



Wisconsin Middle East Lobby Group

American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) -
Milwaukee Chapter
Antigo People for Peace
Candlelight Coalition
Catholics for Peace and Justice
Center for Peacemaking - Marquette University
Friends of Palestine Wisconsin
Islamic Society of Milwaukee
LaCrosse Interfaith Justice and Peace Network
Madison Area Peace Coalition
Madison Rafah Sister City Project
Middle East Action Team (MEAT) of
Christ Presbyterian Church-Madison
Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition
National Peace Foundation (NPF)
Peace Seekers of Washington County
Peregrine Forum of Wisconsin
Politics Focus Group of Racine Dominicans
Racine Coalition for Peace and Justice
Racine/Kenosha Central America
Solidarity Coalition
Sauk Prairie Area Peace Council
Veterans for Peace, Madison,
Clarence Kallin Chapter 25
Milwaukee Veterans for Peace, Chapter 102
Women's International League for
Peace and Justice (WILF) - Madison
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

February 18, 2014

Dear President Obama,

An item grabbed our attention this week. Samantha Power's praise of Israel's participation in JUSCANZ, a core coordinating group focused on human rights and social policy at the United Nations. She reminded the world that "The United States has long been a tireless advocate for Israel's full participation and inclusion at the UN" and that "the United States will combat every effort to undermine Israel's legitimacy as a full and equal member of the community of nations, including by ending the various forms of structural discrimination against Israel throughout the UN system".

She was not, however, to be alone in claiming Israel's abuse by the UN. Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Ron Prosor, hailed Israel's admission into JUSCANZ and said: "An historical injustice has been corrected. Anyone who champions human rights must celebrate this announcement. Israel's admission into JUSCANZ highlights the international community's recognition of our democracy. In the Middle East, a region where women are stoned to death and minorities executed, we are a beacon of human rights, equality, and freedom."

The General Assembly allocates to its Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee, commonly referred to as the "Third Committee", agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world. The Committee also discusses the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination.

Israel violates every item included in the purview of the Third Committee. Women forced to give birth at checkpoints, children arrested during night raids and tortured, second class citizenship based on ethnicity, lack of self-determination for the indigenous population, refusal of right of return for refugees, to name a few. No government should support or sponsor the membership of a state whose actions are so obviously at odds with the principles of this group.

The glaring absence of these facts concerning Israel's 66 years of ethnic cleansing, ignoring of all UN resolutions pertaining to abuses of Palestinian human rights, 47 years of brutal occupation, and establishment of an ethno-religious "democracy" with exclusive rights for Jews, is downright shocking. How can this rogue nation dare claim to be "a beacon of human rights, equality, and freedom." How can the U.S. continue to abandon its principles when it comes to defending Israel's continued abuse of Palestine's Arabs?

Equality? In late 2012, when the United Nations upgraded the Palestinian Authority's status to that of a nonmember observer "state", this was indeed a correction of an historical injustice. Israel, along with the United States, strongly opposed the action and refused to recognize the existence of a Palestinian state. This "beacon of human rights" is keeping Palestinian patients from being transferred from the Gaza Strip to hospitals in East Jerusalem or Israel because of the presence of three words on a letterhead – "State of Palestine".

This misrepresentation of our values as citizens of a nation built on respect for law and human rights does not go unnoticed. We require an honest evaluation of our country's support for Israel's treatment of the indigenous Palestinians.

Sincerely,

Joyce F. Guinn, Secretary
Wisconsin Middle East Lobby Group

cc: Ambassador Samantha Powers, Senators Baldwin and Johnson, WI Representatives