

Genocide against the Palestinians – Craig Mokhiber steps down

by Alfred de Zayas, Geneva



Alfred de Zayas (Photo ma)

Craig Mokhiber has the courage that every international civil servant should have. He has stepped down from his post as Chief of the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in protest against the failure of the United Nations to stop the genocide being

perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinians.

I have known Craig since 1992 and consider him a friend, an intellectually honest, constructive and optimistic UN official, a model for others. But there are times when officials have to step down, because the Organization has allowed itself to be hijacked.

Two other friends stepped down from their Assistant-Secretary-General posts in the 1990's — Denis Halliday and Hans Christoph von Sponeck — because of the complicity of the United Na-

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tions in the US- led genocide of Iraq pursuant to thoroughly criminal "sanctions" that killed over a million human beings.

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Dear High Commissioner,

This will be my last official communication to you as Director of the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

I write at a moment of great anguish for the world, including for many of our colleagues. Once again, we are seeing a genocide unfolding before our eyes, and the Organization that we serve appears powerless to stop it. As someone who has investigated human rights in Palestine since the 1980s, lived in Gaza as a UN human rights advors or the 1990s, and carried out several human rights missions to the country before and since, this is deeply personal to me.

I also worked in these halls through the genocides against the Tutsis, Bosnian Muslims, the Yazidi, and the Robingya. In each case, when the dust settled on the horrors that had been perpetrated against defenseless civilian populations, it became painfully clear that we had findle in our duty to meet the imperation of prevention of mass atrocites, of protection of the vulnerable, and of accountability for perpetrators. And so it has been with successive waves of murder and persecution against the Palestimans throughout the entire life of the UN.

High Commissioner, we are failing again.

As a human rights lawyer with more than three decades of experience in the field, I know well that the concept of genocide has often been subject to political abuse. But the current wholesale slanghter of the Pollestinian people, notioned in an ethno-autonation settler colonial ideology, in continuation of decades of their systematic persecution and purging, based entirely upon their status as Arabs, and coupled with explicit statements of intent by leaders in the Israel government and imitiary, leaves no room for doubt or debate. In Gaze, civitian homes, schools, churches, mosques, and medical institutions are wantonly attacked as thousands of civilians are massacred. In the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, homes are seized and reassigned based entirely on race, and violent settler pogroms are accompanied by Israeli military units. Across the land, Apartheid rules.

This is a text-book case of genocide. The European, ethno nationalist, settler colonial project in Palestine has entered its final phase, toward the expedited destruction of the last remants of indigenous Palestinian life in Palestine. What's more, the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and much of Europe, are wholly complicit in the horrific assault. Not only are these governments refusing to meet their treaty obligations "to ensure respect" for the Geneva Conventions, but they are in fact actively arming the assault, providing economic and intelligence support, and giving political and diplomatic cover for Israel's atrocties.

Volker Turk, High Commissioner for Human Rights Palais Wilson, Geneva