

Rising for Palestine

**Edited by
Raouf Farrah &
Suraya Dadoo**

**Africans in
Solidarity for
Decolonisation
& Liberation**





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Review by Bruce Kadalie

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Authors Suraya Dadoo (on the screen) and Raouf Farrah address the launch of 'Rising for Palestine' in Cape Town. (Read about the book launch at <https://doi.org/10.14426/ry1zh571>)



'Rising for Palestine 'is, finally, a book about memory and duty. It remembers ... Namibia's genocide ... that Congo's dead number over six million since 1996 ... that Western Sahara remains Africa's last colony. And it insists that to remember any of these is to remember Palestine. The coloniser, the book argues, wants us to see each struggle as separate, contained, manageable. Solidarity is the refusal of that fragmentation.

There are books that inform, books that argue, and then there are books that arrive like a clenched fist wrapped in a shared heartbeat. *Rising for Palestine: Africans in Solidarity for Decolonisation & Liberation* belongs to the third category. Edited by Algerian writer-researcher Raouf Farrah and South African independent scholar Suraya Dadoo, this urgent book lands in a moment when the word "genocide" risks numbness. Yet the editors refuse to let that numbness settle. Instead, they gathered 30 contributors – scholars, diplomats, activists, poets, former freedom fighters – to do something both simple and revolutionary: they remind Africa, and the world, that Palestine is not a distant crisis but a mirror.

The book opens not with theory but with an epigraph drawn from daily life in Gaza: "Every morning, Gaza speaks in fragments – shattered homes, broken bodies, names etched into screens before they vanish beneath the dust." Those fragments become the organising principle of what follows. The editors write that what defines this genocide "is not a lack of information, but its relentless saturation – and



so the book refuses to perform neutrality. It declares, clearly and early on, that there is a coloniser and a colonised, an aggressor and a people under annihilation. This is not polemic for its own sake. It is the necessary ground setting for any serious conversation about solidarity.

The book is structured into five movements. Part I, *Legacies of Violence*, draws direct lines from Namibia's genocide under German colonial rule (1904–1908) to Gaza today. Jephtha Uaravaera Nguherimo contributes a devastating personal history: his great-great-grandmother died of hunger during that genocide; his great-grandmother survived to tell of concentration camps on Shark Island. In "From the River to the Rift," Kambale Musavuli traces the parallel struggles of Palestine and the Democratic Republic of Congo, both caught in "the global struggle for self-determination". And Shahd Hammouri offers a lawyer's bleak reckoning with international law's failure, asking whether Palestine will finally become "international law's breaking point".

Part II, *Solidarity and Resistance*, contains the book's most electric passages. A lengthy interview with Dr Basim Naim, described as a member of Hamas's political bureau, allows Palestinian armed resistance to speak in its own voice – a rarity in Western-facing writing. Another interview with Ambassador Malainin Lakhel of the Western Sahara's Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic draws explicit parallels between Saharawi and Palestinian struggles, two peoples locked in what Lakhel calls "a shared history of colonialism and aspiration for self-determination". Zahid Rajan's chapter on Kenya is particularly uncomfortable reading, tracing how a nation that once housed a Palestinian embassy that was a hub of anti-Daniel arap Moi resistance against the former Kenyan president later became complicit in normalising ties with Israel.

Part III, *Africa-Israel Collaboration*, is where the book earns its most urgent claim to relevance. It maps, in granular detail, how Israeli



surveillance technology – Pegasus spyware, facial recognition systems, digital listening devices – has been sold to African governments from Rwanda to Ghana to Nigeria. As contributor Kribsoo Diallo writes: “Occupied Palestine effectively functions as an open-air laboratory for Israel to test surveillance technology before selling them to repressive regimes around the world in exchange for diplomatic favours.” This is not abstract geopolitics. It is a tracing of the actual pipelines through which colonial violence exports itself.

Part IV, *Reimagining Liberation*, turns toward the future.

