



# Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté  
Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.

## **WILPF Middle East Committee STATEMENT ON PALESTINE, 2010**

If we compare conditions in Palestine today with those that existed a year ago, we find that conditions have continued to decline, with a few exceptions, and the Palestinians as a whole—East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza—are in worse condition today in terms of human rights than they were a year ago. The problem, of course, is Israel's continuing occupation of Palestine. The solution is to end the occupation and to end the siege of Gaza.

### **EAST JERUSALEM**

- The Israeli government has served notices of eviction or of house demolition on 88 families in Silwan, on 55 families in Ras Al Amoud, and on 104 families in Sheik Jarrah.
- The Israeli High Court upheld the eviction of 54 people from their two houses in Sheik Jarrah, even though the families had been living there since they were forced out of their original homes in 1948, and two families in the Old City of Jerusalem were forced to demolish their own houses.
- The government of Israel also authorized the building of 104 new homes in Ras Al Amoud, 666 new homes in Har Homa settlement in East Jerusalem, and 600 in Pisgat Zeev, and homes for 1500 new residents in Maale Adumim.
- Because of Palestinian protests about perceived threats to the Haram Al Sharif due to the opening of the Hurva Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter, Palestinian access to the Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount for a time was restricted to men over 55 and women and to no Palestinians from the West Bank. Similar restrictions occurred when Palestinians in Silwan protested strongly the right wing march through their village led by the fanatic, anti-Arab Baruch Martzel.
- In other words, the seizure of land and displacement of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem have increased not decreased in the past year and the intentional incitement by Marzel of strong protests or riots has occurred for the first time.
- The immediate introduction of U.N. peacekeeping forces into East Jerusalem would alleviate some of the problems.

### **THE WEST BANK**

- The situation in the West Bank has also declined, although there are some improvements, for example, in freedom of movement since Israel has removed some roadblocks and checkpoints, and in land reclamation, since the IDF after several years finally obeyed the High Court of Israel and moved the separation wall from some land belonging to the village of Bil'in.
- Israel has previously authorized the building of 3000 new homes in the West Bank and has just authorized the building of 112 new homes for settlers in

- Betar Illit and 1600 in Ramat Shlomo, although the government, under pressure from the US, has agreed not to begin to build for four months.
- The leaders of the Palestinian Authority supported non-violent weekly protests in Beit Umar, Bil'in, Nil'in and elsewhere in the West Bank have been arrested in the middle of the night and imprisoned without charges.
  - Members of Hamas, Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade (Fatah), Islamic Jihad and PFLP have been seized and imprisoned by the IDF and also by the Palestinian Authority Police funded by the US and directed by retired US Gen. Keith Dayton.
  - Hamas members especially have been targeted by the Palestinian Police, at least several each week being arrested, and Hamas affiliated government employees—doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers, teachers, etc.—have been systematically fired from their jobs because the U.S. unjustly calls Hamas “terrorist” and thus requires the Palestinian Authority Police to arrest or otherwise persecute Hamas affiliates.
  - Israel demolishes homes in the West Bank built without an Israeli permit, even in areas under Palestinian civil control.
  - There are still severe restrictions on travel and on access to the holy places in Jerusalem
  - Israel has just issued a law designating as “infiltrator,” i.e., someone who can be imprisoned or deported, anyone living in the West Bank without a valid Israeli permit. Many Palestinians from refugee camps in Jordan or Syria or Lebanon or Palestinians from Gaza, who have married spouses in the West Bank and who reside there now with their children, can be deported under this new law, as can international spouses or NGO workers such as CPT (Christian Peacemaker Team) or the Ecumenical Observers, who seek to secure Palestinians from settler or IDF violence.
  - Perhaps the most reprehensible new phenomenon, however, is the greatly increased settler violence against the Palestinians, as, for example, the attacks on two mosques within the past several months, one of which was burned down, and the attacks on Palestinian villages and orchards. The settlers define this violence as the “price tag” that the Palestinians will pay when the Israeli government, under pressure from the US, freezes even temporarily the building in the settlements.
  - In other words, many peaceful Palestinians in the West Bank are less secure in their own homes than they were a year ago. The immediate introduction of U.N. peacekeeping forces into the West Bank would alleviate many of the problems.

