



Speak Out Now

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We Must Oppose This War on the Palestinian People

The war on the people of Gaza has entered its seventh month. That is seven months of incessant bombing, the terror of invading Israeli troops, shooting people at will – young and old, male and female. Hospitals have been bombed into rubble and scenes of mass executions have been uncovered.

At least 35,000 people have been killed, the majority of them children and women. Hundreds of thousands of people fled to the southern part of the Gaza Strip, to the city of Rafah, at the orders of the Israeli military. Today 1.3 million people there await their fate, as Israel and its partners negotiate with Hamas for a cease fire, which will only be temporary.

People are literally facing mass starvation, as Israel continues to restrict the number of trucks carrying food, water, medical supplies, and other essentials that are allowed, into the region. The world is waiting to see, not if, but when the Israeli military will unleash its forces of destruction against the people trapped in Rafah and in other parts of the Gaza Strip.

This is a U.S. war as much as it is Israel's. The U.S. Congress recently voted to fund another \$15 billion for weapons to continue Israel's genocidal war. We may not have a say in how our tax dollars are spent, but we don't have to be silent. Students at more than 100 colleges and universities have set up tent encampments, protesting the war being carried out in their name. They have demanded that their schools end investments connected to Israel and their partnerships with Israel be ended.

At a number of schools these encampments have been attacked by the police. More than 2000 students have been arrested, and a number of them suspended or expelled from their school. Biden weighed in on the side of these attacks. He denounced the protests saying, they need "to be done without violence, without destruction". Violence and destruction? The minor damage that occurred when some students occupied university buildings is nothing compared to the leveling by daily bombing of hospitals, homes, universities – of everything – in Gaza.

Those student occupations have helped expose the role of the U.S. government in this campaign of terror against a civilian population in Gaza, and the violence they are willing to use to silence people in the U.S..

Students are right to stand up against threats of jail and discipline by the universities. Not all universities have criminalized students for opposing this war. Some have said they would consider demands to stop investing in weapons manufacturers, or would study the situation. What that will mean remains to be seen. But it will not end this war. That depends on us.

The message from those in power is clear. They will not withdraw support from Israel. They will try to silence those who oppose the massacre, labeling them as being anti-Jewish or anti-semitic. This, despite the fact that Jews make up some of the most active groups in this movement – *Jewish Voices for Peace* and *Not In Our Name*. Students who are active have been threatened with suspension and not receiving recommendations when they graduate. And some now have criminal records as a result of standing up against what, the U.N. and other institutions have called genocide, and a humanitarian disaster.

This is not the first time that those who have stood against the brutal functioning of this system have faced attack. Every movement for social justice in this country has – including the union movement, the fight against segregation, and the movement against the war on Viet Nam. Those in power try to suppress the truth. More than 140 journalists in Gaza have been killed by Israeli forces. And Al Jazeera and other media outlets, not under Israeli control, are now banned from Gaza.

Peace is not being negotiated by those in power. They are negotiating the very existence of the Palestinian people. The future of an entire generation of children who have experienced this mind and body-shattering experience is on the bargaining table. Faced with the realities of this horrific genocidal war on the people of Palestine, we must oppose this war in whatever ways we can.