Hamza Hamouchene’s chapter on climate crisis and ecocide in Gaza – “[W]hat is unfolding in Gaza is not merely genocide: it is also ecocide” – adds a dimension often missing from Palestine solidarity discourse. Rosebell Kagumire’s contribution on Pan-African feminists insists that “our struggles are one,” centring women’s organising as the unsung backbone of solidarity movements. The book closes with poetry by Marwan Makhoul and Dareen Tatour, as if to remind us that after all the analysis, what remains is a people singing their own existence.

The book’s endorsements carry weight, but none more so than that of Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories. On Instagram, via Pluto Press’s account, Albanese calls *Rising for Palestine* “a long-awaited and much-needed publication” – a powerful call to global solidarity, uniting African and Palestinian struggles in a shared fight against colonialism, apartheid, and empire. Coming from Albanese, whose meticulous UN reports have documented Israel’s “settler-colonial” project and “crime of apartheid” with legal rigour, this endorsement signals that the book is not merely activist literature but serious scholarship with moral authority.

What makes *Rising for Palestine* distinctive is not its argument; the argument that African and Palestinian liberation are intertwined is, as the editors note, decades old, forged at the landmark 1945 anti-colonial



Pan-African Congress summit and sustained through the Organisation of African Unity. What is distinctive is the book's willingness to hold two truths simultaneously. It celebrates South Africa's boldness in bringing Israel before the International Court of Justice while also noting, in Roshan Dadoo's chapter, that "South Africa is still a major supplier of coal to Israel". It honours Kenya's revolutionary history while documenting its present betrayal. It acknowledges the African Union's historical solidarity while mapping how Israeli "religious diplomacy" and Christian Zionism have successfully courted African evangelical leaders.

This ambivalence is the book's great strength. The editors coin the phrase "pragmatic ambivalence" to describe how African governments have accepted Israeli security assistance while publicly condemning occupation. They do not moralise from afar. Instead, they invite readers into the difficult work of holding nations – including morally exemplary ones like South Africa – accountable for their contradictions.

The timing of this publication is no accident. Released in March 2026, nearly two and a half years after October 7, 2023, *Rising for Palestine* enters a world where the death toll in Gaza has reached over 72,000 according to Gaza's Health Ministry – a figure the book does not hesitate to declare. It speaks from within ongoing catastrophe, not after it. That gives the collection a rawness, a refusal to perform the tidy closure that academic volumes often mistake for rigour.

If the book has a weakness, it is that some chapters read more like manifestos than analyses. The interview format, while powerful in giving voice to Palestinian and Saharawi diplomats, occasionally lacks critical distance. And readers hoping for a diversity of perspectives on, say, the ethics of armed resistance will find only one side represented. But that, perhaps, is the point. *Rising for Palestine* is not a balanced debate. It is a declaration of alignment.



The conclusion, co-written by Farrah and Dadoo, is titled “*No Liberation Without Action*”. It refuses to let the reader close the book unchanged. “To speak of Africa-Palestine solidarity,” they write, “is to confront a world structured by violence: Gaza’s rubble, Sudan’s humanitarian crisis, Congo’s plundered mines – all reveal the imprint of empire in its many facets.” They call for “a decolonial practice of solidarity” that moves beyond statements and resolutions toward material action: divestment, boycott, convoy organising, legal pressure.

One chapter describes the “Sumud Convoy” of 1,700 Tunisians, Algerians, and Libyans who attempted to reach Rafah by land a failed journey, perhaps, but a breathtaking act of embodied solidarity. That image lingers: bodies in motion, ignoring borders, refusing the lie that some lives matter less than others.

Rising for Palestine is, finally, a book about memory and duty. It remembers that Namibia’s genocide happened. It remembers that Congo’s dead number over six million since 1996. It remembers that Western Sahara remains Africa’s last colony. And it insists that to remember any of these is to remember Palestine. The coloniser, the book argues, wants us to see each struggle as separate, contained, manageable. Solidarity is the refusal of that fragmentation.

Francesca Albanese is right: this is a long-awaited publication. But “long-awaited” suggests passive waiting. *Rising for Palestine* is not a book to wait for. It is a book to act on. Read it with a highlighter in one hand and a list of your local Palestinian solidarity organisations in the other. The editors have done their work. Now it’s time for you to do yours.

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