

Dec. 31, 2009

The Editor,

The Chronicle Herald.

Dear Editor:

The letters, by Maida Follini and Mark David [Dec.31], compile a mass of falsehoods and fabrications. Israel has been maintaining a brutal illegal occupation of Palestinian Territories, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, for over 42 years, in violation of international law and repeated Security Council resolutions. Throughout this occupation, Israeli practices, including detention of prisoners, torture, home demolition, extra-judicial assassination, expropriation of land and other methods of collective punishment, are all in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. These acts are war crimes, as defined by international law.

The so-called Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, in 2005, is a charade. Israel took out its troops from Gaza but maintained an oppressive siege, controlling free access to Gazans, by air, sea or land. In fact, as confirmed by all international and Israeli human rights groups, Gaza was transformed into an open prison. The charges against Hamas bear no relation to facts. In June 2008 Hamas agreed to a 6-month ceasefire with Israel and maintained that. It was Israel which broke that ceasefire, on Nov. 4, 2008, bombing and killing 6 people in Gaza, as well as maintaining the siege denying Gazans the food and health care essentials.

The talk of peace is outside Israeli designs as confirmed by Israel's leaders' statements and continued expansion of illegal colonies [settlements] in the West Bank. This has no bearing on the presence or actions of Hamas, which was created in 1987, decades after the illegal Israeli occupation. The brutal assault on Gaza a year ago, which the peace marchers are demonstrating against, defies description, as confirmed by the Goldstone Report, Sept. 2009.

If Israel's apologists truly care for peace, they should call on Israel to comply with international law and UN resolutions and terminate completely its illegal occupation. Thus peace and security can be attained for Israelis and Palestinians.

Yours Sincerely,

Ismail Zayid, MD.

President, Canada Palestine Association.