

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

First of all, we want to thank the organizers for inviting us to attend and to speak at this important international event

On the centenary of the declaration of Balfour, the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist State and the subsequent transfer of its embassy to that city, marks a new historical step in the colonial project in Palestine. This act removes unequivocally any possible ambiguity and leaves collaborators and Naive without a leg to stand on. It also demonstrates that the only way to ensure Al Quds becomes the capital of the Palestine is the struggle "by all means necessary" against the Zionist and imperialist enemy.

Pulling the plug on dying Oslo accords, the vessel of the "non-solution" of the Arab-Zionist conflict, and through the formula of the "2 peoples 2 states", reveals a racist international scam, which has lasted a quarter of a century.

This declaration of war against the Arabs, is part of the US imperialist and neocolonialist plan which includes not only the occupation of parts of Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, but also the desire to plant US flag on Palestine and its historical capital: Al Quds.

This clear picture of the situation presents us with the choice of either Resistance or Surrender. There is no more room for negotiations, compromises, security collaborations, national bureaucratic authorities that administer the "non-existent" Palestinian territories.

Calming things down will not play the role of the "good cop" currently undertaken by the European imperialists regarding the "Jerusalem" dossier; distinguish itself from the role of the "bad US cop", with the intention of containing any possible or unforeseen damages.

The position gained in this thinly disguised attempt to give support to the collaborationist and Zionist Arab bourgeoisie, as well as to the Palestinian National Authority (ANP) that stutters weak positions, seeks help from the "international community" in the hands of Zionism. We believe that it is in the context of the Palestinian struggle and the fracture which exists between Zionist Neocolonialism and anti-imperialist Resistance that the future strategic fate of the Mediterranean tricontinental basin will be played out, in which no space will be granted to neutrality and indifference, in the perspective of the war that is mounting.

The Colonization of Jerusalem, as the capital of the Zionist state, can only be brought to an end through the Liberation of Al Quds, as the capital of a unified, democratic and anti-Zionist Palestine. The means of this liberation will be the Resistance initiated by the Arab-Palestinian partisan forces, together with all the other oppressed peoples and with the rightful rebirth of the movement against the imperialist war at a global level.

In this political framework, even the start of the Giro d'Italia from a Jerusalem, unilaterally proclaimed the Zionist State Capital, on the 70th anniversary of its foundation, is an attempt to legitimize in the face of international public opinion, especially Italian and European, a fact imposed on the Palestinians. Opposing this situation is an undertaking to contribute to the denunciation and counter-information against colonialism and the Zionist Apartheid, which is within everyone's reach.

"We have been working with the Giro in recent years, by publicizing Israel. This year we will intensify this cooperation and I'm sure we will see the result. Together we will promote Israel as a tourist destination. The images of the spectacular landscape of Israel will give further impetus to our campaigns all over the world and I am sure that this will help to further increase tourism in Israel."

This was the comment of the Israeli Minister for Tourism at the official presentation of the Tour of Italy 2018 in Jerusalem, which occurred provocatively on the same day as the 35th anniversary of the the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. It was a partisan choice on the part of the RCS Mediagroup S.P.A., to start the 2018 edition of the Giro d'Italia from Israel, where the first three stages will take place: Jerusalem, Haifa -Tel Aviv and finally the Negev desert.

Aside from the fairytale of sport bringing people closer together and promoting peace on this occasion of the 101th Giro d'Italia, the choice was made with a clear political significance to enhance Israel as the theater of the initial stages, and in so doing exalts the policies of occupation and Apartheid.

From this perspective three clear elements emerge:

The choice of date. May 15, 2018 falls on the 70th anniversary of the birth of the Zionist entity, and therefore the formalisation of the occupation of Palestine. The promoting of the start of this cycling event in these very days means in fact deliberately forgetting the Nakba of the Palestinian people, its diaspora and the colonization of its land.

The departure from Jerusalem. This decision only feeds the false belief that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, even though the UN considers the Israeli parliament's proclamation of Jerusalem as being the capital as "null and void, a violation of international law and a serious obstacle to peace in the Middle East".

The choice of the route. In order to avoid "accidents", the three planned stops touch only the '48 Territories, thereby deliberately avoiding areas such as the Apartheid Wall in the West Bank and its military checkpoints.

The claim of Jerusalem (Al Quds) as the capital of Palestine free from Occupation, is one of the pillars on which the Palestinian Resistance forces have always found unity, together with the Right to Return of Refugees, the release of Palestinian prisoners, and the claim to all of Palestine.

This choice is part of the broad framework of close links that unite the Italian and Zionist States and which are expressed in many respects, from economic agreements to military collaborations, from academic partnerships to common political objectives in the war strategies of the Imperialism to which they both belong.

It goes, without saying that with these ties the Italian state not only demonstrates its total support for the Zionist ideology and its project of ethnic cleansing of Palestine, but imports all its "industry of violence" generated in 70 years of occupation which the Palestinian people have had to endure. Now more than ever opposition to the Zionist model and the Resistance of the Palestinian people to the Occupation can be a beacon in the world scenario of the war against the peoples. We believe it is therefore necessary that all movements, associations, and individuals who stand in solidarity with the

Palestinian people together with those who resist imperialist aggression and those who believe and defend the values of sport and oppose attempts to exploit it must mobilize on this too.

Recalling that March 10th was *The International Day of Action* to #RelocateTheRace, we invite everyone to continue to create opportunities for of information and denunciation, to organize initiatives and protests to ensure that the Giro d'Italia does not start from "Israel" and does not become an instrument of legitimisation of the occupation of Palestine and of the celebration of the link between the Zionist state and the Italian imperialists.

Thank you
Fronte Palestina
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