

RMS Statement on the Genocide in Palestine

Revolutionary Marxist Students expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people's heroic national liberation struggle against the Zionist state of Israel and its imperialist enabler the United States. We condemn the ongoing Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people and the apartheid conditions enforced thereby. We denounce the U.S.'s consistent role as the supplier and facilitator of the Israeli occupation and affirm the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, right to return, and right to wage armed struggle for their liberation. RMS calls on all progressive and revolutionary forces to show solidarity with the Palestinian national liberation struggle and to condemn the Israeli invasion and occupation.

In the spirit of efforts happening all over the world to help advance the Palestinians struggle, we hope to be able to contribute as well in sharing some provisional analysis of the situation. We would be remiss to not acknowledge that we here in the U.S. cannot provide the Palestinian people with the desperately needed strategy for a revolutionary victory against the Israeli state. What we can do is make some observations and insights on the current situation. We welcome any and all criticism and disagreement, in the name of furthering that strategy.

The narrative that has emerged in the mainstream U.S. media about the events of October 7th is fairly straightforward: under the cover of a rocket barrage, Hamas militants broke through the Gaza border fence and entered into Israel where they occupied several villages and Kibbutzim¹. Hamas is then said to have carried out a series of massacres, including beheading toddlers or infants,² killing numerous Israeli civilians in their homes, and attacking attendees at a music festival.³ After a few days the Israeli military was able to secure the area around the Gaza strip, and the Israeli government said that 1400 Israelis were dead⁴. These stories of carnage and destruction have served as a *casus belli* for Israel's subsequent brutal bombardment and recently launched ground invasion of the Gaza strip, leading U.S. politicians to try to out-do one another emphasizing their "unshakable" support for Israel⁵ (Biden) or asserting that there should be "no limit" to the number of civilians in Gaza that Israel is permitted to murder (Lindsey Graham⁶). Since the first US Senator began to speak in favor of a ceasefire (Dick Durban⁷), a sector of

¹ See the initial coverage from the New York Times, here:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/world/middleeast/israel-netanyahu-hamas-attack.html>

² A claim uncritically repeated by numerous media outlets internationally, who later had to admit the claim could not be verified (e.g. CNN: <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1712132220809298163>).

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/08/middleeast/hamas-videos-visual-timeline/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/31/israel-attack-victims-forensic-identification/>

⁵ See Biden's short October 11th remarks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKh8a7a5e6Q>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/01/lindsey-graham-israel-hamas-war-civilian-casualties>

⁷ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-palestine-war-gaza-bernie-sanders-ceasefire-progressive-base-alienating>

politicians have begun to call for a “short-term stop” in the war,⁸ but vast military support for Israel from the United States remains undeterred.

The pro-Israeli camp emphasizes that October 7th is the “bloodiest day in Israel’s history”⁸ (which is only true if one does not count the Palestinian dead) and cynically evokes the memory of the Holocaust⁹ to justify Israel’s crimes as “self-defense.” This narrative has been used to some effect by the Zionists to justify their bombardment and war crimes in Gaza and get at least tacit support from the U.S. and countries like Germany and the U.K. for carrying out their long-held plan for the ethnic cleansing of the Gaza strip.¹⁰ It is thus worthwhile to examine some of the facts that have emerged since October 7th which paint a different picture.

On October 7th, Hamas was able to break down an unguarded part of the fence surrounding Gaza and push into a number of kibbutzim and towns, remaining active and nearly unopposed in the area for around eight hours before the IDF responded¹¹. The failure of Israel’s military to respond quickly is striking, especially given the mythology surrounding Israel’s immense military capabilities and the fact that Israel was reportedly warned by Egypt about these attacks¹². It’s not clear, at present, how many of the more gruesome attacks in Israel can be unambiguously attributed to Hamas fighters, since members of other groups and Gazan civilians also went through the fence¹³, but it seems increasingly clear that almost half of the Israelis that were killed were combatants¹⁴ (soldiers or police) with the vast majority (roughly 97%) being adults.¹⁵ In addition to this, reports from IDF soldiers who were involved in combatting the Hamas attack on October 7th have revealed that hundreds of the Israeli civilians causalities in said attack were killed not by Hamas fighters but were instead killed by indiscriminate air strikes conducted by Israeli Apache attack helicopters.¹⁶ Captives have been released by Hamas who’ve described humane treatment and Hamas’ commitment to following the Geneva convention to the letter.¹⁷ On the other hand, Israel has reportedly been treating captives brutally, subjecting them to torture

