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SA BDS Coalition statement on the Gaza ceasefire deal

The SA BDS Coalition welcomes the ceasefire deal and joins with the people of Gaza in the hope that this will provide respite from over 15 months of the genocidal Israeli regime's terror against the Palestinian people.

"The steadfastness of the people of Gaza represent one of the most astonishing examples of collective courage in history" said Ronnie Kasrils, patron of the SA BDS Coalition.

This genocide could not have occurred without the political and military support provided by the US, Germany, the UK and other European states. Since October 2023, the US has provided over \$26 billion in armaments to Israel. This is Biden's legacy – he has blood on his hands.

We remember the over 46,000 martyrs, 70% of whom are women and children as well as the thousands unaccounted for, buried under the rubble. Hamas agreed to a similar deal over a year ago and 10s of thousands of precious lives could have been saved. The memory of 5 year old Hind Rajab, Dr Adnan Al-Bursh from Al-Shifa Hospital, the academic Refaat Alareer and countless others killed or, such as Dr Hussam Abu Safiyeh who have been abducted into torture camps, will always be remembered and will haunt the génocidaires.

Israel's unparalleled impunity is what has allowed it to maintain its 76-year-old regime of settler-colonialism and apartheid and emboldened it to unleash the world's first livestreamed genocide. Israel is a threat to humanity. Most nations today see Israel as a rogue genocidal state that openly defies international law.

A ceasefire, however, is only the most important first step to end the genocide against the 2.3 million Palestinians in the illegally occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. Without massive pressure, it may constitute a continuation of a less visible form of genocide that Israel and the US will hope to provoke less global outrage, boycotts and sanctions.

We cannot forget that in the West Bank the Israeli regime is conducting incursions and the destruction of refugee camps, pogroms, increasing persecutions and killings and is rapidly annexing even more Palestinian land and constructing new settlements.

Without serious accountability, Israel's mass extermination "experiment" in Gaza will be a model for an unprecedented might-makes-right era, where powerful colonial states can "dispose of" weaker nations and racialized communities everywhere. As Columbian President Gustavo Petro said in his COP 28 speech, "the devastation wreaked on Gaza was a harbinger of what might happen to many other countries. The unleashing of genocide and barbarism on the Palestinian people is what awaits...the people of the global South."

Now more than ever, we need effective international solidarity to ensure accountability. The SA BDS Coalition salutes the people of South Africa who continue to mobilise with us. Our work is not done. We must continue to channel our immense grief and rage into principled and strategic pressure against the Israeli regime. The global solidarity movement's marching, picketing, boycotting and creative forms of solidarity, directly pressured those in the halls of power and contributed to making them accede to this ceasefire.

Most urgently, BDS pressure must be mounted like never before to ensure Israel completely ends its occupation and settler colonialism.

A first step must be to ensure that the Israeli regime does not renege on the ceasefire deal, particularly as 30 Palestinians have been killed since the deal was announced. It must allow humanitarian aid in without restriction in order to ease its induced famine and the spread of infectious diseases. According to UNRWA, 90% of Palestinians in Gaza, or 1.9 million, are internally displaced. Over two-thirds of Palestinians in Gaza are refugees, having been ethnically cleansed by Israel during the Nakba. All those who fled their homes must be allowed to return to what is left of those homes and assisted to rebuild. Their right of return to their original homes and lands across historic Palestine is more urgent now than ever and cannot be extinguished by genocide or the passage of time.

- A ceasefire, while welcome, is not enough. A permanent ceasefire requires the occupation forces to leave Gaza and the West Bank.
- UNRWA must be supported and allowed unimpeded access to all Palestinians.
- Schools, universities, hospitals, homes and infrastructure must be reconstructed; reparations and compensation must be paid by those responsible for the genocide.
- Those who committed torture, rape and murder must be held accountable.
- The siege of Gaza must end.
- Journalists, health care workers and UN personnel tasked with collecting evidence of the genocide must have immediate access.
- The South African government must pursue the ICJ case with renewed energy, and should be at the forefront to reactivate the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and suspending Israel from the UN General Assembly and other UN organs.
- Those South Africans who join the Israeli Occupation Forces must be prosecuted.
- South Africa must stop exporting coal to fuel genocide and the illegal occupation.
- South Africa should cut all diplomatic, trade, academic, sporting and cultural ties and promote sanctions to isolate the racist Israeli state until Palestine is free from the river to the sea.

For more information please contact:
Roshan Dadoo: 082 816 2799

Zukiswa Wanner: 061 063 5928

Salim Vally: 082 802 5936

Jaamia Gallant: 079 231 4273

Rina King: 082 854 5692

Firoza Mayat: 083 634 6093