

CNN fires contributor for defending Palestinian rights



New York, December 3 (RHC)-- CNN has fired political commentator Marc Lamont Hill after he gave a pro-Palestinian speech at the United Nations, where he called for justice for Palestinians and said there needs to be “a free Palestine from the river to the sea.”

A CNN spokesperson told reporters: “Marc Lamont Hill is no longer under contract with CNN.” The media outlet did not give a reason for the ouster, nor did it explicitly confirm Hill’s exit was a result of what he said at the UN.

Speaking at the pro-Palestine meeting at the United Nations, Hill urged the international community to boycott Israel, and called for a “free Palestine from the river to the sea.”

The comments sparked an immediate backlash from those who believed “from the river to the sea” is a phrase used by Hamas and other anti-Israel groups, and implies the replacement of Israel by a Palestine stretching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

“We have an opportunity to not just offer solidarity in words but to commit to political action, grass-roots action, local action and international action that will give us what justice requires and that is a free Palestine from the river to the sea,” Hill said at the UN.

Israeli lobby groups in the U.S. accused the commentator of advocating for the destruction of Israel, but Hill said his “reference to ‘river to the sea’ was not a call to destroy anything or anyone. It was a call for justice, both in Israel and in the West Bank/Gaza.”

“If we are standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, we must recognize the right of an occupied people to defend itself,” he said in his speech. “We must advocate and promote nonviolence at every opportunity, but we cannot endorse a narrow politics of respectability that shames Palestinians for resisting, for refusing to do nothing in the face of state violence and ethnic cleansing.” He also lashed out at the Israeli regime for denying “citizenship rights and due process to Palestinians just because they are not Jewish.”

Hill further expressed his support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a global campaign promoting various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law.

He delivered the speech for the UN's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which has been annually marked on November 29th since it was established in UN General Assembly Resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

Speaking at a meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, UN chief Antonio Guterres said the UN had created the day of solidarity 40 years ago to remind people of the unfinished task of resolving the Palestinian issue.

He strongly criticized the Israeli regime and said “demolitions, illegal continued settlement expansion and construction, forced evictions and collective punitive measures will not bring peace.” He also urged Israel to lift its restrictions on the flow of goods and people into the Gaza Strip and act with restraint along the Gaza fence.

The UN chief further called on Hamas to prevent violent actions and provocations, but at the same time noted: “Palestinians in Gaza have legitimate grievances and the right to demonstrate peacefully.”

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