palestinian Struggle: Nearer the Boiling Point

*Nassar Ibrahim, Alternative Information Center
Dr. Majed Nassar, Health Work Committees,
February 2002*

The Palestinian resistance movement against the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian lands has reached another series of turning points. Ariel Sharon's assumption of power marked the first, and President Arafat's imprisonment in Ramallah the second. The third is that, in the face of these developments, Israel and the United States have made no concessions. Instead, they have colluded to plague the Palestinian people with further injustices, and in doing so, they have increased our will to resist. As these turning points bring us nearer the boiling point, the steadfastness of the Palestinian people has reached legendary proportions in the face of US-sponsored Zionist aggression.

The election of Sharon, after Barak failed to crush the Intifada, reflects the rightward, religious shift of the Israeli society, once embodied by Netanyahu, who, despite increasing his government's oppressive measures, also failed to end the resistance movement. Sharon, the latest King of the Israel, has attempted to avoid the mistakes of Netanyahu by forging a national unity coalition, which the Labor Party has accepted, resulting in the strongest government since the establishment of the State of Israel. Sharon triumphed in the elections most of all due to his promise to crush the Intifada within a hundred days, ostensibly to bring security to the citizens of Israel. Despite his differences with the Labor Party, and the deteriorating social and economic situation within Israel, Sharon has managed to keep the national unity government fully debriefed in its overriding quest to defeat the Intifada. The differences between him and Barak became irrelevant or "not that big," as Eli Goldschmidt, the publicity head of Barak's campaign, stated on 2 December 2001 to the Guardian. And a role was given to Shimon Peres: to whitewash Israel.

Although Sharon is leading the strongest government yet, he is trapped within it. He won the votes of his extreme, right wing followers by promising that the "Land of Israel" would not be partitioned. For the Labor Party and for a person like Shimon Peres, this was not an intrinsically controversial stance, despite that forfeiting some land is consistent with the Labor Party program.

Sharon and Shimon Peres continued the same policy of confiscating Palestinian land, building settlements, and

never reaching an agreement. Again the Labor Party did not envision any controversy, as it too, from the era of Barak to that of Shimon Peres, had failed to reach or seriously pursue an agreement. As Palestinian resistance continues against the Israeli occupation, and as Sharon refuses to accept that the only solution is to end the occupation, he still struggles to reverse the wheels of progress, based on his conviction that Palestinians have no rights in Palestine. All his efforts thus far have not brought him any closer to the objectives of peace and security that he set before the Israeli public. Today the security of the Israeli public is at its lowest point, and the economy is deteriorating, without the government proposing any viable remedy. The heroic resistance movement being waged by Palestinians, even at the cost of martyrdom, has defeated Sharon's military operations and exposed as hollow his pledge to usher in an era of security and peace. The Israeli public is raising questions that Sharon is unable to answer. The interview Sharon gave to the Israeli TV Channel One in January 2002, offers poignant testimony to his apathy and the public's unrest. Inconsistencies and confrontations inside Israeli society as well as within the Israeli government are also reaching a dangerous simmer. Unrest has spread from injured and disabled Israelis to Israeli farmers to tourist branch workers and beyond. Meanwhile, there have been recurrent conflicts between Sharon and Peres, as well as between Sharon and Burg, the head of the Israeli Knesset.

Most encouraging is that an increasing number of Israeli soldiers, presently about 250, are refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Sharon's options involve the following question. If the Palestinians will accept seven apples out of a hundred, why should the Israelis offer them even that many? By increasing pressure on the Palestinians, Sharon perhaps assumes that they would accept as few as three apples, for example. And not necessarily three good apples!

From this point of view we can analyze Sharon's options.

First: Reoccupation of the autonomous areas.

Sharon and the Likud Party never have been fond of a partition or ceding land to the Palestinians. The separation model is an idea of the Labor government. Sharon believes that Israel can keep all the land and at the same time control the Palestinians. (If the Palestinians do not like this, he reasons, then they can leave.) This option recalls the situation before Oslo, which remains unacceptable to the world community and at the same time threatens to confront Israel with responsibilities for three million additional civilians.

