

PIN Bulletin For Local Organizers

Volume 10, April 2020

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?



A Message from your PIN Convener during COVID-19:

It is time for the Episcopal Church to wholeheartedly support the nonviolent tactic of BDS to challenge Israeli expansionist aggression.

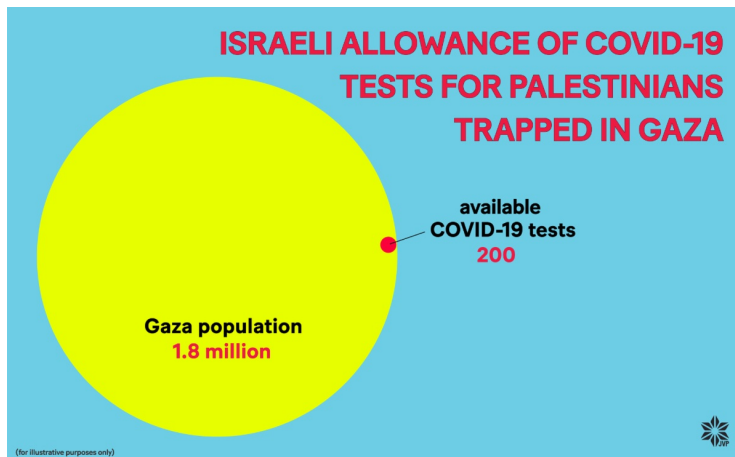
Americans are preoccupied by the horrific challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a New Yorker, sheltering at home, I wait for our governor's daily briefings to keep it all real ... the death, trauma, blatant inequality, fears about basic security and long-term survival of individuals and society. The whole world is preoccupied. Israelis and Palestinians are preoccupied. But Palestinians enduring COVID-19 are also occupied, with intensifying brutality and inhumanity. This is epitomized by the destruction of a Palestinian COVID-19 clinic and emergency housing by Israeli military forces in the village of Khirbet Izbiz in the Jordan Valley. [HERE](#) (See photo above.) If that doesn't prove the point, news that the number of Palestinian children detained by Israel has increased during the pandemic [HERE](#) clearly does.

COVID-19 has provoked the formation of an emergency coalition government in Israel to deal with the pandemic. The Netanyahu - Gantz power-sharing deal manipulates the virus preoccupation to hammer home the "Greater Israel" intentions of the occupation. The deal asks Netanyahu to

advance legislation for annexing major swathes of the West Bank starting July 1, with U.S. approval. The new defense minister overseeing the annexation is Gantz. This is the Benny Gantz who bragged during his election campaign that "parts of Gaza were returned to the Stone Age" under his direction as army chief during Operation Protective Edge in 2014. 547 children were killed, among 2200 total deaths.

This is what the Stone Age looks like: the attacks have destroyed water sources and sanitation plants, cut almost all electric power generation or imports, caused widespread chronic severe malnutrition, destroyed schools and thousands of homes, destroyed medical facilities, destroyed agricultural enterprises. And then, under the pretense of blocking dual use goods, the siege keeps out most materials needed to rebuild and maintain essential systems.

Here is what the Israeli government offered Stone Age Gaza in the face of COVID-19:



The threats to Gaza posed by COVID-19 have sparked a "race against time" for a people who say they "need a miracle" in the face of the pandemic. [HERE.](#)

Israel did this because they can; the siege of Gaza is total. Since 2010, our Church has passed resolutions urging an end to the siege. Now to be faithful to our baptismal covenant, we are obliged to condemn - to renounce! - this evil "destruction of the creatures of God."



What is it like "on the ground" in Gaza to face attacks by both human and viral enemies with a broken medical system?

EPF PIN member Tom Foster visited Gaza on a medical mission in February 2020, just days before Coronavirus lockdowns and quarantines began. He reported from one physician there, "...the five-year survival for a newly-diagnosed breast cancer patient in Gaza is 50%. In Israel, just a few miles away, the five-year survival is 85%. There is no radiotherapy in Gaza. Chemotherapy is in short supply...Appeals to cross the blockade to receive care in Israel or the West Bank are routinely delayed or simply denied. These patients suffer and die." And he saw that "at the Al Awda Hospital, a fluoroscopy system sits dormant awaiting a \$3,000 circuit board, the delivery of which Israel has blocked for months. This is common in Gaza. At the Al Quds Red Crescent Hospital, a new CT scanner has been delivered, but the workstation that enables its advanced cardiac applications has been held up at the blockade."

The stark realities of COVID-19 bring new urgency to this question: what are the limits of inhumanity, of gratuitous cruelty and barbarism that the world will afford the State of Israel?

Our church is called to act with others to help shape the post-COVID world. Among those actions is the necessity to put our Palestine/ Israel Resolutions into practice by joining our voice with the worldwide Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions Movement:

<https://bdsmovement.net/>

In our Baptismal rite, we renounce the evil powers of this world that corrupt and destroy the creatures of God. As we rebuild our world, we are called to repent of our collaboration in systems and institutions that dehumanize and crush human aspirations for freedom and dignity.

We are called to turn again, to put our whole trust in Jesus, to speak and act the truth in love and solidarity. Thanks be to God!

Faithfully, Linda Gaither

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