⁸ <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2023/10/12/hamass-attack-was-the-bloodiest-in-israels-history>

⁹ Israeli ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, has been wearing a Star of David reading “Never Again” to the UN General Assembly <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/why-gilad-erdan-israels-un-ambassador-wears-a-star-of-david/ar-AA1jliz1>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/middleeasteye/status/1723544880998191117>

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67056987>

¹² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-intelligence-official-says-israel-ignored-repeated-warnings-of-something-big/>

¹³ <https://seymourhersh.substack.com/p/the-mysteries-of-october-7>

¹⁴ <https://new.thecradle.co/articles/what-really-happened-on-7th-october>

¹⁵ <https://new.thecradle.co/articles/what-really-happened-on-7th-october>

¹⁶ <https://middleeastobserver.org/2023/10/29/new-evidence-that-idf-shelled-israeli-citizens-on-oct-7-killing-over-a-hundred/>

¹⁷ https://www.democracynow.org/2023/10/24/shalom_hamas_hostage_release_handshake_video

and even killings¹⁸. These basic facts are critical to understanding the flurry of numbers around kidnappings, killing, and rapes, that the Israeli state and other forces in mainstream media repeat. While it's true that Hamas has killed Israeli civilians, the claims of Israel regarding Hamas' uniquely excessive brutality should be doubted, especially compared to the sheer amount of Palestinian civilians (as of now 10,000) killed by Israel as a response to Hamas' action.¹⁹ It's clear given the genocidal actions taken by the Israeli state following the attack that reducing civilian death is not a motivating principle for the Israeli occupation.

There is also, as mentioned, evidence that a substantial portion of the Israeli dead were killed by the IDF. The Gray Zone reported that at kibbutz Be'eri the IDF shelled homes in which Israelis sheltered or were held hostage²⁰, and at the "peace rave" IDF soldiers reportedly opened fire into crowds of unarmed civilian festivalgoers, contributing to the death count²¹ for which Hamas alone has been held responsible. For the Israeli ruling class, the lives of a few hundred more Israelis don't seem to have been much of a concern, and for the media, the inflated death count serves as a better justification for calling Hamas "worse than ISIS" and thereby building domestic public support for a major military campaign against Gaza. The casual attitude taken by the IDF towards killing Israeli civilians renders the claim that Israel is a safe homeland for the Jews something of a sick joke²².

Considering Israel's prior knowledge from Egypt of a possible attack shortly before October 7th,²³ it seems possible at this point that Israel knowingly allowed most of these attacks to occur, killed many of their own civilians, and then used these events to make a case for wiping Gaza off the map. At the very least, the Israeli state has found the attack convenient and made quick use of it to launch their brutal assault on the Palestinian people. While this is a clear sign of the Israeli state's "at any cost" mentality, it should also serve as an exposure to the Israeli people that the Israeli state has little interest in actually protecting them, and instead views them as expendable as the state plans to do whatever it takes to destroy Gaza.²⁴

¹⁸ <https://seymourhersh.substack.com/p/how-the-hostage-crisis-could-end>

¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/pressure-israel-over-civilians-steps-up-ceasefire-calls-rebuffed-2023-11-06/>

²⁰ <https://thegrayzone.com/2023/10/27/israels-military-shelled-burning-tanks-helicopters/>

²¹ <https://new.thecradle.co/articles/what-really-happened-on-7th-october>

²² In addition to the above points, there has been relatively clear coverage even in the liberal media indicating that Netanyahu is doing next to nothing to recover Israeli hostages, which is an additional aspect that is sharpening the contradiction between Israeli people and ruling class <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/20/1207367313/more-than-200-hostages-are-held-in-gaza-their-families-lack-needed-information>

²³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67082047>

²⁴ Israeli war crimes and atrocities have been well-documented in the conflict, such as the November 3rd airstrike on an ambulance convoy at Al-Shifa Hospital which the Israeli government admitted it carried out (<https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/03/middleeast/casualties-gazas-shifa-hospital-idf/index.html>) or the October 13th assassination of Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah in southern Lebanon (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/rsf-says-killing-reuters-journalist-lebanon-targeted-strike-2023-10-29/>) as well as the ongoing collective punishment of the residents of the Gaza strip via Israel's food, water, and energy blockade, killing of massive numbers of children in what even the U.N. calls a "graveyard for children"

