

12/17/2009 Chicago Faith Coalition Update #20
Next Update January 7, 2010



Social Justice and Security for Palestinians and Israelis

Action Opportunities

Reps. Jim McDermott and Keith Ellison are co-sponsoring a letter that calls upon President Obama to "press for immediate relief for the citizens of Gaza." Reps. James Moran and Bob Inglis are co-sponsoring a letter asking Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to "advocate that the Israeli government end the ban on student travel from Gaza to the West Bank, and in its place establish an effective mechanism to evaluate and approve requests from Gaza residents to study in the West Bank in a timely manner." Organizations alerting constituents to call their U.S. Representatives to sign both of these letters before Friday, December 18, include [American Association for Palestinian Equal Rights](#), [Churches for Middle East Peace](#), [U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation](#) and [Just Foreign Policy](#).

Jewish Voice for Peace issued an [alert to contact President Obama and ask for Abdallah Abu Rahmah's release](#), He is a leader for the Bil'in nonviolent marches and details of his arrest as well as a video of last week's march can be viewed [here](#).

U.S. Foreign Policy

Speculation continues about Netanyahu as Peace Maker with the [New York Times weighing in](#). This newspaper also reported how [settlers are making Palestinians pay the price](#) for Netanyahu's settlement freeze.

Israel continues the Judaization of Jerusalem (the settlement freeze does not apply to Jerusalem) and American politicians continue efforts to "proclaim" an undivided Jerusalem as Israel's capital. However, [Dr. James Zogby's article describes this as Israel's Fictional Undivided](#)

[Jerusalem. Lord Patten's op-ed in the Financial Times](#) reports on the EU foreign ministers' policy statement on Palestine and Israel. Jordan's former permanent representative at the United Nations has a [quite different take on the EU statement](#).

Israeli officials are finding unexpected chilly receptions in the UK and USA. [Tzipi Livni angrily protests the warrant issued for her](#) arrest in the UK. Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. is characterized as an apologist for war criminals by an article in the [student newspaper](#) at Harvard after his scheduled campus speech.

Egypt's new underground steel wall as described by the [Christian Science Monitor](#) and by the [electronic intifada](#) adds a devastating wrinkle for suffering Gazans and a new reality for U.S. foreign policy wonks. The [UNRWA financial crisis resulting in service cuts in Gaza](#) will increase instability in the region.

Must read or must view or must hear

At a press conference in Bethlehem on December 11, [Christian Palestinian leaders issued a Kairos 12-page document](#) that includes the theological underpinnings to urge all churches to positively respond to the call of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee. The electronic intifada also reports that [more investors are abandoning Lev Leviev and Africa-Israel](#) consistent with the notion that the BDS movement is gaining strength. *The Guardian* reports on new [UK recommendations for labeling food from West Bank Israeli settlements](#) as different from West Bank Palestinian products. This labeling recommendation will make it easier for UK citizens to boycott Israeli settlement products.

[View the video as several women ask Elie Wiesel to join them](#) on the [Gaza Freedom March](#).

Realities rarely reported in U.S. news media

B'Tselem turned twenty and [Haaretz published a lengthy article](#) about the accomplishments of this highly respected Israeli Information Center

for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

[Gisha reports](#) that the High Court of Israel denied Berlanty Azzam the opportunity to return to Bethlehem University to complete the final two months of her BA in Business Administration despite the fact that there were no security allegations against her.

A Christian Peacemaker Team has put together a [video that shows the Israeli military denial of electricity to the community of At-Tuwani](#) in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank.

[Thousands participated in the first ever march for human rights](#) sponsored by The Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The [denial of Bedouin right to elections](#) and the [NGO Monitor's campaign to silence dissent in Israel](#) highlight the need for such an organization.

Evidently Israeli prisons, not unlike South African prisons decades earlier, [function as revolutionary universities](#).

Scheduled Event

Chicago in Solidarity with Gaza

Wednesday, December 30, 2009 at 5:30 PM

Grace Place, 2nd Floor Sanctuary, 637 S. Dearborn St. in Chicago

Convened by the American Friends Service Committee

Featuring a Live Broadcast from the Gaza Freedom March including interviews with Chicagoans on the March

Special guest: Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence who visited Gaza in early 2009

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