

fully. In Lebanon, however, Hezbollah is in a different position. Firstly, it has the support of its government, and secondly, it has more than one secure supply route for weapons. Hamas caused limited Israeli casualties in ground warfare, but that will not be the case in Lebanon. It's not impossible for Hezbollah sympathizers from around the world to reach Lebanon.

In the 1980s, American and French forces in Lebanon could not withstand the nationalist fighters and were forced to leave Lebanon in disgrace. On the other hand, Israel has said it only wants to eliminate the military strength of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, which has posed a threat to Israel's northern occupied areas for the past year. After October 7, 2023, Hezbollah turned Israel's northern areas into hell for Jewish settlers, forcing 60,000 settlers to relocate to central Israel. Israel is concerned

about the security of these crumbling northern regions and seeks to resettle Jewish settlers there to reduce the risk of losing control. It cannot be ignored that the evolving war situation in Western Asia will lead to bloodshed in the region and could have disastrous consequences for the entire world. The already fragile tensions are now moving toward a full-scale war, which could affect not only Lebanon and Israel but potentially other regional powers like Iran and Turkey as well.

Hezbollah, Iran's primary military and political asset in the region, is already mourning the martyrdom of its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and other key commanders. This raises an important question: What will Tehran's response be in this situation? Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has sent a message to the Iranian people, hinting that they should stop their leadership from tak-

ing anti-Israel actions. Netanyahu's fear is based on reality. Foolish friends and wise enemies are criticizing the Iranian government for not launching a direct war against Israel. Is there any doubt that Iran is currently the axis of Islamic resistance, backing Hezbollah, Hashd al-Shaabi, Ansarullah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad? These military forces have not only shaken Israel but the entire West and have, over the past year, exposed the human rights hypocrisy of Western governments.

The Islamic world should not be discouraged. The economic losses of Israel and the West won't allow their arrogance to last long. The West's paradise is soon to turn into hell. Sayyed Nasrallah was assassinated on America's orders with bunker-buster bombs supplied by the US and Hezbollah has announced its preparedness for a long war. The peace Israel seeks has ended with Nasrallah's

passing because they have crossed the red line. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was the spiritual leader of Hezbollah and resistance movements worldwide, committed to fighting Israel. Hezbollah's strength will never fade, but Israel's racist ideology might. The Jews don't realize they are merely pawns of the American devil, who could sacrifice them at any time to maintain its power.

The intensity of the regional war will lead to regional instability, threatening global energy markets and international security. The martyrdom of Hezbollah's leader was not entirely unexpected. Israeli intelligence had been trying for years to eliminate Nasrallah. They spent millions of dollars on failed operations. Had the events of October 7 not occurred, it was only a matter of time before Israeli agencies would have eliminated this iron man, whom Israeli leadership viewed as a threat to their

national security. Nasrallah hadn't been seen in public for years, constantly moving from place to place. His martyrdom signals a clear conclusion.

We must also examine Saudi Arabia's policy regarding Palestinians. Saudi eagerness to establish relations with Israel has paved the way for bloodshed in the Middle East, engulfing the entire region in flames. It must be remembered that Israel's enmity leads to challenges and problems, but friendship with it brings nothing but destruction. Israel's ambitions are expansionism, as expressed by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who said, "Israel's reach extends across the Middle East, and any adversary can be our target at any time." Even if Netanyahu's words are not taken seriously, it must be acknowledged that Israel's terrorist mentality can pose a threat to both the Middle East and the world at any time.

UN resolution and the movement to liberate Palestine



By Craig Moldhiber
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OPINION

On September 18, a world that has stumbled to find its voice through eleven months of genocide in Palestine, finally spoke. The General Assembly of the United Nations, a body unconstrained by the U.S. veto, and in which all countries have a seat, overwhelmingly endorsed the findings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and declared that the occupation of East Jerusalem (Al-Quds), the West Bank, and Gaza is unlawful and must end entirely, that every soldier and settler must be removed, that the apartheid wall must be dismantled, relevant laws repealed, that Palestinians must be compensated and allowed to return home, and that Israeli-imposed racial segregation and apartheid in Palestine must cease. And it declared that Israel must immediately comply with the provisional measures of the ICJ issued by the court in the genocide case brought against Israel by South Africa.

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Despite intense U.S. and other Western efforts to derail the resolution, the vote was not even close. 124 countries voted in favor (two-thirds of the world), while only 14 voted against, including the United States, Israel, and a few right-wing regimes and pacific dependencies of the United States. The votes in favor included Western countries like Spain, Belgium, Ireland, and Iceland, as well as U.S. ally Japan, P5 powers China and Russia, and almost the entire global South. Several European states abstained.

When the votes were counted, there was a sense that the UN had, at least for a moment, regained its soul. Conscious of the historic nature of the moment, the Assembly broke into applause. As the gavel came down, delegations celebrated in the aisles and lined up to shake the hand of the Palestinian ambassador.