Israel's aims in attacking Gaza are clear from observation, but by way of confirmation, Israeli military plans for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza were recently leaked,²⁵ making the ultimate aim of this violence undeniable. The leak outlines plans to expel the Palestinians in Gaza to the Sinai desert to live in tents after carrying out “intensive ground operations” and a huge bombing campaign. The document even details the push-back such a move would likely face from the international community, showing that Israeli elites know precisely what they are doing: consciously striving to stage a repeat of 1948, when members of the Irgun and the Haganah, directed by David Ben-Gurion and others, carried out systematic and calculated atrocities as a means to expel some 700,000 Palestinians from their land and seize their homes and property²⁶.

While the ultimate responsibility for such a vicious and brutal act lie with the Israeli government, it is the responsibility of liberation forces to take into account how the enemy will respond, and from that account, evaluate if a given action or campaign makes sense. Given this, the Hamas attack on October 7th should be evaluated for its strategy. It is important that such an evaluation be made, as past experiences teach us the pitfalls of not providing a deeper analysis of strategy, both from within and without the Palestinian liberation struggle. Take, for example, the revolutionary period of 1967-1977: While the PLO and its member organizations bravely and heroically resisted the brutal Zionist onslaught both in and outside of Palestine, various political errors (mainly the overemphasis on training resistance fighters and carrying out military strikes as opposed to a more diverse strategy as deployed in the Chinese, Vietnamese and Algerian national liberation struggles) stunted the movement’s overall potential in bringing an end to Zionist oppression and colonization. However, the left both within the PLO (as represented by the PFLP and the DFLP) as well as the international Communist movement largely did not seek to criticize and revise the negative political line put forward by the PLO (Fatah in particular) and instead tailed said political line, contributing to the Palestinian national liberation movement of the time meeting a political impasse.²⁷ While Hamas may turn out to have the ability to carry on military operations for a good length of time using their tunnel network and could thus make Israel’s ground assault extremely costly, it is also possible that Israel is able to carry out a second Nakba, whether or not Hamas offers stiff resistance. If that turns out to be the case, it would represent a massive regression and set-back for the Palestinian struggle. We hope to be wrong about that possibility but it is not clear how this will play out as of yet.

Further, even though Hamas is the largest force in Palestine fighting back against Israel, alone will not bring about Palestinian liberation. For example: in the same line of Hamas’s charter they write about both “from the river to the sea” but also support the 1967 borders which means a two-state solution.²⁸ This displays their contradictory position on the route to Palestinian libera-

(<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/un-chief-says-gaza-is-graveyard-for-children-as-death-toll-climbs/article/A1jumtq>), increasing settler attacks in the West Bank (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143087>), and so on.

²⁵ <https://twitter.com/mtracey/status/1718790713377178007>

²⁶ For a thorough account of this consciously planned and executed campaign of terroristic violence and displacement see Ilan Pappe’s book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*.

²⁷ Baumgarten Helena, “The Three Faces/Phases of Palestinian Nationalism”, 2005
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2005.34.4.25#>

²⁸ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-2017-document-full>

tion. A geographically-complete liberation and a continued two-state occupation are not compatible. The two-state solution sells out the Palestinian national cause and makes massive concessions to Zionism (all the 1948 territory). Only through the implementation of one secular and democratic state for both Israelis and Palestinians in place of the religious-fascist state currently ruling over the region can this brutal apartheid come to an end. But Hamas advocates against this, leading only to buying time before the Zionist project attempts to take Palestine again. A one state solution for both Palestinians and Israelis who are against the occupation can only be established through a unity of both groups which much of the above evidence points towards Hamas not being likely to push for.

Historical precedent proves the need for such an alliance of both the colonized and colonizer working classes in ending Apartheid, as seen in the South African example. In South Africa, while less than 10% of the population was white, an alliance with the working class of said population was not only possible, but necessary for the ending of Apartheid regime, as shown in the organization of and critical actions performed by the cross-racial Congress of South African Trade Unions in the 1980s and 1990s²⁹. Within the bounds of pre-1948 Palestine (not including those Palestinians who reside in neighboring states), the Israeli population makes up about 60% of the population with around 47% of the total population between the river and the sea being Jewish³⁰, a great deal more than the 10% figure for white Afrikaaners in South Africa. As such, it would then follow that in order to wage any sort of successful national liberation struggle in Palestine, a significant section of the working Israeli masses would have to turn against the apartheid state and link up with the Palestinians and that such an alliance across apartheid is historically possible. This is not to say South Africa is a model example of a struggle similar to the Palestinians, but that is all the more reason to study its history, understand what went right, what went wrong, and what mistakes to avoid.