## GAZA

- The situation in Gaza is far more disastrous for the Palestinians than their situations in East Jerusalem or the West Bank. Since 2007 Gaza has been under a siege which has prevented most goods from entering or leaving Gaza and has thereby destroyed its economy. And Gaza a year and three months ago was devastated by Operation Cast Lead, which destroyed 4000 housing units, 211 factories, 24 mosques, 159 schools, 34 health institutions, and damaged 50 United Nations buildings. Moreover, at least 1387 people were killed: 1054 civilians, including 109 women and 320 children. (B'Tselem's figures)
- Because of the war and the siege, Gaza has suffered health epidemics, including greatly increased birth defects and leukemia.

- Gaza has been unable to rebuild the destroyed buildings. Some families who lost their homes in the war are still living in tents provided by Turkey and the UN.
- Approximately 60-70% of the population lives on handouts from UNRWA: a bag of flour, a bag of rice, a bag of beans, a can of oil, and tea and sugar. Malnutrition is rampant among the children, who comprise half the population.
- The tunnels, which have provided additional though expensive food, fuel, clothes, medicine, building materials, etc., are being sealed by Egypt by a 59 meter deep steel wall which the US/Israel wants and for which the U.S. is paying.
- Food insecurity is growing.
- Fishermen, who are supposed to be able to fish twelve miles out, are attacked and sometimes killed by Israeli gun boats if the fishing boats exceed the 3 km limit Israel imposes.
- Farmers, especially in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya, are prevented from farming their land within a large new buffer zone along the Israeli border.
- Gazans have no freedom of movement out of or into their country
- The people do not have adequate electricity to provide lights every night to allow their children to study; blackouts are frequent since Israel and the Palestinian Authority do not provide adequate fuel for the electrical plant and even under normal circumstances people get only eight hours of electricity a day.
- Water is supplied through pipes to storage tanks on each house only once every thirteen days,
- The sewage processing plant, which was bombed during the war, has not been repaired since the necessary building supplies are not available. That bombing and Israel's deliberate targeting of industrial and water installation sites are among the war crimes cited in the Goldstone Report, and the Israeli siege has made repairs impossible.
- The after-effects of the war crimes and crimes against humanity that the Gazans were subjected to, still are in effect a year and three months later because of the illegal siege on Gaza.
- An immediate lifting of the siege and rebuilding of the infra-structure of Gaza would greatly improve the lives of the Gazans.

## **HAMAS**

- Hamas is being badly discriminated against by the U.S. and Israel because of its religious beliefs. Fatah, which also participated in the second intifada and also used suicide bombings is not discriminated against because it is secular.
- Hamas has been offering the two-state solution officially since 2004, when it also instituted its unilateral cease-fire with Israel. In June 2004, Sheik Yassin stated that Hamas would end armed resistance in exchange for a Palestinian State in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. That position has been reiterated by Khalid Mashaal and Ismail Haniyeh since that time, for example, in Mashaal's statement in February, 2006, that Hamas "cannot oppose the unified Arab stance expressed in the resolution passed by the Arab League summit. That resolution, approved in Beirut, speaks of recognizing Israel and normalizing relations with it in exchange for a full withdrawal and a solution to the refugee problem." The Arab League offer has been ignored and Hamas is still unjustly shunned by the west. It is being discriminated against on the basis of its religious views.
- The United States quite unjustly has kept Hamas on the terrorist list even though Hamas is very good at observing cease-fires, at keeping peace in Gaza and at

preventing the small parties, which are the ones that have shot the Qassam rockets, from shooting them into Israel.

