
BDS CAN BUILD A MOVEMENT TO HELP SET PALESTINE FREE

Israel's latest assault on Gaza has now lasted for over three weeks. More than a thousand Palestinians have been massacred. Homes, hospitals and schools are being reduced to rubble for the third time in six years.

The horror shows no sign of ending. Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised a "lengthy campaign" against the Palestinians. These war criminals in the Israeli government will not stop until Gaza has been razed to the ground.

WHAT CAN WE DO? OUR MARCHES AND WHY THEY MATTER

The plight of Palestinians has touched a nerve across the world. Over a million people globally have taken to the streets in solidarity with victims of Israeli bombardment – including hundreds of thousands here in Britain.

Our marches are tremendously important for the people of Gaza, hemmed in and battered by Israeli military power. Protests help break down their isolation and show that Palestine has allies in every corner of the world.

David Cameron's government is solidly pro-Israeli, just like every other British government. But even though they will never admit it, politicians have to watch their backs and bend to public opinion. The numbers openly siding with the Palestinians are rising, while support for Israel is dropping.

Our protests give us the confidence to argue for Palestine with our families, friends and workmates. They break down the stereotypes and help turn the widespread passive sympathy for Gaza into active solidarity.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: EGYPT AND THE ARAB REVOLUTIONS

Demonstrations on their own are not enough. We cannot win this struggle on the streets of Britain – we have to look to the resistance of ordinary people in Palestine and across the Middle East and North Africa region.

Resistance in the West Bank has ramped up in recent weeks, with huge protests in solidarity with Gaza. John

Kerry, the US secretary of state, has let slip that he is worried about a "third intifada" in Palestine.

What happens in Egypt is also crucial. Gaza is only 200 miles from Cairo. Three years ago people in Egypt rose up with mass protests and strikes to overthrow their dictator Hosni Mubarak.

That was a massive blow to Israel, which relies on corrupt tyrants across the Arab world to enforce its domination of the Palestinians. But now General Abdel el-Sisi has come to power and is leading a counter-revolution in Egypt.

Sisi's blood-soaked dictatorship is a close ally of Israel, blocking convoys of food and medical aid from crossing the border into Gaza at Rafah. He has prevented aid and oil from Tunisia, Morocco and Qatar from leaving Egypt.

That is why we must support all those in Egypt struggling against Sisi's repression – their battles are inseparable from those of the Palestinians.

BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT SANCTIONS: A TACTIC THAT WORKS

It's time to take our solidarity efforts in Britain up a level and throw our weight behind the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) campaign. The boycott call was launched by Palestinians in 2005, inspired by similar tactics used against South Africa's former apartheid regime.

BDS is a tactic that works. Tesco recently announced it will no longer stock dates grown in illegal Israeli settlements. The arms firms that supply Israel's occupying forces are a particular target – such as G4S, booked to do security at the Labour conference in Manchester next month.

BDS is direct action that we can all get involved with. Campaigning for a boycott helps win the argument that Israel is a racist state that should be isolated until it ends its terror tactics in Gaza and the West Bank.

Let's use BDS to build a movement that forces our politicians to drop support for Israel – a movement that delivers solidarity to all people across Palestine and the wider Arab world. Find out more at rs21.org.uk/bds