

THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE: A WORKERS' ISSUE

SPSC TU Network Newsletter | July 2026

EDITORIAL: UNCONDITIONAL SOLIDARITY | WORLD CUP | FILTON 4 UPDATE +



Photo: Edinburgh Pride/Matt Sime

**NO PRIDE
IN GENOCIDE**



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EDITORIAL

UNCONDITIONAL SOLIDARITY



Photo: Edinburgh Pride/Matt Sime

Kerris Duffy
Scottish PSC Organiser
Edinburgh Branch

As Queer individuals, we often feel pressured to conceal parts of our identity for fear they'll be weaponised against us in some way or another. During my time campaigning in Scotland, within the Palestine solidarity movement, I have experienced this first-hand.

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Over the past three years of genocide, I've had my share of fellow Queers, operating under the racist assumption that Palestinians are inherently homophobic, accusing me of being a "traitor." On the flip side, supposed comrades on the left have also accused me and other Queer activists of "dividing the movement," for highlighting the parallels between Queer liberation and the Palestinian struggle.

Partially, I think this is because of our collective failure to acknowledge the historic and vital role Queer people have played in liberation movements worldwide.

Queer liberation is a political approach to sexuality and gender that stems from the rejection of heteronormativity and patriarchy, which is the foundation of any settler colonial project — including Israel. Yet so often the LGBTQ+ struggle is dismissed, seen as irrelevant or even as an adversary to the Palestinian liberation movement. Pride Month offers us an opportunity to challenge this notion.

Beneath the rainbows, glitter, corporate sponsorship, and performances from iconic X Factor contestants of yesteryear is a story of mutual aid, activism and an intersectional fight for liberation

A commonly used example is the [Lesbians & Gays Support the Miners](#) (LGSM), an activist alliance of lesbians and gay men who supported the National Union of Mineworkers during the year-long strike of 1984–1985.

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The impact of this unconditional solidarity still echoes today. Earlier this year, Reform UK counsellors cut funding for Durham's Pride. In response, Trade Unions, including TUC, the Durham Miners Association and Equity, came together to replace the lost council fund, surpassing the £15,000 that had been cut.

Also in 1984, Simon Nkoli, an openly gay, anti-apartheid South African activist, had been arrested and charged with treason as part of the Delmas Treason Trial. Despite the initial discomfort from his co-defendants, Nkoli refused to hide his sexuality and previous involvement in gay activism during the trial. The trial then garnered increased global solidarity from anti-apartheid activists across the world. But Simon Nkoli decided to stand trial as a proud black gay man, leading to a wave of global support from LGBTQ+ groups.

Nkoli used this opportunity to encourage his supporters to extend their solidarity to his co-defendants, stating that his identity as a gay man should not be viewed as special. After the end of apartheid, South Africa became the first country in the world to guarantee freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. This inclusion was enshrined in the 1996 South African Constitution, as a direct response to the visible role Queer people played in ending apartheid.

LGBTQ+ rights and public support have come a long way since the 1980s

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This has historically forced right-wing, fascist groups to get smarter about how they seek to divide and ultimately distract us. In the context of Palestine, this could not be clearer than when we analyse Israel's use of Pinkwashing.

The term Pinkwashing was adopted by Palestinian activists around a decade ago, used to describe how the Israeli state and its supporters weaponise the LGBTQ+ community to pull international attention away from the oppression of Palestinians.

While support for the Palestine solidarity movement grows, Pinkwashing becomes a vital cog in the Israeli propaganda machine, in the attempt to promote itself as a “liberal,” “modern,” and “democratic” state. This rhetoric relies on presenting Palestinians, as well as Muslim countries and people more generally, as fundamentally anti-LGBTQ+ and, therefore, undeserving of solidarity.

Whilst on the surface, Pinkwashing appears to be just another PR campaign, it functions on a much deeper level as a weapon of colonial violence. At its core, the Israeli settler colonial project, much like all colonial endeavours, seeks to eliminate Palestinians through classic divide-and-conquer tactics. This can be through tangible means, such as the military occupation and the apartheid wall, as well as less obvious methods of psychological divisions.

