

South African Freedom Day 30 Years Later. “The Liberation of Palestine”

Today the country is playing a leading role in the global struggle for Palestinian liberation

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President Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected head-of-state in the Republic of South Africa, said during the final phases of the transition from apartheid settler-colonialism to non-racial democracy, that “our freedom remains incomplete without the liberation of the Palestinians.”

This statement takes on an even more poignant character in light of the developments of the last seven months in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

At present, approximately 35,000 people have been killed by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7 where resistance organizations based in the Gaza Strip launched an offensive operation against the Zionist state. The massive bombing operations and ground offensive by the IDF has drawn the opprobrium of billions of people around the world.

Mass demonstrations, boycotts, blockades, cultural presentations, petitions and electoral campaigns have been launched demanding an end to the siege of Gaza and the total independence of the Palestinian people under their own sovereign state. On college and university campuses in the United States and other countries from Western Europe to Australia, students have built encampments along with taking over buildings to demand the complete divestment of these educational institutions from entities that engage in business dealings and other forms of cooperation with the State of Israel.

The African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party in South Africa, has been a longtime

ally of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority. In recent months, the ANC government has held discussions with the Hamas Resistance organization and other groupings representing the oppressed people.

Due to this decades-long affinity between African Liberation Movements and their Palestinian counterparts, the South African Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs filed a lawsuit in December 2023 charging Tel Aviv with violations of the Genocide Convention of 1948. A ruling from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest legal body within the United Nations, said that the claims made by South Africa in its pleadings were plausible.

Nonetheless, the ICJ and the UN Security Council have refused to take any punitive actions against the Israeli regime. A separate legal challenge by the Nicaraguan government against Germany for being the second largest supplier of weapons to the IDF, was rejected by the ICJ.

Obviously, the imperialist states are committed to the maintenance of a settler-colonial state amid the struggling and oppressed peoples of West Asia and North Africa. U.S. President Joe Biden continues to supply bombs, warplanes, guns, intelligence assistance and diplomatic cover to the administration of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the entire ruling apparatus which contains and exploits millions of Palestinians along with people living in neighboring Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq.

The disproportionate economic and political power exercised by the U.S. and other imperialist states on an international scale has been further exposed as being detrimental to peace, security and sustainable development. This is the reason behind the failure of western-dominated institutions such as the UN to impose harsh measures on Tel Aviv and its supporters for the perpetuation of settler-colonialism and genocide.

This intransigence on the part of imperialism is the trigger which ignites the resistance movements across the region. The mass demonstrations by broad sectors of the population within the Western states are a reflection of the social contradictions which exist in the leading capitalist countries. While there is much self-congratulatory rhetoric on the part of both ruling class-dominated political parties in the U.S., tens of millions remain impoverished and insecure.

South Africa and its policies towards the Palestinian question represents the rejection of U.S. and Western European hegemony. This attitude towards settler-colonialism and institutional racism positions the imperialists on a collision course with the majority of people around the globe.

South Africa and the World Economic Crisis

A key characteristic of capitalist societies is the level of inequality between the ruling class and the majority of the people constituting the workers, farmers and youth. All of these social elements of the oppressed peoples are destined to resist and eventually rise up against their rulers.

South Africa as a transitional state clearly remains an unequal society characterized still by the dominance of the capitalist modes of production. When reading most western-based analyses of the current phase within the South African political trajectory there is considerable emphasis on the official statistics revealing more than 32% jobless rate and

even higher among youth.

In addition, the degree to which reforms instituted by the government have not fulfilled the aspirations of both the domestic and international capitalist interests lends to the arguments suggesting that the ANC has failed in its policy imperatives. Various positions taken and advanced by the South African government have drawn the ire of the Biden administration and the U.S. Congress.

Moreover, the Biden administration falsely accused Pretoria of selling arms to the Russian Federation assisting its Special Military Operation in Ukraine. An announcement was made recently calling for a downgrading of diplomatic relations by the U.S. towards South Africa.

However, interesting enough, South Africa has been once again designated as having the largest economy on the African continent. The ANC is standing for national elections at the end of May. There are economic and political interests within and outside of Africa which are working towards the weakening of the ruling party as an outcome of the voting. (See [this](#))

Diplomatically, the White House castigated the ANC government for filing a legal claim against the Israeli government saying publicly that the case had “no merit.” Such continued utterances by the Biden administration are placing its own chances of reelection in an even more precarious status.

Leading African American religious organizations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) together issued a joint statement demanding that the Biden administration commit to a ceasefire in Gaza. These two denominations represent 4.9 million African Americans in the U.S. Prior to the AME-AMEZ statement early in 2024, 1000 African American clergy held a press conference telling the White House to work towards a ceasefire.

Therefore, the South African government, commandeering the largest national economy within the continental African Union (AU), along with the African American progressive forces, are working towards the halting of the genocide against the Palestinian people and a long-term resolution to the Palestinian question. In the U.S., the militant actions taken by students and professors at the most elite higher education institutions in the country, illustrates that the myths under which imperialism has shaped public opinion around the legitimacy and inevitability of the status-quo are collapsing.

In the U.S. hundreds of labor leaders and unions have formed committees to advance the cause of ending the genocide in Gaza. The struggle for Palestine liberation has grown exponentially within the imperialist centers of power.

Role of the African Union

At the AU headquarters in Ethiopia, the Commission has issued a series of statements condemning the actions of Tel Aviv against the Palestinians. In addition to the AU's views and official policy on Palestine, they have parted ways with Washington over the necessity of a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine crisis. (See [this](#) and [this](#))

These declarations by African states are occurring within the context of a rising demand for U.S. and French military and diplomatic forces to vacate certain Africa states, particularly in the West African Sahel region where a series of events involving the military seizure of power is resulting in an apparent shifting of alliances from the NATO states to the Russian

Federation and the People's Republic of China. Over several decades, successive Washington administrations have invested substantial resources and lives in their machinations to control the economic and political atmosphere within the AU member-states.

Consequently, the U.S. administration is working to destabilize those African states which are seeking to form their own independent foreign policy. South Africa has refused to back away from its solidarity with the Palestine people.



This is one of the most important achievements of the 30 years of independent democratic control in South Africa. Despite the limitations of the advancements toward total freedom and sovereignty, South Africa embodies large vibrant trade union and communist movements.

These proletarian organizations are allied with the government around the questions of Palestine and the necessity of building an alternative to the existing power relations. In the U.S., more working class organizations are diverging from the capitalist state involving foreign policy issues.

In order for imperialism to be defeated it will require a convergence of national liberation and working class struggles on a world scale. The current warmongering of the imperialists must be viewed as an act of desperation. These developments cannot deter the peoples from continuing their efforts for a just and peaceful planet.

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