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The Belligerence of Oppression **By Abukar Arman** **BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator**

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By now, most of the world is aware of the horrific news of death and destruction that has been visited upon the people of Gaza. Millions have watched in utter shock the footage depicting Israel's indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza.

This brutal military campaign that already took the lives of over 300 people, including children of all ages and women, and injured over 1000 people is likely to continue as the so-called international law can neither stop Israel nor could hold it accountable. Certainly not in its current arrangement!

For decades there was a widely accepted international norm that kept the word "oppression" out of anything written or spoken about the state of Israel. The exception being: when the combination was used to describe the historical suffering of the Jewish people. All others were immediately dismissed as Anti-Semitic assertion or expression.

This unique and profoundly privileged status was made possible by a number of factors. Chief among them, of course, is the U.S. foreign policy toward Israel; a policy that, over the years, not only has provided absolute and unquestioning support, but also billions of the U.S. taxpayers' dollars to beef-up the Israeli military.

By all objective accounts, what has taken place and continues to make life unbearable for the people of Gaza constitutes war crimes.

In his latest article in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* titled, "The Neighborhood Bully Strikes Again," Gideon Levy, one of Israel's journalistic voices of conscience writes this: "Once again, Israel's violent responses, even if there is justification for them, exceed all proportion and cross every red line of humaneness, morality, international law and wisdom."

Levy reinforces his charges with blatant honesty by writing "What began (Saturday) in Gaza is a war crime and the foolishness of a country. History's bitter irony: A government that went to a futile war two months after its establishment (Lebanon)...embarks on another doomed war two months before the end of its term."

The question that begs moral and ethical evaluation is: do oppressed people who are denied their basic human rights, who are kept under inhumane economic strangulation, whose homes are routinely demolished and their lands confiscated...have the right to defend themselves?

Meanwhile, what if the impetus of the current deadly military campaign against the Palestinian people had little or nothing to do with these over-sensationalized rockets? What if it was staged to attain a political end?

"Indeed, this is another voluntary war by Israel, and seems to be motivated more by dishonored Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak's desire to not leave office without somehow erasing the memory of their failed Lebanon invasion two years ago..." comments Rabbi Michael Lerner in reaction to the Gaza massacre. In addition to this motive, the current brutal overreaction is intended to provoke Iran into a reactionary mishap.

Whether or not President-elect Barack Obama will bring fresh ideas that can pave the way for lasting peace between Israel and Palestine is yet to be seen. However, if his position expressed during his visit to Israel last summer is any indication, he is likely to continue business as usual with perhaps a slight difference in style.

Obama said what resembled the sound-bite mantra of the Israeli leadership to justify any heavy-handed actions against the Palestinians. He said he did not think "...any country would find it acceptable to have missiles raining down on the heads of their citizens."

The Israeli / Palestinian conflict is the most stubborn and indeed the most volatile political dilemma facing the world. Today, as in its inception over sixty years ago, the victims are denied their day in court. The cruelly caged, oppressed people of Palestine have a story to tell in the court of history...if only history would lend them the opportunity to be heard.

The saga of the oppression suffered by the people of Palestine does not begin with "...we became under rocket attack and we reacted accordingly," unless, of course, the narrative is controlled by the oppressor.

Now that Israel is one of the mightiest military powers on the face of the earth; now that it has routinely been exercising that power without sense of proportionality and restraint and thus putting world security at a greater risk, it is high time to hold it

accountable.

It is about time the state of Israel is pressured to comply with the Geneva Conventions or be dealt with as a rogue state.

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