

## **Q & A: Working toward a just peace for Palestine and Israel The situation in Palestine**

### **What are the effects of the occupation of Palestine?**

There are around 235 Israeli settlements in the West Bank in violation of international law and in defiance of United Nations (UN) resolutions.<sup>1</sup> Checkpoints, roadblocks, military bases, and bypass roads that connect illegal settlements are found throughout the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine has had a serious impact on workers. Unemployment has risen from 5% before 1993 to around 50% in 2006, leaving approximately 350,000 workers unemployed. Approximately 50% of families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are living under the poverty line of \$2 per day.<sup>2</sup>

### **What would a just peace look like for Israel and Palestine?**

A framework for just peace was first established in 1967 by United Nations resolutions. This consensus called for two states of Israel and Palestine, with Jerusalem as the shared capital and justice for Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian state would cover Gaza and the West Bank based on the 1967 borders and the Israeli occupation would end.

### **What does international law say about the Palestinian occupation?**

Numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions have dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Here are several important resolutions that have been ignored by Israel and the United States.

**UN Resolution 194** (1948) – Calls for protection and free access to the Holy Places, demilitarization and UN control over Jerusalem and the return of refugees.<sup>3</sup>

**UN Resolution 242** (1967) - Calls for "the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East" by withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for the right of every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.<sup>4</sup>

**UN Resolution 338** (1973) - Calls upon all parties fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately, implement UN Resolution 242 and begin negotiations aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, *Enduring occupation: Palestinians under siege in the West Bank*, June 2007, p.18

<sup>2</sup> Stop the Wall, *The Struggle of the Palestinian Workers in the West Bank and Gaza – Why we call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions...*

<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (III). *Palestine – Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator*, 1948, <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/c758572b78d1cd0085256bcf0077e51a!OpenDocument>

<sup>4</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 242, 1967, <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1967/scres67.htm>

<sup>5</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 338, 1973, <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1973/scres73.htm>

The International Court of Justice in The Hague determined in 2004 that the Israeli “security fence”, or Apartheid Wall, is illegal.

### **What is Canada’s role?**

From 1967 to 2004, Canada voted with the majority of UN countries to support resolutions calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli military from the occupied Palestinian territories. However, Canada did not demand that Israel implement this policy.

In 2004, with Paul Martin as Prime Minister, the Liberals began to abstain from or vote against resolutions that were critical of the Israeli occupation. When Stephen Harper was elected in 2006, he moved Canadian foreign policy even further toward the “war on terror” ideology. He aligned Canada’s position on the Middle East with the United States’ policies. Harper even called Israel’s destruction of Lebanon a “measured response”. Furthermore, in June 2007, the UN Human Rights Council voted 46 to 1 to maintain a special Human Rights envoy in the Palestinian territories. Canada was the only negative vote.<sup>6</sup>

### **What is the Israel-West Bank Separation Wall or Apartheid Wall?**

In 2003, the Israeli government began building a 700 km long and six-metre-high Separation Wall inside the West Bank. More than half the wall has been completed and construction continues on the rest. Agricultural land has been uprooted and destroyed and dozens of homes have been demolished. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been cut off from their land and means of earning a living. The route of the wall has been designed to encompass more than 50 Israeli settlements.<sup>7</sup>

The International Court of Justice, the world’s highest court, ruled the wall illegal in 2004. The court stated Israel was obliged to stop building the fence/wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories, dismantle sections already built there, and provide reparation to Palestinians affected by the construction.<sup>8</sup> The Israeli government rejected the court’s recommendations.

### **Is there really apartheid in Israel?**

Resolution 338/339 refers to the “apartheid nature of the Israel state”. Apartheid literally means separation. According to the United Nations, “The crime of apartheid means inhumane acts... committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime”.<sup>9</sup>

By supporting this resolution, the majority of CUPW delegates agreed that the conditions of apartheid exist in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Here’s what some other people think:

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<sup>6</sup> CUPE BC, *The Wall Must Fall*, 2007, p.11-12

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International, *Enduring occupation: Palestinians under siege in the West Bank*, June 2007, p.5

<sup>8</sup> International Court of Justice, *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, July 9, 2004, <http://www.icj-cij.org>

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, *Part 2. Jurisdiction, Admissibility and Applicable Law*; Article 7(h); <http://www.un.org/icc/part2.htm>

“In 1994 [South African] apartheid came to an end and Palestine became the only developing country in the world under the thumb of a western affiliated regime. Herein lies its significance to the future of human rights. There are other regimes, particularly in the developing world, that suppress human rights but there is no other case of a western affiliated regime (Israel) that denies self-determination and human rights to a developing people (Palestinians) as it’s done so for so long.”<sup>10</sup> John Dugard, South African lawyer and UN Special Envoy on Human Rights in the Palestinian territories.

“As someone who lived in apartheid South Africa and who has visited Palestine I say with confidence that Israel is an apartheid state. In fact, I believe that some of the atrocities committed by the erstwhile apartheid regime in South Africa pale in comparison to those committed against the Palestinians.”<sup>11</sup> Willie Madisha, President, Congress of South African Trade Unions.

### Where can I get more information?

There are many resources on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign.

Here are a few helpful links:

- [http://www.cupe.ca/globaljustice/CUPE\\_BC\\_updates\\_The\\_-\\_The\\_Wall\\_Must\\_Fall](http://www.cupe.ca/globaljustice/CUPE_BC_updates_The_-_The_Wall_Must_Fall), booklet produced by CUPE BC
- <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/033/2007> - Link to download a report by Amnesty International called *Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Enduring Occupation. Palestinians Under Siege in the West Bank*
- <http://www.palestinemonitor.org> - Extensive and up-to-date information by a Palestinian non-governmental organization
- <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/outlook/> - Monthly progressive Jewish publication opposed to occupation
- <http://www.stopthewall.org> - A website with information on the campaign to stop the building of the Israel-West Bank Separation Wall
- <http://www.protection-palestine.org> – A website from La Campagne Civile Internationale pour la Protection du Peuple Palestinien
- <http://www.bdsmovement.net/> - A website with information on the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions
- <http://tadamon.resist.ca> - A Montreal-based collective working to build relationships of solidarity with grassroots political movements for social and economic justice
- <http://www.caiaweb.org/> - A website for the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, a Toronto-based group that’s part of the movement against Israeli apartheid
- <http://bigcampaign.org> - A website about the Boycott Israeli Goods Campaign in the United Kingdom

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<sup>10</sup> CUPE BC, *The Wall Must Fall*, 2007, p.6

<sup>11</sup> Congress of South African Trade Unions, *Cosatu President supports Palestinians struggle*, <http://www.cosatu.org.za/news/weekly/20060609.htm>