And historic it was. After a three-decade detour during which U.S. pressure and the Oslo smokescreen diverted the world's attention while Israel's repression and dispossession of the indigenous Palestinian people were expedited, the resolution returned the UN to its mandated focus on freedom, on human rights, on equality and on the protections of international law for Palestine.

As such, the resolution vindicated the appeals of the long-suffering Palestinian people, a global movement demanding a free Palestine, and international law itself. And the Assembly did not stop there. In a historic repositioning of the global community, the resolution (following the lead of the ICJ) rejected the unjust (and failed) paradigm by which Palestinians were expected to negotiate for their rights with their oppressor. In its place, the resolution has (re)established a framework of decolonization underpinned by international law. The Palestinian people's right to self-determination is, according to the resolution,

an inalienable right, and is not subject to conditions imposed by Israel. And Israel's "security concerns" do not override Palestinian rights in the Palestinian territory over which Israel can never exercise sovereignty, the resolution declares. Equally important are the demands placed on all other states by the resolution and by the ICJ findings on which it is based.

The resolution, drawing directly from the ICJ opinion, affirmed that all countries are legally obliged to cease any recognition of or support for the Israeli settler-colonial project in the occupied territory, to work to liberate the Palestinian people and to end Israel's racial segregation and apartheid, to ban any products from the settlements, to sanction settlers and others involved in Israel's occupation, and to cut off all military, diplomatic, economic, commercial, financial, investment, trade, political, and legal relations with the Israeli occupation.

In other words, the UN General Assembly has called on all states to participate in a military embargo and in boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) to bring the occupation to an end.

Equally historic is the resolution's endorsement of the court's findings that the Israeli regime practices apartheid and racial segregation, as prohibited by Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, marking the (belated) start of the Organization's alignment with the global movement against apartheid in Palestine (a move urged by UN human rights experts for years). States are called on to work to end these unlawful apartheid systems, and the resolution mandates the UN to prepare a proposal for an international mechanism to combat them.

These provisions in particular will bring important benefits to the global BDS and anti-apartheid movements, and to hu-

man rights defenders in civil society more broadly, who have faced significant repression (especially in the West) for their advocacy on these issues. They can now rightly claim that the world, acting through the General Assembly of the United Nations, has not only endorsed their positions but has called on all states to join them.

Predictably, Israel's defenders are already seeking to deflate the importance of the resolution by saying that it is "non-binding." Such statements are at best a gross misrepresentation.

First, what the resolution (and the court findings on which it is based) has enumerated is the (pre-existing) legal obligations that bind all states, by virtue of their erga omnes (universally binding) character in international law, and the jus cogens (no exceptions) nature of the Palestinian rights in question. The substance of the resolution is thus binding, even if the UNGA has no power to compel states to respect these obligations. Secondly, the resolution was adopted in an Emergency Special Session under "Uniting for Peace," a UN procedure that gives enhanced powers to the General Assembly when the Security Council fails to act (usually, in this case, due to a U.S. veto). Thus, this is not an ordinary UNGA resolution, and the law that it cites is indeed binding, even if the resolution itself cannot command states to act.

The resolution puts Israel on notice that it must completely end its occupation and apartheid within twelve months or face further consequences. Accountability measures in the meantime are to include the establishment of a mechanism to ensure that Israel pays reparations to the Palestinians, an international register of damage to facilitate that process, evidence-gathering initiatives to that end, and consideration of measures for criminal accountability, including prosecutions for the worst Israeli crimes.

It also calls on Switzerland to convene, within six months, an extraordinary Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the convention in Palestine. And it decided, as well, to convene an international conference under UN auspices in the coming months to address the implementation of the many UN resolutions on Palestine of which Israel is in breach.

Finally, the resolution mandates a report from the UN Secretary-General in three months' time on the implementation of the resolution, and decides to keep the matter under UNGA review, so that it does not become dead letter.

Needless to say, the resolution is not a panacea, and it will not end Israel's 76-year reign of terror and impunity. It will undoubtedly be ignored by Israel and by its US sponsor, both of which will work behind the scenes to obstruct its implementation. And the resolution itself leaves unaddressed many crucial aspects of the Palestinian struggle, not least the rights of Palestinians inside Green Line Israel and the fate of those purged from their homes there. And, beyond its reiteration of the UN's obligations under the orders of the ICJ, it does little to end the ongoing genocide.

But seen in conjunction with recent action by UN human rights experts, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, diplomatic advances in the recognition of Palestine, growing solidarity in global public opinion, movements in civil society across the globe, and steadfast Palestinian resistance, it heralds the birth of a new era: an era in which Israeli impunity is no longer guaranteed, and in which the foundations of Israeli settler-colonialism, apartheid and ethnonationalism have begun to crumble.

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Result of the General Assembly vote on a draft resolution on the ICJ advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory on September 18, 2024.
● EVAN SCHNEIDER/
UN PHOTO



The recent UN General Assembly vote on the illegality of the Israeli occupation shows Israeli impunity is no longer guaranteed and the foundations of Israeli settler-colonialism and apartheid have begun to crumble.