## **HAMAS AND THE CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROADMAP**

- On June 4, 2003, President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in the presence of President George W. Bush agreed upon the roadmap, which is supposed to lead to the two state solution. The first of three stages basically called upon Israel to destroy illegal settlement outposts, to freeze settlement growth, and to turn governance of Palestinian cities over to the Palestinian National Authority; and it called upon the Palestinian National Authority to institute political reforms, including holding elections, and to prevent violence and terrorism.
- Currently, the roadmap, which was never implemented, is being revived, and the Palestinian Authority, under Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and US National Security Adviser Gen. Keith Dayton, has been working on implementing the roadmap by ending violence and terrorism.
- The problem is that the United States quite unjustly has kept Hamas on the terrorist list even though Hamas is very good at keeping the peace.
- Therefore the Palestinian Authority police in the West Bank, under the direction of US Gen. Keith Dayton, have arrested Hamas leaders, members and affiliates, torturing at least one to death, and the Palestinian Authority has fired from their jobs any Hamas related teachers, doctors, nurses, or other government-paid workers.
- Even though the constitutional international law protects people's right to belong to a political party, the Palestinian Authority under U.S. pressure, is violating that right. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, **religion, political or other opinion**, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (Art. 2.2)
- Because of US intervention, Palestinians are being persecuted because of their political support for Hamas, and that in turn is preventing the formation of a unity government and the reunification of Palestine, which is necessary for peace with Israel. In other words, as the roadmap is currently being implemented, it is interfering with peace not implementing it.
- When the US takes Hamas off the terrorist list-- and when Israel agrees to freeze settlements-- then the roadmap may again provide a path to peace.

## **HAMAS AND THE QUARTET**

- The Quartet demands first, that Hamas renounce violence, second, that it accept previous agreements and third, that it recognize Israel.
- As shown above, Hamas renounced terrorism in 2004, and is very good about renouncing violence in action not just in words through ceasefires, both unilateral and bilateral, as long as Israel does not violate them. However, it retains the right of self-defense.
- Second, Hamas has stated that it "respects" previous agreements and it has authorized the PLO to implement them in negotiations with Israel. Moreover, Hamas has shown its acceptance of the Oslo Accord by participating in elections, Hamas has consistently called for the two-state solution that the Oslo Accord envisions, and Hamas has followed the roadmap since August 2004 by renouncing suicide bombing and consistently calling for and committing to ceasefires with Israel as long as Israel observes them.

- However, on the third demand, Hamas, like twenty Arab countries, does not yet recognize Israel since Israel is still occupying Arab land and since Israel has not recognized either Palestine or Hamas. But Hamas has made clear that it will accept a peace treaty with Israel when the Palestinian people approve it in a referendum, and it will then, like all the Arab and Islamic countries, recognize Israel.

What would be an appropriate response by the Quartet to Hamas' consistent and patient calling for the two-state solution, even when it is attacked and war crimes are carried out against it and its people?

- If the Quartet is serious about wanting peace between Israel and Palestine within two years, then the Quartet will accept Hamas' obvious desire for peace, will take it off the terrorist list, and will allow the Palestinian unity government to form and negotiate peace with Israel.
- On the other hand, if the Quartet wishes to call for peace but in reality plans to prevent it from happening in order to maintain the status quo, which is what the extreme right wing in Israel wants, then the Quartet will continue to try to force Hamas to recognize Israel before Israel recognizes Hamas or Palestine. The PLO did not recognize Israel until Israel recognized it. Why should the Quartet treat Hamas differently? The PLO did not change its charter until Israel recognized it. Why should the Quartet treat Hamas differently?
- If the Quartet wants peace between Israel and Palestine, it will accept Hamas and allow the PLO to negotiate peace with Israel.

### **SUMMARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST PALESTINIANS**

Throughout Palestine, including East Jerusalem, Palestinians are being deprived:

- of their right of self-determination (Art. 1.1, Covenant, . On Civil and Political Rights)
- of the right freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources (Art. 1.2, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)
- of their right to liberty of movement, including the freedom to leave and to enter their country (Art. 12, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)
- of their right to work (Art. 6, Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights)
- of their right not to be deported or forcibly removed or have Israelis imported: "Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies" nor forcibly remove its lawful residents. Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49 The Rome Statute calls this a war crime.

In the West Bank, Palestinians are being deprived

- of the right to liberty and security of person. "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention." (Art. 9.1, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)
- of the right to a trial within a reasonable time or to release (Art. 9.3, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)
- of the right of peaceful assembly (Art. 21, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)

In the West Bank, Hamas is being deprived

- of equal protection of the law, i.e., to be treated without discrimination on the basis of religious or political opinion (Art. 26, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)

In Gaza, the Palestinians are being deprived

- of the right of mothers of very young children to special protection (Art. 10.2 Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- of the right of children and young people to special protection and assistance (Art. 10.3, Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- of their right to adequate food, clothing and housing (Art. 11.1, Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- of their right to medical service and medical attention (Art. 12.2.d, Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)