

# ISRAELI SOLDIERS STEAL AND DESTROY PALESTINIAN CLINIC AGAINST COVID-19

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By **Rainer Rupp**

„This morning, Thursday, 26 March 2020, at around 7:30 am, officials from Israel's Civil Administration in the West Bank arrived with a military jeep escort, a bulldozer and two flatbed trucks with cranes at the Palestinian community of Khirbet Ibziq in the northern Jordan Valley (...) As the whole world battles an unprecedented and paralyzing healthcare crisis, Israel's military is devoting time and resources to harassing the most vulnerable Palestinian communities in the West Bank, that Israel has attempted to drive out of the area for decades.“

This was reported by "B'Tselem", a Jerusalem-based non-profit organization whose declared goal is to document human rights violations in the Israeli-occupied territories, on March 23. As expected, this news was not picked up by any of our quality media.

In a commando raid, Israeli soldiers tore down the walls of the makeshift clinic still under construction with heavy equipment, not without first stealing and transporting to Israel, probably for their own purposes, medical and other equipment, as well as large tents and a generator. Finally, radical right-wing rabbis never tire of convincing the Israeli soldier that "one Jewish life is worth more than 1000 Arab lives", a formula that ex-chief rabbi Mordechai Tzemach Eliyahu even wanted to see enshrined in the law.

Stealing equipment from a Palestinian makeshift clinic in the middle of a pandemic and then tearing it down is "an especially cruel example of the regular abuse inflicted on these communities, and it goes against basic human and humanitarian principles during an emergency. Unlike Israel's policies, this pandemic does not discriminate based on nationality, ethnicity or religion. It is high time the government and military acknowledged that now, of all times, Israel is responsible for the health and wellbeing of the five million Palestinians who live under its control in the Occupied Territories." according to the „B'Tselem".

There is no doubt that under international law the occupying power is responsible for the population in the occupied territories, including health care. But in Palestine, the Zionist occupiers have always ignored the legally binding commitment because they can be sure that powerful Zionist friends in the US Congress and, to date, in virtually all US governments have blocked for at least half a century any initiative in the United Nations that would have forced Israel to change its criminal course.

And in Germany - in politics, the media and in society - the anti-Semitism club that threatens to

suffocate any criticism of the racist apartheid policy of the self-declared Jewish state.

The past experience with the coronavirus in the West Bank is not only a perfect example of the criminal irresponsibility with which Israel rules over the Palestinians, but also of how the Zionists exploit the corona crisis for illegal activities in the occupied territories. In the Palestinian city of Bethlehem, for example, where there have been approximately 30 cases of Corona, a curfew strictly controlled by the Israeli military was imposed, while in Tel Aviv, where there were several hundred more cases at the same time, such restrictive measures were not imposed.

The curfew for Palestinians was accompanied by night-time raids by the Israeli military and by the expulsion of Palestinian families from their homes, which were then demolished to make way for the expansion of old or the construction of new, illegal Zionist settlements on the West Bank. All of this increasingly happened in the second half of March, with the occupying forces taking advantage of the Corona crisis to keep foreign journalists away from the sites of their crimes.

Against the background of the dramatic escalation of Covid-19 disease in the occupied territories, leading representatives and senators of the Democratic Party in the US Congress, including Elisabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, Van Hollen, Tom Udall and others, have written a letter to the Trump Administration asking them to send urgently needed aid to Palestine in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. The letter says:

“Given the spread of the coronavirus in the West Bank and Gaza, the extreme vulnerability of the health system in Gaza, and the continued withholding of U.S. aid to the Palestinian people, we are concerned that the Administration is failing to take every reasonable step to help combat this public health emergency in the Palestinian Territories,” the letter states.

When the letter from members of Congress to President Trump talks about the need to lift the continuing blockade on US aid to the Palestinian people, the background is the following. Until the end of last year, the Palestinian self-governing authorities had received modest economic and medical aid from the United States. However, when the Palestinians refused to agree to President Trump's "Grand Peace Plan", which he presented on 28 January 2020, all US aid to Palestine was stopped on his orders.

Trump's peace plan, officially entitled "PEACE TO PROSPERITY: A Vision To Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People", would have, against the promise of larger sums of money, further fragmented Palestinian territory in the West Bank and de facto created even more space for the Zionist land robbers.

The plan was developed under the leadership of Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. Trump had appointed the fervent Zionist Kushner, who is a close friend of Israeli Prime Minister and right-wing racist Benjamin Netanyahu, as Special Representative for the Middle East. In this function, Kushner, together with Netanyahu, had worked out the "Middle East peace plan". The third in the alliance was Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS), who became notorious above all for having commissioned the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a journalist from the Washington Post.

The peace plan had little to do with peace, however, since its main purpose was to forge a military-political and economic axis between Israel, the USA and Saudi Arabia against Iran. In order to prevent the Saudi Crown Prince MBS from becoming a traitor to the Palestinian cause in the Arab-Islamic world, the Palestinians were to be lured with the promise of a great deal of Saudi money to agree to the peace plan later presented by Trump.

However, since the so-called "peace plan" included, among many other impositions, a further dismemberment of the West Bank, the plan, as well as any negotiation of it, was completely rejected by the Palestinians. As an enforcement measure, Washington promptly stopped all further US aid to the Palestinians. Since Trump's son-in-law is now also a member of the US President's COVID-19 Task Force, it is difficult to imagine that Trump will lift the blockade of US aid without any return of the Palestinians, despite the urgent humanitarian situation in the occupied territories of Palestine.

Nevertheless, on Thursday last week (March 26, 2020) the left-wing organization of American Jews "IfNotNow" announced that more than 10,000 people had signed its petition calling on Israel to protect the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank from the coronavirus by ending the blockade and allowing medical aid (from other countries) to pass through again.

The petition also stated: "The international community must do everything it can to protect everyone in the world from this pandemic — and this must include the stateless Palestinians in Gaza, whose lives are controlled by the Israeli military. If there was ever a moment to realize that we are in this fight together, it is now".

The appeal of "IfNotNow" to the international community alone will be of little use. The USA must lead the way in providing aid to the Palestinians. Because the Zionists don't give a damn about the "international community", just as they don't care about resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. But if they were to obstruct official US government aid to the Palestinians, this could have serious consequences for the amount of annual US financial injections and military aid to

Israel.

Cumulatively, Israel is the largest recipient of US foreign aid since World War II. So far, the United States government has given Israel a total of 142.3 billion dollars. The figure is not adjusted for inflation, which means that, for example, \$1 million in 1960 had a significantly higher purchasing power than \$1 million in 2020, meaning that the \$142.3 billion in U.S. aid from 1946 to 2020 shown above is far too low and is more likely to be twice as high.

## Sources:

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