Pinkwashing is one of these psychological manipulations that seek to push the racist idea that diverse sexuality and

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genders are not natural to Palestinian society (for a more in-depth analysis of this, I recommend reading *Beyond Propaganda: Pinkwashing as Colonial Violence* by alQaws).

In that sense, we see similar examples of psychological divisions being weaponised here in Scotland, as cisgender women and children's "safety" is being used to justify the removal of transgender rights and as justification for racist acts of violence.

If we want to build strong solidarity movements, we must honour and include Queer liberation in our activism. For those of us looking to engage in workplace and organising around Palestine, we must learn to discuss and challenge Pinkwashing. We must use every opportunity to highlight the countless times the LGBTQ+ community has displayed unconditional solidarity for liberation movements despite great risk to their safety.

Likewise, as LGBTQ+ people, we must honour the activists who came before us. We must continue to reject bad-faith attempts to paint entire communities as adversaries and continue to offer our unconditional solidarity to all those who face oppression.

“So, when I fight for my freedom, I must fight against both oppressors. All those who believe in a democratic South Africa must fight against all oppression, all intolerance, all injustice” – Simon Nkoli

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OPEN LETTER

NO PRIDE IN GENOCIDE GLASGOW



Siobhan
No Pride in Genocide Glasgow

“Trans rights, workers' rights, one struggle, one fight!” is a chant that echoes from May Day marches to Pride protests, led by those committed to an intersectional understanding of our shared struggle.

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Emerging from resistance to state violence and discrimination, Pride should be inseparable from broader social justice movements, a fight for liberation and against exploitation, oppression and inequality of all forms.

In recent decades, however, the increasing commercialisation of Pride has given rise to Pinkwashing: the strategic use of LGBTQ+ inclusion to cultivate a progressive corporate or state image while obscuring practices of exploitation and human rights abuses. This is a propaganda strategy used by the zionist entity.

No Pride in Genocide — Glasgow formed in opposition to Pinkwashing by Glasgow's Pride LTD, following their refusal to engage with community members who raised concerns about their 'Proud Partners,' that is, the corporations they take money from in exchange for advertising space within our march.

Mainstream Pride organisers frequently celebrate the co-optation of our movement, partnering with weapons manufacturers like BAE Systems, international banks with investments in the weapons trade like Barclays, and this year, Glasgow Pride's partnership with The Coca-Cola Company. The Coca-Cola Company has long been a target of the BDS campaign, due to the operations of Coca-Cola Israel, an exclusive franchise of The Coca-Cola Company, which operates out of the Atarot Industrial Settlement in the Occupied West Bank, which constitutes a war crime under International Law.

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The Coca-Cola Company has long been a target of the BDS campaign, due to the operations of Coca-Cola Israel, an exclusive franchise of The Coca-Cola Company, which operates out of the Atarot Industrial Settlement in the Occupied West Bank, which constitutes a war crime under International Law. Capital operates globally, and workers' solidarity must do the same.

The case of Coca-Cola's Colombian bottling plant provides a stark example; anti-union violence, including the assassination and intimidation of trade unionists by paramilitary groups acting in collusion with corporate interests, terrorised workers to prevent them from joining the Sinaltrainal trade union in the 1990s.

The ongoing displacement and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure are part of the same struggle, across borders, against the imperialist powers and capitalist systems that prioritise power and profit over people. The fight for LGBTQ+ liberation, workers' rights and the Palestinian cause are expressions of the same commitment to justice. Our movements are strongest when they recognise our common enemies and come together to resist.

That's why this year, we're calling for a boycott of the parade organised by Glasgow Pride LTD. We will meet as a community as we have done in previous years, but instead of marching, we will sit. We will stay behind and not add a single body to their pinkwashing exercise. We refuse to be tools in their exploitation of our cause.

