

Palestine/Israel and the BPI

By: Laura Savinkoff

Dear Brother and Sisters,

As the crisis in Palestine/Israel escalated, the BPI felt compelled to voice our concern about the plight of the children in this latest assault on Palestine. The constant bombing of civilians by Israel is unacceptable, as was the attack on Israeli civilians. Although this is the latest in the 75 years of this conflict, it is the most devastating.

We could not sit by without giving voice to our deep concern.

Our first action was a Parliamentary Petition that we sent to MP Richard Cannings with 65 signatures gathered in a few days. The petition is still available for signatures at New West Trading and at the USCC office in Grand Forks. Until this war is over the petition will be valid, but remember that if you've signed it once you cannot a second time because that will make that whole page invalid.

Second we organized a walk and vigil in conjunction with a global call for November 12th. Over 50 people gathered. We walked silently to the beat of the drum in support of the children of Palestine, Israel and all victims of war. In Gyro Park we held silence with the drum with a collective focus on putting an end to war. JJ Verigin passed on greetings from the Kootenay Doukhobor community. Adam, a Palestinian living in our region, expressed his appreciation for the gathering, for the love shown for his people and talked of the pain knowing his homeland is being bombed into oblivion and that family is not only displaced but some are dead. The fact that the Government of Canada is a participant in this attack, never mind all that has happened in the past, is devastating, he said, as again Adam thanked all for caring.

Laura thanked everyone for coming, including the Gazette, and explained that the BPI will look at further ways to lend our support to the victims of this latest war as well as in other parts of the world, such as Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen and so many other places.

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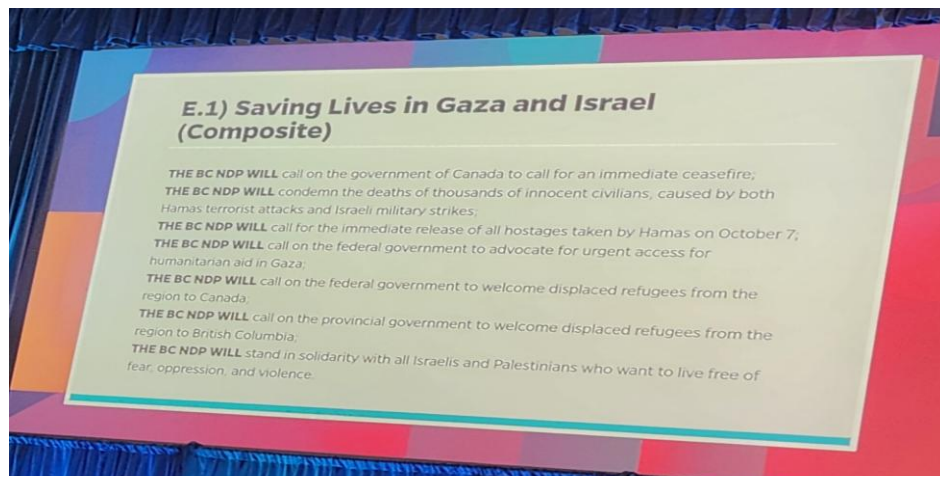
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Watch for further actions. But remember that as an individual you can write letters to your MPs expressing your feelings, the address is in the Newsletter.

Together we can move our respective Governments to find a way out of this conflict that developed after the creation of the State of Israel by the west. Israel then decided to annex, by force, the Indigenous lands of Palestinians who have lived there for Millennia and so here we are in this continuous state of war.

Photos are courtesy of Iskra Publication





B.C. NDP Convention 2023 passes a motion to save lives in Gaza and Israel by calling for an immediate Ceasefire, Humanitarian Aid and release of all hostages. They also voted to accept refugees into Canada and B.C. and stand in solidarity with those looking to live free of fear, oppression and violence.

BRICS condemns Israel war on Gaza in signal to the West

The grouping, which has previously focused on economic issues, called for an end to 'war crimes' in the Gaza conflict.

