



**“THE MORAL SAVAGERY OF ISRAEL’S ‘SELF-DEFENSE’:
RACISM, NEO-COLONIALISM AND COLLECTIVE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT”**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

WE MUST NEVER FORGET AND DO NOT forget the oppression and righteous resistance of other oppressed and suffering peoples of the world, the Haitian people, the Uigurs of China, the Rohingya of Myanmar, the Yemeni and others, and Africans almost everywhere, including us. But Palestine presents us, as a people, with a special moral challenge in this their hour of great and urgent need for support against the genocidal war being waged against them by the government of Israel. And all our sacred texts, even if the phrasing is different, tell and teach us we are morally obligated “to bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place, especially for those who have no voice”, the devalued, downtrodden, dispossessed, dominated, deprived and degraded. Also, we must speak truth to the people and to power and righteously and relentlessly resist this racist and colonial genocide in all its forms and false claims of self-defense against the innocent, infant, ill, elderly and all others vulnerable and defenseless.

Regardless of anyone’s serious faith or saleable fantasies about a superior race or a singularly sacred people immune from criticism or questioning, the killing and crushing of innocent children, women, men, the elderly, ill, infirm and vulnerable is clearly morally wrong and the brutal indiscriminate bombing and killing of currently 10,327 and wounding over 25,000 is *moral savagery*. Likewise, starving people, denying them water, medicine, medical equipment and fuel and electricity to sustain the lives of babies in incubators, people on ventilators, people needing operations and other life-saving equipment, and creating other conditions of

death and dying is radically evil and morally indefensible.

Indeed, Israel cannot use the moral shield of self-defense for creating conditions of sudden death and slow dying and dealing death so indiscriminately and with such mercilessness and magnitude and claim exemption or exoneration. It cannot claim exemption from basic human moral mandates concerning respect for human life, human dignity and human rights. And it cannot claim exoneration for the *killing field* and *concentration camp* it has made of Gaza in particular and Palestine in general, imposing *collective capital punishment* on a helpless and hostage people.

We may not want to see or say it, but there is no small amount of racism and religious bigotry and bias here, and an attempt by both the Israeli government and its crime partner and patron, the U.S. government, to revive and get cosigning and acceptance of aid for colonial control and rule of Palestine. Nana Kwame Nkrumah warned against neo-colonial independence, flying the false flag of independence while the colonizers keep control of the economy, target and kill legitimate leaders and put in place puppets and dependent dictators to deny the people their freedom and control of their lands and resources. And Israel so oriented and a holdout from another era, resists conceding a post-colonial world. It holds tenaciously, racistly and religiously, in both senses of the word, to Palestine. Like America, it still talks of and acts out manifest destiny fantasies of empire of a thousand years and a subdued and compliant colony providing cheap and oppressed labor, water resources and untapped oil and natural gas reserves of Palestine. Just think, in the 21st century we are back to the White-dominated

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countries agreeing to supporting and practicing racist genocide, after all the documents and declarations of a new world free from the barbarism of colonialism, imperialism, enslavement and on good days, racism. And think too of White-dominated countries that are outlawing protest and arresting protestors for speaking against and resisting racism, genocide and settler colonial suppression and control practiced by Israel against the people of Palestine.

By every human rights organization’s objective assessment in Israel and the world, the Israeli government practices systemic racism or apartheid by its Boer name. Apartheid is, by international law and by morality, a crime against humanity, punishable under the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court. Indeed, the point here is that it has been declared not only unlawful, but criminal in the deepest sense. That is to say, it is not only a crime against the targeted people, but also a crime against the whole of humanity and what it means to be human.

The systemic racism of apartheid is defined as “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them”. These inhuman acts include murder, torture and other inhuman treatment; arbitrary arrests; legislative measures legalizing discrimination in political, economic, cultural and social fields; residential segregation; political persecution for resistance; and deliberate imposition of living conditions calculated to cause the targeted and oppressed people’s destruction in whole or in part.

No one can honestly and in any real rational or really human sense deny that this has been Israel’s policy before the current right-wing government and before the al-Qassam Brigade of Hamas attacked Israel on October 7. It has simply intensified and

expanded now. Indeed, there was before then a blockade, dispossession and the denial of food, water, and other vital necessities. Now, the White world openly endorses and encourages it and the U.S. government, always Israel’s loyal funder, protector, apologist, crime partner, and patron of almost every kind, calls on us to support the oppressor against the oppressed. Here, as I have said before, we have no morality if we give the oppressors more moral status than the oppressed; if the rapist or robber, and the killer and the colonizer are given more moral consideration than the raped, the robbed, the killed and the colonized. Only in racist reasoning could this be attempted and argued.

Israel wants us to begin and end with the indiscriminate attack on civilians and soldiers on October 7, for it clearly violates the rules of war and a moral way of life to kill innocent civilians. And if we stay there and we do not discuss what Israel has done of greater magnitude against the Palestinian People for decades and what it was doing to the Palestinian People even on October 7th and has intensified afterwards, we are not able to bring into the field of our moral vision and concern this history of horrific and sustained oppression of the Palestinian People. This attempt to erase the history, Palestinian history, of oppression by Israel emulates the book burners and banners in the U.S. For there is a racist need of oppressors to deny the savage oppression imposed on the oppressed, to blame the oppressed for their oppression, and to hold them all unworthy of a good life and even life itself.

Moreover, the oppressed are not to resist their oppression, even non-violently. This is the lesson of several attempts over time to do so being violently suppressed and crushed. This clearly was the brutal message sent during the peaceful non-violent “Great March of Return” in 2018. The Palestinians marched calling for Israel to end its then 11-year ille-

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gal and immoral air, land and sea blockade of Gaza and to allow Palestinian refugees to return to the villages and towns taken from them by force and violence throughout Israel’s history. The resultant casualties speak to the racist and violent character of colonialism in all its forms. The UN reports that 240 were killed including 46 children, and 36,100 were wounded including 8,800 children, many with long term injuries and trauma, and journalists, and medical personnel suffered a similar fate.

FINALLY, IT IS GOOD TO SEE PEOPLES ALL over the world standing up, speaking out and resisting this unfolding genocide against the Palestinian People. And it is good also to see among these in resistance Jewish groups like If Not Now, Jewish Voice for Peace, and others who do not equate Judaism with the modern state of Israel, who oppose

the unfolding genocide and the apartheid state and reaffirm the equal humanity, dignity and rights of the Palestinian People to self-determination and security. The challenge for us as a people is to set aside fear of penalty and punishment, and concerns for funds and favor for our silence or one-sided and immoral statements that support the Israelis genocidal concept of self-defense, selective morality, immunity from criticism and questioning, and amoral early man practices of collective capital punishment for the Palestinian People. Indeed, such a clear and compelling moral stance is required by our own history, humanity and our ongoing righteous and relentless struggle for an expansive and inclusive realm of freedom and shared good in and for the world and all in it. ▲

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