

## Voter Voices Group Update #7

### Social Justice and Security for Palestinians and Israelis

Dear Friends,

I recently returned from nearly a month of conversations with Israeli Jews and Arabs, Palestinian Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land. Although everyone acknowledged a just peace is nowhere in sight, many are steadfast in resisting injustice and building bridges of understanding in whatever ways they can. They are a courageous and faithful people.

I am writing you today because April in Chicago is a month teeming with speakers highlighting social justice for Israeli Arabs and Palestinians, and they need our support. I hope you will attend some of these events and invite one friend who is unfamiliar with the tragedy unfolding in Israel/Palestine.

I write also because you signed a petition to our Representative, Jan Schakowsky, whose position on these issues appears to remain largely unchanged. We begin with a letter she signed to Secretary of State Clinton.

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In recent weeks, the mainstream media has reported on the tension between Israel and the United States. Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Eric Cantor (R-VA) circulated a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reaffirming the U.S.-Israel alliance. The letter stated, "Our view is that such differences are best resolved quietly, in trust and confidence, as befits longstanding strategic allies." You can read the letter [here](#).

Representative Schakowsky and other members of Congress who signed the letter can be viewed [here](#). If you believe that silencing public debate and discussion about American and Israeli interests

continues the backing of security for Israelis without an equal backing of social justice for Palestinians, then call, email, write or meet with Representative Schakowsky and let her know. When our voices are silent, the voices that focus strictly on Israeli security capture the media and public opinion.

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Many speakers will be in town over the month of April to talk about issues in Israel and Palestine. We flag two of these events, one is located nearby. The other is farther afield but is hoped to have a significant impact beyond Chicago.

1. On Thursday, April 15, 2010 at 7:30 PM in the Evanston Galleria located at 1702 Sherman Avenue (NW corner of Sherman and Church) in Evanston, Ta'anit Tzedek (Jewish Fast for Gaza) is sponsoring an evening of interfaith reflection, conversation and action. **Mark Braverman** will be speaking about *Dignity under Siege*. Proceeds from the evening's collection will be donated to the Milk for Preschoolers of American Near Eastern Refugee Aid [ANERA]--a relief campaign that combats malnutrition among Gazan preschool children. Details about the Jewish Fast for Gaza are available at [www.fastforgaza.net](http://www.fastforgaza.net).

2. On Sunday, April 18, 2010 from 1:30 PM to 5:30 PM, you are invited to attend or view a live webcast of the Chicago Hearing. The Chicago Hearing, an initiative of the American Friends Service Committee, Chicago, will address the question: Does U.S. policy on Israel and Palestine uphold our values? The Hearing is modeled after a Congressional fact-finding meeting. Witnesses and a listener panel will have a moderated discussion on the topics of property rights, freedom of movement, speech and association and military aid. Details available at [www.chicagohearing.org](http://www.chicagohearing.org).

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