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Israel is attacking Gaza again. The time for Canada to act is now.

Labour for Palestine-Canada is horrified by the atrocities inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian people in Gaza over the past 3 days. Under the laughable pretext of pre-emptively responding in self defense, Israel launched airstrikes on the captive population in residential areas, effectively murdering 43 civilians, including 15 children. As an occupying force with one of the most well funded militaries in the world, including an Iron Dome defense system, Israel is not entitled to a claim of “pre-emptive self defense”.

In response to calls for support and solidarity from the Palestinian people, we are demanding the Government of Canada, all political leaders and labour unions in this country, to condemn these war crimes. The response of the Canadian Government to date, “to support Israel’s right to assure its own security, while respecting human rights and international law”, is nothing more than a PR strategy to appease apologists for Israel’s violence. It’s obvious that these well-worn talking points, shared by global imperialist powers, are becoming harder and harder to defend.

The United Nations special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanez, has clearly stated that Israel’s air raids on the besieged Gaza Strip “not only are illegal but irresponsible”. Without condemning the violence and then claiming to “mourn the loss of civilian life... and urging all parties to de-escalate tensions and protect civilians”, knowing full well Israel’s attack on an occupied population is a violation of international law, it is beyond shameful. The facts on the grounds suggest that, by association, the Canadian Government will be complicit in the crimes against humanity being perpetrated against the Palestinians by Israel if it does not change course now.

There is a power imbalance inherent to the so-called Israel-Palestinian “conflict” that cannot be ignored. Labour for Palestine-Canada supports the right of all oppressed people to resist their oppression by whatever means they deem necessary. If Israel wants to “pre-emptively” stop the violence as it claims, it needs to end its illegal occupation and colonization of Palestinian land, allow refugees the right to return to their homeland, ensure the equality of Arab-Palestinians citizens of Israel, end the 15-year siege on Gaza and at a minimum allow aid to enter Gaza and ensure the energy supply needed to operate medical facilities is not depleted. These are the preconditions to a just peace.

Israel’s colonization, ethnic cleansing and occupation of Palestine continues to this day – the brutal attack on Gaza is but the latest chapter. This time Canada needs to respond. We call on Canada’s labour movement to act in solidarity with Palestinian workers and people against these atrocities as well as the continued military occupation and apartheid imposed on the Palestinian people. Trade unions need to pass emergency resolutions in support of Palestinian human rights and the right to resist military occupation. Unions that have taken a position in support of the BDS movement need to take concrete boycott and divestment actions today in support of Palestinian people’s legitimate liberation struggle.

Free Palestine!

Long live international solidarity!