

Sri Lanka Must Act in Solidarity with Palestine!



The diabolical horrors unfolding in Gaza compel people of conscience across the world to take a principled stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The current violence unleashed indiscriminately on Gaza in particular, is supposedly aimed at eradicating Hamas whose surprise attack on 7 October, and abhorrent killings of civilians as well as subsequent taking of over 200 Israeli hostages, is presented by mainstream media as the immediate trigger behind Israel's gross and egregious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Blanket bombings of the Gaza strip, coupled with assassinations and other acts of Israeli state terror in the West Bank and Lebanon, are supposed to achieve this aim.

However, Hamas's actions in early October cannot, and should not, be understood in isolation from decades of Zionist settler-colonial violence that has sought the physical and political erasure of Palestine. The grievously regular killings of Palestinians, including children, at the hands of Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank are well known and documented. The Gaza strip, known as the world's largest open-air prison, has been in a state of siege for close to two decades now.

What has been a semi-acknowledged state-of-affairs has become official reality since the 7th of October, with a full blockade being imposed on Gaza. From a daily average of 500 trucks with water, food, and medical supplies that used to be permitted into Gaza, only a few dozen are allowed in now. Apartheid Israel's

political leadership, notably its Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, are openly throwing around dehumanising rhetoric about Palestinians to justify their actions amounting to genocide.

Israel is throwing a tantrum over a statement of fact by the UN Secretary-General condemning the “collective punishment” of Palestinians, labelling it as antisemitic and calling for his removal. Naming any, and all, criticism of Israel as antisemitic is a tactic used time and time again to silence and cow down those who oppose and challenge Zionism. But Israel’s advantage in global public opinion is steadily dissipating through its ongoing actions, including within the Jewish diaspora.

Hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of honourable people of all faiths and none, and across the political spectrum, have taken to the streets of Europe and North America, the Middle East and North Africa, Australia and in Asia including Sri Lanka, to demand a #CeasefireNOW; international action against genocide in Gaza; and for a secular, democratic Palestine.

We salute the enormous courage of Jews within Israel, North America, and Europe, who stand against Israel’s barbarism and with the people of Palestine, amidst Zionist threats of violence and intimidation, and ostracism from their families and co-religionists. We reiterate that the Israeli State does not represent all Jewish people, and that any kind of violence against anti-Zionist Jews is indeed antisemitism, even when unleashed by Israel and its backers.

As an institution against all forms of injustice, the Social Scientists’ Association of Sri Lanka, and its magazine *Polity*, stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine in their struggle for the right to freedom from Israeli State terror and violence, to peace and dignity with security, for their right of return from where they are refugees and exiles, and their right to self-determination.

We appeal to the people of Sri Lanka and their political representatives, to oppose Israel’s total war on Palestine, and strive for lasting peace through a political solution that acknowledges the grave wrongs to which the Palestinian people have been subjected since the *Nakba* of 1948.

To borrow from Rabbi Brant Rosen: “Let us find the courage to speak the words that must be spoken. Let our words kindle sparks of possibility, and may they inspire us all to create the world we know is possible.”

- Aamina Nizar
- Adilah Ismail
- Amali Wedagedara
- Amana Zahid
- Ameena Hussein
- Ammaarah Nilafdeen
- Amra Ismail
- Anberiya Haniffa
- Aneesa Firthous
- Anithra Varia
- Ann Jabbar
- Anne M. Blackburn
- Anupama Ranawana
- Apsara Karunaratne
- Aruni Samarakoon
- Asha L. Abeyasekera
- Ayesha Perera
- Balasingham Skanthakumar
- Camena Guneratne
- Chathurika Sewwandi
- Chulani Kodikara
- Deepika Udagama
- Devaka Gunawardena
- Devana Senanayake
- Dhanusha Gihan Pathirana
- Dinali Fernando
- Erandika de Silva
- Ermiza Tegal
- Faizun Zackariya
- Farah Mihlar
- Farzana Haniffa
- Fazana Ibrahim
- Geethika Dharmasinghe
- Harshani Fernando
- Hasini Lecamwasam
- Herath Gunatilake
- Hyshyama Hamin
- Ishan Weerapura
- Jayadeva Uyangoda
- Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala
- Jeana De Zoysa
- Jeanne Samuel
- KD Darshana
- Kumudini Samuel
- Lakmali Hemachandra
- Leila Udayar
- Maduranga Kalugampitiya
- Malin Kumaranayake
- Malinga Prasad Jayarathna
- Marisa de Silva
- Melani Gunathilaka

- Nabeela Iqbal
- Natasha Van Hoff
- Nelun Gunasekera
- Nicola Perera
- Nisreen Rehmanjee
- Nuwan Walasmullage
- Prabath Hemantha
- Pradeep Peiris
- Ramyani Ratnayake
- Rohini Dep Weerasinghe
- Rohini Hensman
- Ruki Fernando
- Ruvani Ranasinha
- S. Janaka Biyanwila
- Sabra Zahid
- Safana Gul Begum
- Sakina Moinudeen
- Sakuna M Gamage
- Sakunthala Kadirgamar
- Sandun Thudugala
- Sarah Kellepatha
- Sarala Emmanuel
- Sepali Kottegoda
- Shafinaz Hassendeen
- Shafiya Rafaithu
- Shamala Kumar
- Shashik Silva
- Shreen Saroor
- Shyamala Sivagurunathan
- Sulochana Peiris
- Sumaiya Pallak
- Sumathy Sivamohan
- Sunela Jayewardene
- Suresh Amuhena
- Taniya Silvapulle
- Tehani Ariyaratne
- Thahira Cader
- Upul Wickramasinghe
- Vasanthi Thevanesam
- Vijaya Kumar
- Vijayakanth Madasami
- Waruni Chandrasena
- Yasantha Chamara Jayasooriya
- Yathursha Ulakentheran
- Zahrah Rizwan
- Zainab Ibrahim
- Zulfika Ismail

31.10.2023