Furthermore, this situation would bring soldiers into the midst of Palestinians, likely causing increased friction and loss of Israeli life. This cannot be viewed as an

acceptable solution, much less as an ideal. Also it is not a course supported by the Israeli public, a recent poll having found 58 percent of it opposed to a reoccupation and 38 percent in favor.

Second: Continue the siege-and-assassination policy, destroying the infrastructure and Palestinian economy.

A majority of the Israeli public seems to support this option, although more voices of protest are rising against it, taking heed that the increasingly effective Palestinian resistance movement is wreaking sorrow upon average Israelis. Two days ago more than ten thousand Israelis demonstrated against Sharon's policy, in favor of ending the Israeli occupation. Former members of the Israeli government, such as Yossi Sarid from the Meretz Party, have declared openly that Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories, dismantle the settlements, and divide Jerusalem between the Palestinians and the Israelis. (Interestingly, during Labor Party governments, the Meretz Party refrained from taking this position.) So far, the Israeli government has made every attempt to destroy Palestine's infrastructure and hold its three million residents in captivity, including President Arafat. To date this policy has proven to be counterproductive. The Palestinian resistance movement is stronger than before, and, after years of being divided in the aftermath of Oslo, the people are uniting behind Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.

Third: Replacement of Arafat and the Authority

The unwillingness of the United States and Israel and the inexplicable hesitation of the European Union to promote democratic structures in Palestine has led to a so-called Catch 22. Holding village, council, and city elections was a public Palestinian demand that, unfortunately, has never been taken seriously -- not even when many Palestinians requested that the European Union make its support for the Palestinian Authority contingent upon these elections being held.

President Arafat, whether loved or hated, is an elected official who embodies legitimacy; it is appropriate that he is the only one who can sanction official agreements. Replacing Arafat cannot succeed, no matter who is chosen. The Palestinian society, though in transition, has a vibrancy found nowhere else in the Arab World or the Third World. The political parties as well as the Palestinian public are sufficiently responsible and mature to reject any imposed authority. As such, any imposed authority is doomed to failure, as is any authority that sanctions such an agreement. It is noteworthy that the European Union acknowledged and supported this fact at the foreign ministers' conference of in February 2002. It also called for new elections.

Fourth: Transfer and/or more massacres

In view of the attention of the international community

on Palestine, this option is unrealistic to the point of being hazardous for Israel. It could be one final act committed by an angry Sharon before finally leaving the Palestinian territories, fully aware that no neighboring country would be ready to receive three million Palestinians.

Fifth: Palestine in Jordan

This Likud option, Sharon's most lovable vision, is as foolish as it is impractical. It clearly demonstrates Sharon's colonial mentality. Neither the people of Jordan nor the Palestinians themselves will consent to having it imposed upon them. As this option is impossible to implement, it would only fuel the fire that already has begun to rampage through the Middle East.

Sixth: Unilateral withdrawal

This option contradicts Sharon's promises to his public, and it also fails to address the interrelated questions of settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem. When Sharon declared his acceptance in principle of a Palestinian State, he made it clear that such a state would have to conform to standards dictated by Israel. (He also did not specify any borders.) The unilateral withdrawal as defined in Sharon's plan would only cement the existing situation and thus provoke another resistance movement.

Seventh: The Jordanian option

As discussed for years, a confederation could be established between Jordan and Palestine. However, both King Hussein and his son King Abdullah have flatly rejected the possibility of placing the Jordanian army, instead of the Israeli Army, in control of the Palestinians. This being so, Palestinian efforts will be more wisely directed elsewhere.

Eighth: Complete withdrawal to the 1967 borders, including Jerusalem.

Although an option for Israel, Sharon and the majority of the Israeli public are not considering it at present. Nevertheless, an increasing minority within Israel is recognizing that this option finally might break the cycle of violence and establish security for everyone involved. This option is gaining popularity among those Israelis who appreciate that any effective security solution must be based upon political justice.

Ninth: Regionalizing the conflict

This option has always been an emergency exit for Israel's problems. At the beginning of the Intifada, Former Prime Minister Barak threatened Lebanon and Syria to direct attention away from his more immediate, domestic concerns. Bill Clinton, aware that US interests lay in minimizing conflict, informed him that that it was the improper moment to risk expanding the conflict. Now with President Bush in office in Washington eager to crusade against International terrorism, the United

States has threatened Iraq and Iran and other allegedly "evil" powers with sustained wars. It is possible that Israel will take the same approach as its foreign sponsors. The success of that technique will depend on the ability of the invaded countries to strike back.

