

Israel occupied the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem in 1967. The United States occupied Iraq in 2003. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, both the Palestinian and Iraqi peoples are "protected" populations. Yet for 36 years, Israel has engaged in practices that are grave breaches of international law. These include extra-judicial assassinations, torture, extended curfews and other forms of

including Task Force 121, in intelligence, nighttime raids, and assassinations. "We've got to scare the Iraqis into submission," one American adviser stated (Seymour Hersh, *The New Yorker*, December 15, 2003). The key lesson, according to a former Israeli military-intelligence officer, was "how to do targeted killing, which is very relevant to the success of the war."

right is permitted, even when there is a "public emergency which threatens the life of the nation," as stated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which both Israel and the US are parties. Articles 32 and 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention condemn physical "extermination" and "wilful killing" as grave breaches. Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human

DUAL OCCUPATIONS!

IF IT IS WRONG IN PALESTINE, WHY ARE WE DOING IT IN IRAQ?

collective punishment, house demolitions and the destruction of agricultural land and civilian property, expulsions, and illegal imprisonment.

Since November 2003 the US has imported into Iraq many of the repressive measures that have failed to bring "security" to Israel and have turned the West Bank and Gaza Strip into a tinderbox. Increasingly, the two occupations are coming to resemble each other, as the occupiers actively collaborate to put down indigenous resistance.

LEARNING HOW TO DO TARGETED ASSASSINATIONS

Israeli commandos and intelligence units have been helping train US Special Forces,

Using bombs, missiles, tanks, sniper fire, booby traps, and undercover death squads disguised as Arabs, Israel has implemented "targeted killings" from 1948 to the present, according to a Bar-Ilan University publication (Steven David, "Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing," September 2002): "Taken as a whole, targeted killing, especially in the second intifada, has not thus far enhanced the security of Israel, and probably has cost more Israeli lives than it has saved," David writes.

The practice of assassination has also taken the lives of more than a hundred Palestinian bystanders, including many women and children, since late 2000. And how is the guilt of the targeted persons determined? According to Michael Sfard, a Tel Aviv attorney, "Today we execute people without trial. It's so simple. That's what we're doing. No one shows evidence to anyone" (*Washington Post*, July 30, 2003).

The US State Department denounced Israel's extra-judicial assassinations until late 2002. But Vice-President Cheney argued that they could be justified. Indeed, the US is considering creating covert squads, often posing as Arabs, to carry out "hits", Israeli-style (Reuters, December 11, 2003).

However, there is no justification under international human rights law for what Amnesty International terms "extra-judicial executions" and Israel prefers to call "targeted killings." The right to life is so fundamental that no derogation of this

Rights states that no one should be punished without due process.

IMPRISONING VILLAGES AND DESTROYING HOMES

"I see no difference between us and the Palestinians," an Iraqi named Tarek muttered, as he waited to pass through the checkpoint outside Abu Hishma, now encircled by five miles of razor wire. "We didn't expect anything like this after Saddam fell" (*New York Times*, December 7, 2003).

Checkpoints, concrete barricades, identity cards, and body searches in towns cordoned off by barbed wire, while homes of insurgents' relatives are destroyed and nearby fields are bulldozed to create a sterile no-man's land: in parts of Iraq, the US is reproducing the dehumanizing landscape and siege conditions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Such collective punishment is against the law: Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states, "no protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all means of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited."

The collective punishment used by Israel against the Palestinians is as old as the occupation. During the first decade of the occupation, as many as 20,000 Palestinian homes and some entire villages were destroyed; thousands have been demolished during the current uprising. Far from producing security, Israel's siege on Palestinian



END THE OCCUPATION
US CAMPAIGN TO END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION

The US Campaign is a diverse coalition working for freedom from occupation and equal rights for all by challenging US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Campaign is based on human rights and international law, providing a non-sectarian framework for everyone who supports its Call to Action. Its strategy is to inform, educate, and mobilize the public so as to change the US role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

communities and other forms of collective punishment have, Israeli journalist Amira Hass believes, given some Palestinians the motivation to become suicide bombers (*Ha'aretz*, June 12, 2002).

