

LA Jews for Peace

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United States Complicity in the Freedom Flotilla Piracy

LA Jews for Peace condemns Israel's piracy of the Freedom Flotilla in international waters, a clear violation of International Law, and the killing of civilian members of the Flotilla who were bringing humanitarian supplies to the 1.5 million people living in the besieged Gaza Strip.

We also condemn the U.S. government's full complicity in these crimes. Both the White House and Congress (both parties) are fully supportive of Israel's illegal siege of Gaza.

Both the U.S. and Israel have blood on their hands. In international waters, in the dead of night, the Israeli navy attacked - six boats and more than 600 passengers were abducted. Israeli commandos forced their way onto the vessels. When passengers on one vessel resisted, at least nine were killed and about fifty wounded.

This attack is the latest in a series of Israeli repressive measures against nonviolent protests against the occupation. The brutal retaliation by Israel against non-violent resistance by the Palestinians is paid for with American tax dollars. This unwavering support for Israel continues in spite of Israel's unwillingness to engage in serious peace negotiations which would allow a Palestinian state to emerge in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel's harsh occupation of Palestinian territory, Israel's four-year siege of the Gaza Strip, and Israel's war crimes during last winter's bombardment of Gaza. American support of Israeli deprivation of Palestinian human rights is eroding American prestige and effectiveness in the greater Middle East.

The White House stated that it "deeply regrets the loss of life and injuries sustained, and is currently working to understand the circumstances surrounding this tragedy." That is completely inadequate.

It is time for the Obama Administration and Congress to show some backbone and go beyond their usual mealy-mouthed statements when Israel acts immorally, illegally, foolishly, and dangerously. President Obama talks about American values, and a "rule-based international order," and says "America's commitment to the rule of law is fundamental to our efforts to build an international order that is capable of confronting the emerging challenges of the 21st century."

Now is the time for Obama to prove that he means what he says. Attacking a humanitarian aid mission in international waters is a direct violation of international law and flies in the face of American values -- even if that aid mission was engaged in a politically provocative act.

The United States stands for human rights, and must not accept the collective punishment being imposed on the Palestinian people. President Obama and Congressional leaders should:

- (1) Call for an immediate lifting of the siege of Gaza.
- (2) Support an international and impartial investigation into the tragic killing of civilians.
- (3) Suspend military aid to Israel until the Administration can assure the American public that our aid is used in concordance with American and International Law.

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