By **Shola Lawal**: AL JAZEERA: Nov. 21, 2023

Leaders of major emerging economies [called](#) for an end to Israel's war on Gaza on Tuesday, and for a cessation of hostilities on both sides to ease the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

In a virtual summit chaired by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, the BRICS grouping denounced attacks on civilians in Palestine and Israel, with many leaders calling the forced displacement of Palestinians, within Gaza or outside the territory, "war crimes."

"We condemned any kind of individual or mass forcible transfer and deportation of Palestinians from their own land," a chair's summary read. The group, which did not issue a joint declaration, also "reiterated that the forced transfer and deportation of Palestinians, whether inside Gaza or to neighbouring countries, constitute grave breaches of the Geneva conventions and war crimes and violations under International Humanitarian Law."

The BRICS is made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, all major emerging economies looking for a greater say in a global order long dominated by the United States and its Western allies. These countries are often viewed as leaders of what is referred to in international policy speak as the "Global South".

But it wasn't just these five countries that spoke on the war on Tuesday. Earlier this year, the BRICS had [agreed to expand](#) and add Egypt, Ethiopia, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iran as members from 2024. The leaders of these six countries also participated in the meeting called by South Africa. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres joined the summit too.

The chair's summary — in essence a gist of the mood in the room — highlights growing calls from the Global South to end the war on the Gaza Strip. The conflict began after an October 7 attack on Israeli communities by the armed group Hamas that saw 1,200 people killed and 240 others taken hostage. In response, Israel has incessantly shelled Gaza, targeting hospitals, schools and refugee camps and killing more than 13,000 people, many of them children, in violation of international laws.

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(From last column) BRICS condemns Israel war

Since then, millions of people across Africa, Asia and the Middle East have marched for a "Free Palestine" and called for a ceasefire. Experts in Africa and elsewhere have accused the United States, United Kingdom and European Union of hypocrisy for claiming to be bastions of democracy and human rights while supporting Israel's war in Gaza.

A 'growing assertiveness'

While the chair's summary appeared "mild and somewhat balanced" according to Steven Gruzd, an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), some countries were more combative in their presentations.

In his opening statement at the meeting, the current BRICS chair, President Ramaphosa of South Africa, said that Israel's actions "are in clear violation of international law" and that the "collective punishment of Palestinian civilians by Israel "is a war crime ... tantamount to genocide". Ramaphosa also said Hamas had "violated international law and must be held accountable".

India's stance was comparatively softer, with Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar saying there was "a need for restraint and immediate humanitarian support", as well as "peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy".

Many of the member states, including Russia and Brazil, have previously criticised Israel's non-stop bombardment and now, ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. China, for its part, this week [hosted a delegation of Muslim countries](#), officials and organisations seeking a ceasefire, including the Palestinian Authority (PA).

India, though, has not been as vocal and has in fact [cracked down](#) on pro-Palestine marches at home, seemingly siding with Israel and its biggest benefactor, the US, in what is seen as a split within the BRICS itself.

But that split did not seem glaring at Tuesday's summit, which experts say is a first-of-its-kind meeting for a group that has previously focused on economic issues.

"I am not sure I recall a similar extraordinary summit being called," Gruzd told Al Jazeera. "It does reflect on the growing assertiveness and confidence of the BRICS grouping, not waiting for the West. BRICS has generally shied away from political and security issues; this meeting goes against that trend."

Together, BRICS countries represent 40 percent of the world population and a quarter of the global economy.

President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran — Israel's archenemy — said Palestinians should [hold a referendum](#) to determine their fate. Still, many BRICS nations — not just India — have established ties with Israel that they will be wary of severing.

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Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org

For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email: L4peace@telus.net.

UN International Days

Dec 1: World Aids Day

Dec 2: International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

Dec 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Dec 5: Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development

Dec 9: International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime

Dec 10: Human Rights Day

Dec 18: International Migrants Day

Dec 20: International Human Solidarity Day

(From page 2) BRICS condemns Israel war

China has huge investments in Israel, Gruzd notes, while India has even deeper historic ties with the country and enjoys military and technological partnerships with it. But with a fiery Iran set to join the group, India might not be able to influence how a new BRICS+ will react to Israel, Gruzd said.

