

How does the Israel-Palestine conflict affect Philadelphia, its communities, and people?

About \$3 billion of U.S. tax money funds Israel (already a wealthy industrial state with per capita income roughly equal to South Korea or Spain)—about \$9 million each day. In per capita terms, the U.S. gives each Israeli a direct subsidy worth about \$500 per year. Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. foreign ‘aid,’ constituting about one-fifth of the U.S.’s entire foreign aid budget. Total, the U.S. has given more money to Israel than any other country in the world.

The vast majority of the money is military aid, representing about 18% of the overall Israeli defense budget. Israel is already the strongest military power in the Middle East, and one of the strongest in the world. Powerful U.S. oil, military and media corporations plus Israeli lobbyists make sure that the United States grants Israel’s every wish.

So what’s the problem?

Israel is an Apartheid state, and Americans are directly responsible for the continuation of Israel’s oppressive regime.

The origin of the conflict is exactly analogous to the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans by Europeans. Zionism to Israelis is what Manifest Destiny was to American settlers. “Manifest destiny” was the concept where American settlers believed that they were a superior race to the Natives and were destined to conquer land across the North American continent to the Pacific Ocean. Likewise, Zionists believe that God had given Palestine to the Jews, and that only Jews (and no one else) should inhabit the land—that they are destined to conquer this land for themselves.

In a brutal ethnic cleansing c. 1948, Zionist forces massacred Palestinians and burned down their villages, conquering 78% of Palestine and creating hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees. In a land where Muslims, Christians, and Jews once lived side-by-side in peace for generations, Zionist forces had created a violent conflict that continues to this day.

Since 1967, Palestinians have lived under a brutal military occupation in which the Israeli military controls virtually every aspect of their lives. The UN has found that the humanitarian crisis in besieged Gaza is second only to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In Palestine, Israeli settlers (who are protected by the Israeli military) raid Palestinian homes, throw

out the occupants, and take possession of the land. Israeli bulldozers destroy Palestinian homes and groves. The Israeli military freely detains thousands of Palestinians without charge: more specifically, Israelis hold about six thousand Palestinians prisoner (many of whom ‘disappear’), while Palestinians only hold *one* Israeli soldier prisoner.

Palestinians—men, women, and children—have no right to their homes, cannot travel freely in their own land, may be detained without reason, may be shot and killed without warning nor reason, and have limited access to food, water, medical care, and education. (Israelis receive five times more water per person than Palestinians).

Palestinians must carry ID to pass through Israeli checkpoints/roadblocks to travel through *their own land*. They must wait for hours at military checkpoints; even urgent needs such as access to medical care may be denied (many women have given birth at checkpoints as a result of their passage being denied). Moreover, Israel constructed a ‘security fence’—a combination of concrete walls twice the height of the Berlin Wall and up to 100 meters wide, confiscating up to 50% of the West Bank and increasing the humanitarian crisis of the Palestinians. The wall leaves nearly 16% of the West Bank in contact with the Israeli border, refuting the argument that the Wall is meant to separate Palestinians from Israelis.

The Israeli military has regularly shut down parts or all of the West Bank and Gaza, imposing a ‘curfew’ in which heavily-armed troops enter civilian cities in tanks and armored vehicles, preventing all inhabitants from leaving their houses for weeks or months at a time (only broken up occasionally to allow residents to get food). Every so often, Israel ‘re-invades,’ creating havoc in civilian populations, killing people relentlessly, and stealing/destroying personal property—thus destroying much of the infrastructure for a possible future Palestinian state

The official Israeli excuse for its policies is for the security and defense of Israel. **But what threat can Palestinians—who barely have their own coherent police force—pose to the fourth greatest military power in the world? Israel is NOT acting in self-defense; rather, its policies are very aggressive in the systematic ethnic cleansing of the rest of Palestine.**

**OUR TAXMONEY SHOULD NOT BE FUNDING TERRORISM!
DEMAND AN END TO ALL U.S. AID TO ISRAEL!
DEMAND AN END TO THE BRUTAL OCCUPATION!
END U.S. WAR IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, AND PALESTINE!**

WE NEED MONEY FOR SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, FIRE HOUSES, STREETS, & POLICE FORCES.

Recent Philadelphia budget cuts because of lack of funds (as of July 2010):

\$2.5 million cut to library system

\$3.6 million cut to overtime budget of Fire Departments

\$6.3 million cut to overtime budget of Police forces (on top of canceling two Police Academy classes)

More recently: 30% budget cut to Philadelphia schools

**OVERSEAS WARS ARE DESTROYING THE ECONOMY
LET'S FIGHT TO BRING THE \$\$\$ HOME TO OUR COMMUNITIES**

“Apartheid is a crime against humanity. Israel has deprived millions of Palestinians of their liberty and property. It has perpetuated a system of gross racial discrimination and inequality. It has systematically incarcerated and tortured thousands of Palestinians, contrary to the rules of international law. It has, in particular, waged a war against a civilian population, in particular children.”

~ *Nelson Mandela, in a letter to NYT columnist Thomas Friedman*

TO CALL THE WHITE HOUSE FOR COMMENTS:

Tel. 202-456-1111

TO WRITE TO THE PRESIDENT:

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

For more information, please visit www.phillyagainstwar.org
To contact us, please e-mail phillyagainstwar@gmail.com