Join us!
18th July, Pride, Glasgow Green

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PHOTO: EDINBURGH PRIDE BY MATT SIME



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BEYOND THE FINAL WHISTLE: FOOTBALL AND SOLIDARITY



Photo: Nuseirat Camp – Gaza/Ahmed Younis

Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

I travelled to the World Cup in the United States with some reluctance. Unsure whether my activism might be flagged and prevent me from entering the country, and questioning whether I even wanted to be part of it. For others, however, entry was never an option. Discriminatory policies targeting supporters from Arab, Muslim, African and Caribbean nations meant many were excluded from attending the tournament altogether, even if they could afford the extortionate costs involved.

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BEYOND THE FINAL WHISTLE | HUSSEIN EZZEDINE

Calls for protest and boycott are entirely legitimate and understandable

At its best, the World Cup is a global celebration. After 28 years of absence, Scotland embraced it more enthusiastically than most, filling stadiums with colour, noise and pride. Like many others, I felt this acutely when Scotland defeated Haiti. It was one of those rare moments of collective joy; strangers embrace and, for a brief instant, everything beyond dissolves. But the illusion never lasts. It never has. Sport does not exist outside politics; it is shaped by the same forces that produce war, inequality and domination.

While the tournament is marketed as a celebration of unity, the principal host and its allies, including the UK and Israel, bear responsibility for immense suffering across the globe. Yet resistance exists alongside the spectacle. We know that silence in the face of injustice is never neutrality. In the United States, trade unionists have used the World Cup to demand guarantees that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stop targeting their members and communities. Whilst supporters, including those from Scotland, have raised their voices in the stands.

Meanwhile, Palestinians have embraced the World Cup as a rare source of joy and escape. Families have gathered, through power cuts and destruction, to watch. Football continues to offer moments of hope, with Palestinians even organising symbolic games of their own.

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BEYOND THE FINAL WHISTLE | HUSSEIN EZZEDINE

Back in the United States, we are often told that football transcends politics. It is a comforting fiction, repeated most enthusiastically by those who benefit from the existing order. The World Cup is not separate from politics but deeply embedded within governments, corporations and institutions that help sustain systems of global inequality.

The political theatre surrounding the tournament has been impossible to ignore. FIFA President Gianni Infantino's decision to award Donald Trump a so-called peace prize before the tournament was grotesque. His subsequent appearance in the Iranian dressing room, offering fake empathy after months of US attacks on their country, was performative to the point of absurdity.

Amid this backdrop, there is some unease at being a small part of it, from taking joy, though we need some. We know the image of Scots that is given: the friendly travelling supporter.

There is some truth in that. But friendliness is meaningless if it is accompanied by political silence. Literally at the moment that Scottish fans of all persuasions were dancing with muslim Moroccans on the streets of Boston, a Scotsman was trying to kill muslims on the streets of Edinburgh. As we travel the world singing for Scotland, we must confront our complicity in crimes which have normalised racist slaughter and empowered and emboldened such individuals to rampage through our communities.

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BEYOND THE FINAL WHISTLE | HUSSEIN EZZEDINE

We celebrate the rare victories, thousands of voices rising as one. But we cannot pretend that any of this exists in a moral vacuum. Our own Scottish Football Association has shamefully handed the naming rights to Hampden Park to Barclays, the financiers of genocide. We know that more than 500 Palestinian footballers have been killed by Israel, yet there is silence. Instead of taking a stand, the red carpet is rolled out for fixtures against the Israeli state.

As trade unionists, we understand that solidarity is not selective. It does not stop at borders, nor is it suspended for the sake of sporting spectacle. We owe it to the finest traditions of our movement to oppose injustice wherever it appears.

Tony Higgins, former chief executive of the players' union [PFA Scotland](#), recognised this more than a decade ago when he joined us and spoke alongside Palestinian professional footballer and former political prisoner [Mahmoud Sarsak](#) at a public meeting in Edinburgh. Players cannot be expected to answer for governments or governing bodies. But their representatives can and should speak out on questions of human rights and justice, while supporting players who choose to do the same.