Sharon's policy of continuing the occupation with destructive techniques depends on the following elements:

1. Unconditional support from the United States;
2. European silence (recently broken);
3. Arab impotence;
4. Weakness in the ranks of Israeli opposition.

Sharon is convinced that the Palestinian people finally will surrender under the increasing pressure of the Israeli military and the continuous destruction of the economy and the Palestinian authority. It is of lesser importance for Sharon if the New Middle East of Shimon Peres is not realized. It is feasible for Sharon to survive the harm that the Palestinian resistance movement is inflicting upon the Israeli society. He is capable of absorbing blows and finally is unconcerned about international reactions, as long as he maintained US support.

The following questions remain unanswered. How long can Israeli society endure the Intifada? How long can the Israeli economy bear up given its neglect? How long can the Israeli tourism industry remain paralyzed? Can Sharon face the Israeli public and win the coming elections? Will he adopt a still more aggressive posture beforehand?

Sharon will not be able to impose a new authority on the Palestinian people. It simply lacks the necessary legitimacy. He will not be able to install a junta ala South America nor a Fascist regime ala Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. These have no roots in Palestinian society and thus no hope for any constituency. There is every indication that the solution Sharon is trying to impose on the Palestinian people depends on both the power of Israel and the impotence of the Arab Countries.

Regardless of the course chosen by Israel, the resistance of the Palestinian people has proven more than equal to the challenges before it. The Palestinian people depend on their ability to sustain the pressure, to remain steadfast and to continue the resistance movement. It is an inspiring legacy that they have resisted successfully thus far and reveal no signs of losing their resolve as the Intifada escalates.

The boiling point is fast approaching, and the Palestinians have demonstrated their unwillingness to surrender to a vastly stronger enemy. Surrender, now or ever, is an alternative as unacceptable as the occupation itself. Any solution that does not address the repercussions of Israeli occupation and settlement will fail. In

addition, the Israeli dilemma and the Palestinian catastrophe cannot be resolved through humanitarian bribes, such as anti-poverty programs, human rights campaigns, or love-thy-enemy festivals. Such courses have been followed before, in the post-Oslo years, and their failure was predictable.

The ability of the Palestinian people to pass the boiling point is connected to two factors: First, steadfastness against the Israeli oppression, an area in which the Palestinians have been very successful so far. Second, the provision of all ingredients necessary for remaining steadfast. These include unifying the Palestinians around the common objective of ending the Israeli occupation, halting the political arrests, to which Palestinian society is highly sensitive, and eradicating corruption and monopoly distribution.

No Palestinian accepts that the political parties that have struggled over the last fifty years should be regarded as "terrorist organizations," simply because their cause of liberation is anathema to the United States and its stepchild Israel. Accepting Zionist-imposed terminology would, as intended, defeat the Palestinian spirit. Confronting Palestinian problems, however, is a very necessary and positive task. For example, respecting the law, promoting education, securing basic health care, and respecting women are objectives that reaffirm the culture of resistance to the deceit that has reigned for seven years. All trends toward igniting religious differences and confrontations must be rejected immediately. Finally, the democratic and pluralistic features of Palestinian society should be protected, nurtured, and expanded.

In addition, our goals must be clarified and presented accurately before the world. The Palestinian cause is so intrinsically just that it does not require superficial phrases or misleading terms. The basis for it is that the Palestinians are waging a legitimate resistance movement against an illegal military occupation. Stronger relations should be maintained with the progressive Israeli forces that are attempting to assume responsibility for changing the inhumane system imposed by their government. Though currently all Arab governments appear to have succumbed to US hegemony, the Arab masses fully grasp the depth of the Palestinian problem and empathize with the Intifida.

Arab governments and their citizens have a responsibility to join together in demonstrating legitimacy for the Palestinian Authority. The countervailing Israeli attempt seeks to turn Palestinian leaders into Israeli pawns and thereby sabotage the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority internally. The current Intifada, however, makes clear that the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority are poised to overcome all adversity posed by Sharon and his government. ■