



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

I SUPPORT PALESTINE!

First, I absolutely believe that violence will never bring peace! I also believe that the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israeli civilians was deplorable, but I understand the decades of tension and oppression that built up to bring this on. Second, I completely disagree with Israel's position that its response attack on Palestinians is self-defense! Third, I will not use Hamas and Palestinians interchangeably. Hamas is a militant governing body and does not represent all Palestinians.

By the time everyone reads this article, Gaza will have been under attack by the Israeli Defense Forces for two months—unless the Israeli air and ground attacks have finally stopped. At any rate, we must all look at the lack of restraint exercised by the Zionist government of Israel. Its lack of humanity and complete disregard for the people held under siege and occupation!

Tens of thousands have been killed, hundreds of thousands injured physically and millions emotionally injured as they are now displaced again from their homes, and they have no security. Plus, we must recognize that nearly half the population of Gaza is under 18 years old and have only known a life controlled by Israel, a life where they know they must resist or perish.

And we must recognize that the U.S. government is overwhelmingly complicit with Israel's crimes against Palestinians. Israel's outright slaughter and demolition of entire neighborhoods and killing entire family lines is genocidal. The intense aggression we've seen since Oct. 7 makes it perfectly clear that Israel is using the Hamas attack as its opportunity to take over more land from the Palestinians. Its attack has never been self-defense and is solely for the purpose of eliminating more of the population it occupies.

Attacks on hospitals, schools, UN centers and ambulance convoys; the killing of journalists and medical and aid workers; and targeted attacks on people's legs while they are evacuating all fall under violations of international law, yet Israel acts with impunity—why? I cannot say "enough" as it was "enough" many years ago with the siege on Gaza and the occupation of the West Bank!

The following is a statement from WILPF-US. WILPF-Fresno supports this statement, yet I personally choose to label Hamas as such and not "Palestinian militants." I also recognize that the majority of people living in Gaza are Palestinians, so I use that title to protect the diminishing population of Palestinians in the region due to the Nakba, Israel's occupation and siege on them.

—Teresa Castillo

WILPF-US STATEMENT

Take action to stop the bloodshed in Gaza and Israel!

On October 7, 2023, following 16 years of brutal siege on Gaza; decades of soldier-protected Israeli settlers terrorizing Palestinian children, farmers and villages throughout the territories; and Israeli ministers openly calling for genocide and expulsion—Palestinian militants attacked Israel.

The same day—in line with decades of U.S. policy that has enshrined the safety and interests of one people only—President Biden described attacks by Palestinian militants against Israel as "unprovoked."

We disagree, Mr. President!

WILPF-US calls for an immediate ceasefire and talks that address root causes and include all parties. We urge WILPF members and others who support peace and justice to contact elected officials and the media. We offer talking points to convey your passion for peace. We encourage you to advocate for nonviolent means to end Israeli apartheid.

As more Palestinians and Israelis die and suffer injury, as more homes and infrastructure are destroyed, we call for a just peace based on equality, human rights and dignity for all. We endorse the following messages:

- Stand for human rights and safety for all people and build a foreign policy that will actually end the violence (from Jewish Voice for Peace).
- Stop funding Israel's massacres (from US Campaign for Palestinian Rights).
- Call for immediate ceasefire and end to violence and occupation in Palestine and Israel (from American Friends Service Committee).
- Occupation is indefensible (from CodePink).
- Contact Washington and the media.

We demand an immediate ceasefire, diplomacy and respect for human rights. Don't let the Anti-Defamation League and others, who will get out thousands of calls to increase military funding for Israel, be the only voices heard!

Call your Representative (202) 224-3121, Senators (202) 224-3121, President Biden 202-456-1414 and Secretary of State Blinken (202) 456-1111.

Call your Members of Congress at their home offices if the DC switchboard is busy.

Write to your media outlets.

Here are important talking points that will help you convey your passion for peace.

- *War is not the answer.* Demand an immediate ceasefire and talks involving all parties, including democratically elected Hamas, to discuss root causes and how to move forward with justice, safety and dignity for all. For more information, read and share our booklet *Hamas at the Middle East Peace Table: Why?* and the 2021 update. Both are included as Resources on our webpage.
- *Freeze military sales to Israel pending investigation of Israeli human rights abuses.* Ask your Representative to sign on to HR 3103 Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families.
- *Demand that Israel sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.* Unregulated nuclear weapons of any nation are a threat to the region and the world.

Now is the time to advocate and take action for non-violent means to end Israeli apartheid.



Israel must be stopped and held accountable for its war crimes, its violations of Palestinians' human rights and its apartheid control over the Palestinians. We must continue to hold our U.S. Congressional representatives accountable for their support of Israel. For their acceptance of monies from AIPAC. For their misuse of the censure of their fellow representative. For their inaccurate label of antisemitism when we criticize Israel and speak against Zionism.

Why are we allowed to speak against our own government but criminalized when we speak against Israel? There is a lot wrong with that!

I thank all who have taken a stand against Israel's ethnic cleansing and genocidal actions against Palestinians. For humanity's sake, we must stand together for justice and peace to protect our fellow global neighbors.

—Teresa Castillo, Fresno WILPF Branch Chair

Learn about and support the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS). Since 2005 Palestinian civil society has called for ending international support for Israeli oppression of Palestinians and for pressuring Israel to comply with international law.

It is not antisemitic to criticize Israeli government policy that denies freedom, dignity and safety to half the population of Israel proper and the territory it occupies.

Lobby to repeal state and municipal laws that ban the support of BDS by falsely stating that BDS is antisemitic. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld such a law.

For more information or to reach WILPF's Middle East Peace and Justice Action Committee, contact MEPJAction@wilpfus.org.

—Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US Section

PEACE COMMUNITY CRAFTS FAIRE CANCELED

We made a difficult decision this year to cancel our planned Crafts Faire two and a half weeks before the event. We felt we made the best decision for the few vendors who responded, interested in having a booth to sell their wares.

This was a difficult decision as we miss all of you! We really wanted to gather and celebrate the day with good music, good food and good shopping from artisans and crafts vendors who take the time to produce items we love to share as gifts and keep for ourselves. We also miss the many nonprofit, peace and social justice groups who have had booths in the past.

The decision came due to the low level of interest we had this year. Our Faire was scheduled to be at a new location, Free AME Church, in West Fresno. I certainly hope that our followers and supporters were not holding back because we chose to hold our event in an area they are not used to going to!

I also hope that our followers and supporters will help us to break some of the underlying barriers that exist in the Fresno/Clovis community! As a social justice minded group, it is in our best interest to be present in many communities.

I welcome all of you to join us in the new year as we plan our 2024 Crafts Faire. Let's take that time as the opportunity to come together as we have in the past, perhaps with a different twist, and celebrate each other.

I wish you all peace through the holidays and the coming year.

Remember, if you need to renew your membership or wish to become a member, contact me at taca_03@gmail.com or mail in your membership to Fresno WILPF, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

—Peace ~ Teresa Castillo, Fresno WILPF Branch Chair

WILPF MEETING

Jan. 11 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., online and in person at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and a call-in number. For info, contact Teresa at taca_03@gmail.com or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

Dec. 27 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

UNPACKING RACISM

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. Moving toward community event participation. To join, RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

WOMEN IN BLACK

Dec. 6 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-349-3777.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW! HERE'S HOW

Send dues to WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.

For questions and information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

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