Football has always reflected the world around it. The question is whether our clubs, governing bodies, unions and supporters will merely reflect injustice or help to challenge it. We must increase the pressure on our footballing institutions and empower players at every level of the game to raise their voices. The final whistle ends the match. It does not end our responsibility to stand in solidarity with those still fighting for freedom, dignity and justice.

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FILTON 4 UPDATE

SAVING LIVES IS NOT TERRORISM: PALESTINE ACTION AND THE MARCH TOWARDS AUTHORITARIANISM



Colin Sutherland
UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch

On June 12th, Charlotte Head, 29; Leona Kamio, 30; Samuel Carter, 23, and Fatema Rajwain, 21, were sentenced at Woolwich Crown Court, having been convicted of causing criminal damage after breaking into the Elbit Systems plant in Filton, where they damaged and destroyed over £1 million worth of high-tech weaponry and equipment destined for the Israeli military.

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SAVING LIVES IS NOT TERRORISM | COLIN SUTHERLAND

However, the sentencing judge, who in their trial had denied them any reference to the motivation for their action, didn't sentence them only in accordance with the offences for which they'd been found guilty but, citing Section 69 of the Sentencing Act 2020, treated their 'terrorist connection' as an aggravating factor. He, therefore, sentenced them for offences now deemed 'terrorist', allowing him to impose far more severe custodial sentences, along with post-custodial sanctions that will profoundly affect the rest of their lives.

The result of this mockery of fair legal process resulted in the four defendants being sentenced to a total of over 25 years, with Samuel Corner receiving the severest sentence of eight years and eight months, he and his co-defendants having already spent between 18 and 21 months in custody before sentencing.

Outside the courtroom, over a thousand people gathered to protest the sentencing, where speakers, including John McDonnell MP, Lowkey and Heba Muraishi, still recovering from her extraordinary 73-day hunger strike earlier in the year, addressed the injustice being perpetrated and the continuing attack on civil liberties and human rights by the government and the judiciary. A further 200 or so protestors lined the main carriageway leading to the court bearing signs which read, 'Saving Lives is not Terrorism. I Support Palestine Action.' Of these, 107 were arrested and charged under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000 for declaring support for a proscribed organisation, bringing the total of such arrests for such action to well over 3000.

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Just three days later, on the following Monday, in what had every appearance of choreographed timing, the five senior judges at the Court of Appeal overturned the earlier High Court decision in February in favour of Palestine Action, deeming the government's proscription 'justified and proportionate.' In support of this judgment, in seeking to justify the proscription of Palestine Action as a 'terrorist' organisation, Lady Chief Justice Baroness Carr simply distorted language and misrepresented history. Depending on the co-option and idealisation of the past, she chose to compare Palestine Action unfavourably to the Suffragettes, apparently unaware that in reality the Suffragettes, unlike Palestine Action, had employed arson, bombing and violent assault, resulting in fatalities, as part of their campaign for women's suffrage a century ago. Of course, by the standards of her own apparently ill-informed argument, she would actually have had to have banned those principally responsible for attaining the rights underpinning her very own position.

Meanwhile, outside, 117 more protestors, opposing state complicity in genocide and yet further suppression of democratic freedoms, were arrested for the terrorist offence of declaring their support for Palestine Action and its campaign of direct action against the financing, manufacture and supply of arms to Israel.

This latest set of political manoeuvres and legal measures in a gathering assault on our basic freedoms doesn't stop with anti-democratic legislation or the rulings of the courts. Given institutional legitimacy and amplified by politicians and much of the media, these work their way through social systems and discourse, distorting perceptions and deadening debate.

