

Regarding a statement condemning the attacks by Hamas.

I would not like my name attached to any statement condemning Hamas that does not also recognize the atrocities committed by the Israeli government, condemning them as well. Hamas owes its very existence to the Israeli government and was propped up by Prime Minister Netanyahu in an effort to divide the Palestinian people and reduce the influence and effectiveness of the Palestinian Authority. Any statement that does not acknowledge this is incomplete. Hamas (labeled a terrorist organization) exists purely because of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. Indigenous resistance against western imperial powers extends back 500 years and is ontologically good. Hamas is merely one the more recent iteration of this resistance. Moreover, when we discuss the roughly 1400 people killed "by Hamas," there are several important caveats. First of all, around half those killed were soldiers, not civilians. Second, we know that at first, the Israeli military fired indiscriminately at the crowd of people, including their own citizens, and killed many. If we condemn Hamas for their killing and kidnapping, similarly should we condemn Israel for killing its own citizens, not to mention the conditions in Gaza that Israel created that allowed a group like Hamas to exist at all.

As of this writing on November 13, since October 7<sup>th</sup>, Israel has killed 11,240 Palestinians, including 4630 children. In the West Bank (where Hamas is not) 183 people have been killed by Israeli settlers, including 44 children. In this time, 270 Palestinian health facilities have been attacked, 60% of hospitals are nonfunctioning, 87 ambulances have been damaged, and 70% of primary health facilities are nonoperational. A child is killed in Gaza every 10 minutes. 15 people are killed and 42 bombs are dropped every hour. At least 41 journalists have been killed, 36 of them Palestinian. Even refugee camps have been targeted multiple times.

Since 2007, Israel has controlled the borders of Gaza, creating the world's largest open-air prison containing some 2 million people, half of which are under the age of 18. From the Balfour Declaration to the first Nakba to the current genocide unfolding before the eyes of the world's 8 billion people, Palestinians have had their very existence threatened by the settler-colonial state of Israel. Its current fascist government has tried to overhaul the judicial system, has broken dozens of United Nations resolutions, and has openly stated their intents for complete ethnic cleansing of the Gaza strip. According the Guardian, 65% of the people are in poverty, 80% require international aid, and half are unemployed. Living standards have dropped 27% lower than they were in 2006. Electricity is spotty and unreliable. There is not adequate access to clean water or proper sewage systems.

When considering the context in which Hamas was formed, whether officially labeled a terrorist group or freedom fighters, it is necessary to take into account all these living conditions. Israel has killed Palestinians for years, whether they be peaceful protestors marching or children in the street throwing rocks at tanks. Since 2008, around 18,000 Palestinians have been killed, compared to roughly 1500 Israelis. 40 years of war and occupation before that point add to the enormous death tolls.

Finally, my issue is with the state of Israel and Zionism. I have no hate in my heart for Jewish people, and conflating Judaism with Zionism is not only dangerous, it is antisemitic. Judaism is larger, older, and more complex than a state with a 75-year history. To quote James Baldwin, "The state of Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews; it was created for the salvation of the Western interests. This is what is becoming clear (I must say that it was always clear to me). The Palestinians have been paying for the British colonial policy of "divide and rule" and for Europe's guilty Christian conscience for more than thirty years." Activists from Angela Davis, Nelson Mandela, and Assata Shakur have stood with Palestine

in black-Arab solidarity. Today one of the most prominent voices standing with Palestine is Jewish Voices for Peace. Millions have taken to the street in the last few weeks around the world, voicing exactly where they stand.

Do I condemn Hamas? No. Do I approve of all their actions? Absolutely not. I also recognize that my place of privilege as a white man in the imperial core allows me no moral ground on which to judge indigenous resistance against these same western colonial powers. What I can and do condemn is the state of Israel for its actions against the Palestinian people over the last 75 years. What I can and do condemn is anti-black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, fascists governments, and militarized oppression of indigenous people.