South Africa, currently the smallest BRICS country, and one that itself experienced oppressive apartheid rule for more than four decades, sees its own struggle reflected in that of the Palestinians and has consistently been one of the loudest calls for a ceasefire, said analysts.

At the same time, it has long been Israel's largest trade partner in Africa. On Tuesday, that relationship appeared to have reversed. Parliament members voted to shut down the Israeli embassy in Pretoria, signifying a turning point in the crisis. Diplomats from the country had already been recalled from Israel on November 16. Israel recalled its ambassador to South Africa, Eliav Belotserkovsky, for "consultations" on Monday in response to Pretoria's growing hostility.

Alongside Bangladesh, Bolivia, Comoros and Djibouti last week, South Africa also submitted a referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate whether war crimes have been committed in Gaza.

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(From last column) BRICS condemns Israel war A turning point?

On Monday, South African Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni applied further pressure, calling for an ICC warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, adding that it would be a "total failure" if the court did not investigate the leader.

Earlier this year, South Africa had managed to [convince](#) Russia not to send President Vladimir Putin to the annual BRICS Summit in August because of an ICC arrest warrant issued against him for war crimes committed in Ukraine. If Putin had attended the summit in South Africa, the country, an ICC signatory, would have been obligated to arrest him.

Tuesday's BRICS stance, instigated by South Africa, might push more countries to be vocal in denouncing the war, said Muhammed Desai of Africa4Palestine, an advocacy group.

"South Africa is a significant economic and political powerhouse on the African continent as well as a country with one of the most embassies and high commissions in the world," Desai said. "Thus, its stance and position does have clout within the diplomatic arena."

But the coalition's political weight is not significant enough to have any real impact on the direction of Israel's war, others say. "Frankly, I do not think they have much leverage on Israel directly," said Gruzd of SAIIA. "I also do not think it will have much effect on the West, besides adding to voices calling for a ceasefire."

Their leverage is, however, growing. Dozens of nations have applied or shown interest in joining BRICS, a major reason for the expansion earlier this year, as countries seek to reduce their dependence on the US-led Western financial system.

Russia, which will hold the group's presidency in 2024, is expected to push to use local currencies for international trade payments, as opposed to the dominant US dollar.

That platform, some say, is necessary for the voice of the Global South to be heard. "Within the global world order, BRICS offers another voice," Desai of Africa4Palestine said, and "that is necessary to counter the current Western hegemonic view".

Israel and Hamas have strong reasons not to extend Gaza ceasefire

Patrick Wintour Diplomatic editor The Guardian Fri 24 Nov 2023

Hamas risks losing leverage if all hostages are freed and Benjamin Netanyahu promised a full victory

Diplomats hope to announce plans to extend the four-day temporary ceasefire in Gaza well before it ends, but have to persuade the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, that he is not being lured into a trap that will extend Hamas's rule in Gaza.

Lists of Hamas-held hostages have been drawn up going beyond the 50 captives expected to be released over the next four days. But those involved in the talks acknowledge the difficulties, including the likelihood that Hamas may seek the release of a proportionally higher number of Palestinians than the one for three ratio agreed for the [first tranche of hostages](#). There are as many as 7,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including some serving multiple life sentences for murder.

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WHAT'S UP?

Petition calling for Ceasefire in Palestine/Israel: available for signature in Grand Forks at New West Trading Company and the USCC office.

The BPI is once again seeking **someone to deliver the Newsletter** in downtown Grand Forks. Once a month it takes 1-2 hours to deliver to various outlets. We've delivered this 4-pager to inform people on global issues, what other peace groups are doing, how other parts of the world respond. To give a few hours of your valuable time once a month please contact Laura at 250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net.