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For those arrested and sanctioned by the criminal justice system, punishment doesn't stop with whatever sentence or fine might be issued by the courts. Many of those arrested under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act, for example, have faced or are facing workplace disciplinary investigation, suspension and dismissal as a consequence of the charges against them. With a conviction for an ostensibly serious offence, there is the further consequence of being barred from being able to continue working in professions where any criminal record is subject to disclosure. This would apply, for example, to anybody working in health and social care or education. The fact that this echoes what takes place in authoritarian states, where opposition and dissent are systemically isolated and suppressed through exactly these sorts of means, should cause everybody, not just those engaged with the Palestinian struggle, serious concern.

This is clearly a trade union matter of course, and it needs to be contested in the first place at the level of individual cases with the relevant unions actively encouraging members to seek representation and principled support in accordance with their union's own stated positions. It also needs to be materially contested with employers at both local and national levels. So, while unions, such as my own, Unison, have stated their opposition to the banning of Palestine Action and have been positive in their public support for Palestinian national and human rights, calling for a full suspension of the arms trade with Israel, the suspension of the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, and a ban on trade with illegal settlements on the West Bank, we're fast reaching a stage where concrete action has to be taken if we are to have any impact on stopping the mass murder and displacement of the Palestinian people and if we are to stop losing still more ground in what is becoming a march towards an increasingly authoritarian state.

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40 YEARS OF CONNOLLY



Hussein Ezzedine
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

The James Connolly Society holds an annual commemoration on 5 June, close to the place in Edinburgh where James Connolly was born on that date in 1868. A socialist and trade union leader, Connolly was executed for his part in the 1916 Easter Rising against British rule in Ireland.

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40 YEARS OF CONNOLLY | HUSSEIN EZZEDINE

This year marked the 40th anniversary of the event, and it is fair to say that the commemoration now takes a very different form from its early years. Over time, it has evolved into a family-friendly occasion that embraces the full breadth of Connolly's life and politics. The shift in strategy may have been difficult at the time, but, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that it was a brave decision taken with considerable foresight.

SPSC Edinburgh Branch mobilised for the event, and the well-documented historical connections between British policy in Ireland and colonial administration in Mandatory Palestine were highlighted in the leaflet handed out, whilst the struggle for peace and justice in Palestine was repeatedly referred to by speakers.

Tracy-Anne Miller, Branch Secretary of UNISON Lothian Health Branch, was a speaker. Her report was published on the branch website, expressing what an honour and privilege it was to be asked to speak at the Commemoration.

As she explained “James Connolly is one of two figures on our Branch banner and for very good reason. He was born in the Cowgate in Edinburgh and was a trade union activist who fought his entire life for better pay and working conditions. He was also heavily involved in fighting for equal rights for women. James Connolly stood for peace, social justice and solidarity, ambitions our branch tries every day to achieve.”

We must all do likewise, and continue to be inspired by Connolly, a son of our capital city, and an international giant of our movement.

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WE DO NOT LOAD DEATH!

On the Joint Declaration of the 3rd International Meeting of Dockworkers



Colin Sutherland
UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch

Following its previous meetings in Genoa last September, an historic International Day of Action was spearheaded by dockworkers on February 6th. Coordinated action across more than 20 southern European and Mediterranean ports, including Bilbao, Genoa, Livorno, Mersin, and Tangier, brought loading to a virtual standstill as workers actively blockaded shipments and refused to load weapons and military equipment bound for Israel.

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Mobilising under the slogan “**dockworkers do not work for war**,” the action, combined with their related campaign against the corporate automation of ports, which they see as both a threat to livelihoods and communities and as a means to eliminate their ability to resist the use of civil infrastructure for military purposes. Israel’s relentless genocidal onslaught on Gaza, being dependent on an endless supply of weaponry and military equipment, principally from the United States, but also from this country and Europe, has, of course, brought these interrelated issues sharply into focus.

It was against this background that the 3rd International Meeting of Dockworkers’ Unions met in Istanbul on May 18th and 19th. Participants included union delegations from Italy (Unione Sindacale di Base), Greece (Enedep), France (CGT National Federation of Ports and Docks), Turkey (Liman-Is), Morocco (Organisation Démocratique du Travail), Cyprus (Segmadelin-PEO), and Spain’s Basque Country (LAB).