Hamas's support for the two-state solution is only one indication that the organization is a dead end for complete Palestinian liberation. Besides its clear ties to and support from sub-imperialist forces such as Iran and Qatar,^{31,32} further evidence comes from the fact that Hamas has actively supported the ongoing disunity between Gaza and the West Bank, a dynamic which only benefits the Zionist project³³. The more conservative section of the Israeli ruling class, represented by Netanyahu, has clearly judged that Hamas as a political entity can never lead a successful overthrow

²⁹ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/congress-south-african-trade-unions-cosatu://www.sahistory.org.za/article/congress-south-african-trade-unions-cosatu>

³⁰ 73.6% of the Israeli population of 9,656,000 is Jewish meaning there are around 7,106,816 Jews in Israel. The total population of Israel (9,656,000), the West Bank (2,949,246), and Gaza (2,375,259) is 14,980,505 giving a figure of 7,106,816 Jews out of a total population of 14,980,505, or around 47%, between the river and the sea (demographic figures taken from Wikipedia).

³¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-cash-to-crypto-global-finance-maze-israels-sights-2023-10-16/>

³² <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/26/1208456496/iran-hamas-axis-of-resistance-hezbollah-israel>

³³ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2022.2158805>

of the Israeli state, and therefore Hamas's existence is beneficial to them, in that it provides a foil to their ongoing brutal assault on Palestine. This judgement is encapsulated in Netanyahu's statement to other members of the Likud party in 2019 that, "Anyone who wants to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state has to support bolstering Hamas and transferring money to Hamas...This is part of our strategy – to isolate the Palestinians in Gaza from the Palestinians in the West Bank."³⁴ Israel then funneled money through Qatar to Hamas.³⁵ After Hamas' attack, this seemed like a misstep on Netanyahu's part, but now could turn out to have been the correct play to finalize these horrific leaked plans of ethnic cleansing. With the information released it's clear Israel is hoping to capitalize off of Hamas's attacks as a basis for the ethnic cleansing of the whole region of Gaza. This must be opposed. As usual during wartime, the Israeli propaganda machine is in full swing, obscuring the reality of this situation and doing its best to convince the world and Israeli people that Israel is still the supposed safe land for Jews. Yet it has become clear that the Jewish peoples interest do not come first, but rather the interests of the Israeli ruling class.

To conclude, while this genocide is being committed by Israel and supported by the ruling class of the US and other Zionist supporting regimes like Germany, Hamas as an organization should not be unconditionally supported solely due to their involvement in the Palestinian liberation struggle. We should critically analyze Hamas' strategy, role in liberation struggles, and their ultimate goals regarding the Palestinian and Israeli people especially when considering their backed by reactionary leadership of countries such as Iran and Qatar. The situation is developing fast and as of now could go several different ways, which is why the analysis we provided can only relate to a snapshot of current events. There is a need to keep up with future development and critically assess the forces at play. Our primary role in the United States is to understand and oppose our own state's involvement in this genocide. While the US bourgeois ruling class is in power, they will continue to impose their imperialist plans worldwide. As long as this is the case, class conscious American people need to stand by and support international liberation struggles. Part of this involves building a solid anti-imperialist movement guided by thorough analysis of the given situation. To support the Palestinians in the fight for liberation, we need to create the conditions here so that the US ruling class is unable to continue their imperialist intervention in Palestine and elsewhere.

With all the nuances to consider, we stand clearly against the fascist actions of the Israeli state and support the liberation of Palestine and its people — From the river, to the sea!

³⁴ <https://archive.ph/2023.10.10-030658/https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-09/ty-article/.premium/another-concept-implodes-israel-cant-be-managed-by-a-criminal-defendant/0000018b-1382-d2fc-a59fd39b5dbf0000#selection-1145.1-1145.313>

³⁵ <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Netanyahu-Money-to-Hamas-part-of-strategy-to-keep-Palestinians-divided-583082>