

QUIT! Queers for Palestine



Like all people of conscience, we in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities are deeply concerned about the use of our tax dollars to support the violent, repressive and racist regime in Israel. Our money – nearly \$8 million per day!– is funding the indiscriminate murder and wounding of Palestinian civilians, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the construction of exclusively Jewish settlements and the closure of the occupied territories, which threatens the health, safety and economic stability of the entire Palestinian population.

As queers, we are part of an international movement for human rights that encompasses the movement for Palestinian liberation, and all other liberation movements. We are also part of the growing international movement seeking active ways to express our solidarity with the people of Palestine.

We demand:

- That the U.S. Government immediately end all financial and military aid to Israel.
- That the Israeli Government end its racist policies of harassment and exclusion of Palestinians.
- International protection for the Palestinian people.
- That all displaced Palestinians be granted the right to return to Palestine.
- An end to the construction of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories.
- An end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.
- Complete Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories.
- An end to investment in Israel, including:
 1. Divestment of university and other holdings in Israeli corporations and corporations doing business with Israel.
 2. Divestment by the investment community.
 3. Divestment by the cities we live in of their holdings in corporations doing business with Israel.
 4. A total boycott of Israeli products.

JOIN US!

Many groups interested in justice for Palestine are starting a campaign of divestment from Israel, similar to the campaign used against South African apartheid that was instrumental in bringing its downfall. QUIT! is participating in that campaign and also discussing actions, education and other ways of supporting the Palestinian liberation movement and Israeli organizations working for a just peace. To get involved, please contact:

QUIT! (510) 434-1304 or email quit_palestine@yahoo.com.

What is Israeli terrorism?

Israeli terror and collective punishment used against the Palestinians have traumatized an entire population. Examples of these terror tactics are.

House Demolitions: According to UN's Human Rights Commission, 773 Palestinian family homes were destroyed in the six months leading to February of this year alone, a figure high even by Israeli standards of the practice for the last 50 years. This form of collective punishment violates articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Demolitions are often carried out without any advance notice, often at night, and the effect can be absolutely terrifying. Often demolished Palestinian homes are the sites of new Israeli settlements.

Torture bullets: Israeli troops regularly use special bullets that, upon impact, burst and the fragments spiral within the body destroying other organs. The use of these bullets have killed more than 500 Palestinians and caused debilitating injuries for 15,000 more since September of last year.

Tanks, helicopter gunships, F-16 fighters: Palestinians resist the occupation through stones, rifles and home-made mortars. Israel's response to these has been the use of machine guns, bulldozers, tanks, helicopter gunships and F-16 fighter planes.

Don't Palestinians use terrorism as well?

There have been individual acts of Palestinian terrorism that have been highly popularized by the U.S. media and used as propaganda tools by Zionists. We don't support attacks on unarmed civilians. At the same time it must be understood that it is the right of any occupied people to resist and fight for their freedom, in fact it is their duty. Historically every freedom struggle has been accompanied by acts of terrorism from the oppressed. Of the 500 Palestinians killed since September 2000, nearly all have been civilians. The majority of the 100 Israelis killed in the same period have been soldiers. Palestinian acts of terrorism pale in contrast to Israel's terrorism which have affected almost every Palestinian family through deaths, long-term injuries, beatings, deprivation of work, travel restrictions, daily humiliations. The heavy cost of trying to resist the 4th most powerful nuclear-armed military power in the world has not deterred the Palestinians from struggling for their freedom.

Isn't this conflict very complicated?

The root of this conflict started with the division of Palestine in 1948 to impose the state of Israel on the local population. That ensuing war caused a large exodus of Palestinians from their homeland creating a permanent refugee population of a few million Palestinians – currently the longest term refugees in the world. The rest of the Palestinians living under direct Israeli military control are essentially imprisoned in their own land, where even traveling from one village to another is restricted by Israeli forces, while every day more and more land of the Palestinians are being grabbed by Israel. Almost half (42%) of Gaza strip is occupied by Israeli settlers. Over a



Women in Gaza amid the ruins of their home, demolished without warning by the Israeli military.

million Palestinians are squeezed into the remaining land, 72% of whom are now living below the poverty level. They have nowhere to go and few outlets for their stress and anxiety. New settlements are a major source of the resistance of the Palestinians.

Stripped of the rhetoric of the oppressor the answer is simple: Israel needs to accept the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland and to create their own viable independent state if they choose.

Zionism and Racism:

Zionism began in Europe as a national liberation movement of oppressed Jewish people. The dream of progressive Zionists in Europe and Palestine to live side-by-side with Palestinians was crushed by political Zionists who insisted on a Jewish state in Palestine. They used the phrase, "a land without a people for a people without a land" to describe their quest, negating the very existence of the indigenous people of Palestine. Israel's early leaders openly expressed their intention to expel the Palestinians from their land. Former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, to quote only one example, stated, "With compulsory transfer we will have a vast area ... I support compulsory transfer. I don't see anything immoral about it."

This is not a religious struggle between Jews and Muslims - many Palestinians including prominent leaders of the Palestinian movement are Christians. The root cause and prolongation of this conflict lies in the racist assumption that the indigenous people of Palestine are disposable people, less deserving than Israeli settlers who are paid to settle in Palestinian land, thereby increasing Israel's boundaries. Israel has 20 separate laws which apply only to Israelis or only to Palestinians. Arabs within Israel and Jews from Arab and African countries are also formally restricted from full participation in Israeli institutions. This is racism. A state that belongs to one ethnic group is by definition exclusive. It is not anti-Semitic to oppose it.

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