The BPI wishes all a peaceful and joyful Christmas as together we welcome 2024. Give a few moments for the victims of war. Think about what you can do to stop war and contribute to the Peace, Social Justice and Environmental movements locally and globally. We can change things by working as one human family--across racial and ethnic and social construct lines. It is up to each one of us. What are you willing to do? Together we can build a better world for everyone, everywhere.

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Go to the Government of Canada website for MP email and phone contact at: <http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434** or email L4peace@telus.net.

The BPI is an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Pledge Union, Abolition 2000, CNANW and works with various local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups such as Jewish Voices for Peace.

(From page 3) Israel and Hamas have strong reasons

Lists of Hamas-held hostages have been drawn up going beyond the 50 captives expected to be released over the next four days. But those involved in the talks acknowledge the difficulties, including the likelihood that Hamas may seek the release of a proportionally higher number of Palestinians than the one for three ratio agreed for the [first tranche of hostages](#). There are as many as 7,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including some serving multiple life sentences for murder.

As many as 10 days provisionally could be set aside for a rolling pause, but Qatar – which negotiated the deal between Israel and Hamas – has not set a cap. Netanyahu and his defence team said Israel's military was already preparing for the restart of hostilities after four days, a threat that is not unexpected.

The diplomats' difficulty is that both sides in the war have good reasons not to extend the ceasefire. Hamas would lose leverage over Israel if all the hostages were released. It is also argued that Hamas cannot afford to make too many concessions without losing support to the other rival military groups operating in [Gaza](#), such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

For Netanyahu, the risk lies in being drawn into a ceasefire that leaves Hamas's military structures intact – an outcome that runs counter to his vow this battle is not a repetition of the four previous conflicts with Hamas in Gaza that left it in power. Netanyahu has called it a fight between barbarism and civilisation, so can hardly afford a conflict that does not lead to complete victory.

Moreover, Netanyahu knows if he were to settle for a murky outcome he would be pilloried by rightwing extremists in his government that could then withdraw from the government and force an election that the polls show the public wants – and that he would lose badly.

So those pressing for an extension of the ceasefire do not hold many cards. They are relying on overpowering domestic emotional pressure from the families of the still-unreleased hostages, as well as international demand that humanitarian aid has to continue into Gaza. The next few days may do something to underline how close Gaza has been to a form of mass starvation.

Diplomats see the three key players in Israeli decision-making as the war cabinet, Netanhayu's office, and the Mossad intelligence agency and of those three, the Mossad is most likely to back an extension of the pause.

It is hoped the Mossad has the knowledge to convince Netanyahu that the military elimination of Hamas has at least to be defined, and possibly qualified

It is being argued that it is for the US president, Joe Biden, to tell Netanyahu directly that regardless of the war's outcome, he will not survive politically, and his legacy would be better served by coming to an agreement. But that requires Arab states to show a willingness to take responsibility for Israel's future security.

The announcement on Friday by the Egyptian president, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, that he could see a role for the Arab peacekeeping force is an advance. His remarks at least hold out the prospect of a political horizon that up until now has been lacking, apart from continued Israeli security control of Gaza.

Sisi called for a Palestinian state, but "demilitarised and for there to be guarantees for this in the form of Nato forces, UN forces, Arab forces, American. Whatever you want." He may not be talking about an interim security role in Gaza for Arab states, but a longer-term proposition once a Palestinian state is formed.

But it is an admission of a future role for Arab states as security guarantors. It may not be a coincidence that he made these remarks after speaking to Biden, who again assured him he would not permit Israel to force Palestinian refugees over the border from Gaza into Sinai. Sisi is convinced Israel wants to make Gaza uninhabitable.

Biden again ruled out a future role for Hamas in Gaza. That would require efforts to revive a reconciliation between the secular Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. Reconciliation talks between the two organisations have been staged on a near annual basis since 2005 in Damascus, Mecca, Cairo, Doha, Algiers and places in between. None of them, including the most recent in 2022, lasted. But rejuvenation of the Palestinian political leadership is indispensable if these cycles of indescribable violence are to end.