LEARNING FROM THE INVASION OF JENIN

Shortly after Israel in April 2002 used a hundred thousand troops, and over a hundred tanks and helicopter gunships in a massive assault on the Jenin refugee camp, the US undersecretary of state Richard Boucher called it a “tragedy for thousands of innocent Palestinian people” which caused “enormous human suffering” (BBC News, April 20, 2002). But *The Washington Post* (May 6, 2002) reported that the invasion was welcomed by the US military as a way of checking out on a real battlefield the theories developed in US virtual war games, and that Special Forces were in all probability present at the site.

According to Israeli investigative journalist Shraga Elan writing for the Israeli Internet news service *DEBKA* (May 9, 2002), “One aim of the US-Israeli ‘joint venture’ was to gather important evidence in fighting Muslim extremists in a densely populated area like Jenin in order to apply it later in Kandahar, Afghanistan”—and now, we can add, Iraq.

But as Justin Huggler wrote in the March 29, 2003 *Independent* (UK), “if the US army believes the road to Baghdad lies through Jenin, there is reason for Iraqi civilians to be concerned. During fighting in the Jenin refugee camp last April, more than half the Palestinian dead were civilians.”

Human Rights Watch, which sent a fact-finding mission to the Jenin refugee camp after Israeli Prime Minister Sharon blocked the investigation called for by United Nations Security Council resolution 1405 (April 19, 2002), reported that “during their incursion into the Jenin refugee camp, Israeli forces committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, some amounting prima facie to war crimes” (“Israel, the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian Authority Territories: Jenin—IDF Military Operations,” May 3, 2002).

SHARING HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

Israel has reportedly supplied American military with decoy drones for aerial surveillance, and may be sharing its new software developed to train military commanders in how to defeat the Palestinian uprising (Reuters, December 11, 2003).

US Caterpillar D9 bulldozers, equipped with armor in Israel, are now destroying buildings and land in both occupied territories. The US has long supplied Israel with F16s, Apache and Cobra attack helicopters, and other armaments which have been used against the civilian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in violation of numerous articles of the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 governing the behavior of occupying forces.

Their use also violates those provisions of US domestic law (the Arms Control Act and the amended Foreign Assistance Act) which specify that security assistance must further “the purposes and principles of the United Nations charter” and cannot be provided to states that engage “in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”

SECRET PRISONS AND TORTURE

An article in the November 2003 English edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique* is headlined: “Facility 1391: Israel’s Guantanamo.” It describes a secret Israeli prison which doesn’t appear on any map, and which seems part of an extensive network of secret prisons in Israel.

“Anyone entering the prison can be made to disappear, potentially forever,” stated Israeli lawyer Leah Tsemel. “What little information is available,” writes Jonathan Cook, the author of the piece, “suggests that investigative methods using torture are routine.”

Despite the fact that torture was banned by the Israeli Supreme Court in 1999, a recent survey by the Public Committee against Torture in Israel reveals that 58 percent of Palestinians detained during the current uprising report being subjected to beatings,

shaking, being forced to assume painful positions, having wooden batons inserted into the rectum, having handcuffs intentionally tightened, being hooded for long periods, and not being permitted to sleep or go to the toilet.

According to Dalia Kerstein, the director of the Israeli human rights group *Hamoked* which has mounted a legal challenge to Facility 1391, “It would be quite astounding if Israel, the US’s most loyal ally, which we now know has at least one secret prison, wasn’t offering its services to the US. Israel has decades of expertise in torturing and interrogating Arab prisoners—exactly the skills the Americans now need since the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1) Work for an end to the occupation

of Iraq. United for Peace and Justice (www.unitedforpeace.org) and its member groups organize actions, teach-ins, and demonstrations to bring peace to Iraq and bring US troops home.

2) Work for an end to Israel’s occupation

of Palestine. The US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (www.endtheoccupation.org) provides resources, materials, and actions from its member groups to end US support for Israel’s occupation and promote just peace in Palestine and Israel.

3) Uphold the rule of law! Only the law will protect the people of Palestine and Iraq, as well as of Israel and the United States. If we do not uphold the rule of law, we will be ruled by the law of the jungle. Educate yourself and your fellow activists on the key texts of international law—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the convention on civil and political rights and that on economic, social and cultural rights—and the Geneva Conventions, and refer to them in your letters to the editor, talks, and actions.