Over the two days, the delegates produced a joint declaration calling on unions to build on the success of the actions taken by their members so far. In doing so, they pointed to the urgency of the situation as corporate power through Western governments, by way of their complex of alliances and organisations, moved to expand its massive military assault on West Asia in pursuit of hegemony and control over one of the most strategically important regions in the world.

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With Israel asserting its role as the primary vehicle, the genocide in Gaza has now been expanded into Lebanon, where we see, once again, mass murder and wholesale destruction being unleashed in the service of ethnic cleansing and the permanent eradication of all resistance. An objective, which Israel describes, with a totalitarian lack of irony, as 'permanent security', which in turn has underpinned the Israeli-American attack on Iran.

Uniquely positioned to stand in the way of this project, aimed at subjugation and exploitation, the dockworkers' declaration calls out the familiar attempts by governments to co-opt workers through talk of "development," "jobs" or the "national interest," actually calling on working-class people 'to make sacrifices for profits and wars, and to line up behind the needs of governments, shipowners, monopolies and imperialist alliances.' The language of development, jobs and the national interest, of course, is the language we have heard here in response, for example, to campaigns aimed at shutting down the multinational weapons manufacturer Leonardo, based in Edinburgh.

Explicitly rejecting such language and contrasting it to the reality workers actually face on the ground as they are increasingly subject to deregulation, job insecurity and increasingly dangerous and intensified working conditions, and as funding to public services, to health and social care and to education and social development is cut, the declaration calls for 'an immediate end to the genocide of the Palestinian people', and an end of war in West Asia.

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Expressing solidarity with the people of Iran, Lebanon, Cuba, Venezuela and Sudan, it demands that ports and civil infrastructure stop being used for 'the transport of weapons, ammunition, military equipment and troops.'

This can be achieved, as demonstrated by the transnational action organised and coordinated on February 6th, by the intervention of workers who have recognised a common cause and solidarity with their fellow workers and communities facing death and destruction in the pursuit of profit and power in the West Asia and across the wider world. Reminding us what can be done can be achieved through clear communication, cooperation, organisation and coordinated action, the declaration, in calling for still greater efforts, serves as an inspiration to all of us, who recognise the critical humanitarian role we can play as workers and trade unionists in opposition to genocide and war, and in defence of ourselves and our own communities, in whatever ways we can find to do so.

Read the full declaration [here](#).

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RADICAL POETRY GRAEME BRADLEY / ARTWORK DAVID SWIFT

IN YEARS TO COME
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The sandy coast where waters boast
Their power upon the shore.
The sea in motion, to-ing and fro-ing
As it has always done before.

The structures stood, forming neighbourhoods
Those towers of grey and glass.
The sights and sounds of a people bound
To this place of maligned impasse.

The smell of the sea, and the dream to be free,
In a nation where they were born.
But to open ones eyes, and see the disguise
Of their murderers in uniform.

The terror at sight of a bomb in the night
Lighting the sky for miles around
While the bang fills the air for the people left there
And the buildings drag the living underground.

The people they flee as they try to see
Through the dark and the dust and the death
But they're killed as they run, with a snipers gun
And gasp for their last mortal breath.

And under the ground, where thousands lay downed
Buried in their concrete grave.
They tread on their tombs, over that dark gloom
While the sea continues to wave.

For the sea continues seeing, while the Palestinians are fleeing,
The genocidal funeral bell.
And what horrors lie ahead, for those not yet dead,
In this mutilated Gaza hell.

In years to come, under a darker sun,
We'll never forget this genocide.
In the stolen land of Israel, each footstep a trail
Of children's graves from which you cannot hide.

And the sea continues seeing,
While rolling waves upon the shore
As it has always done before.

Graeme is a writer and filmmaker from
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Photo: Scottish PSC Archive

GET IN TOUCH

Hussein Ezzedine

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WRITE FOR US

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