

Statement Calling on US Government to Apply Pressure to End Middle East Crisis

November 5, 2015

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) US Section calls on the United States government and Secretary of State Kerry to meet with Israeli and Palestinian officials to apply pressure to end the current crisis and bring a measure of peace and justice to the peoples of the Middle East.

Daniel Seidman, an Israeli lawyer interviewed by J Street recently, said that "more Palestinians have been arrested in the last six weeks than in the seven years of the second intifada." There is a new Palestinian uprising. People no longer believe that the political process will bring peace. Young people living in the Occupied Territories, whom the US news outlets have accused of starting a third intifada, have no hope of knowing peace and justice.

A Palestinian who works with the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) reports that they don't know whether they will live or die, and that there is no longer a safe place for children in East Jerusalem (MECA post.) One percent (700) of the Palestinian children in East Jerusalem have been arrested and taken to prison and tortured. (Source: Daniel Seidman, same interview)

Settlers have perpetrated grave violence, aggression, and hatred against innocent Palestinian civilians living in the Occupied Territories ("Lydda, 1948," *The New Yorker*, 10/21/2013; "Review by Assaf Sharon," *The New York Review of Books*, 9/24/2015). The Israeli government is threatening to close the Al Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem to Palestinians. Al Aqsa is the third holiest shrine in the Muslim world. There have also been threats to destroy it.

Israeli Defense and Security Forces are using high-powered rifles bought from the US to kill and injure hundreds of innocent Palestinians in violation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/10184-trading-arms-bombing-towns>

For the last hundred years, WILPF, with other peace and justice organizations, has stated that "where there is no justice, there is no peace." In Israel, the Palestinians are completely powerless to end the occupation and destruction of their land. The US government gives aid to Israel and has leverage, and could broker a just and comprehensive peace at this most crucial time in Middle East history along the lines given by international law.

We, therefore, ask the US government to stop the sale of penetrators (MOPs), or "bunker busters," capable of destroying Iran's nuclear facilities, and B-52s able to deliver them. No other country owns such planes and to transfer them to another nation would be a violation of the New START Treaty between the US and Russia, signed in 2010. These new weapons were to be in addition to the extensive military assistance the US already provides to Israel. (Source: "Can They Undermine the Deal" by Elisabeth Drew).
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2015/nov/05/can-they-undermine-iran-deal/>

WILPF urges the United States government to use its leverage with Israel to require Israel to withdraw its troops from Palestine. Since US law does not allow US military aid to be given to countries violating human rights with US weapons, WILPF calls for an end to US military aid to Israel until Israel ends its illegal military occupation of Palestine.

WILPF further calls for an international conference convened by the UN Security Council and attended by all Arab and EU countries, as well as Israel and Palestine, to be convened immediately and not to be adjourned until a peace treaty is agreed upon and signed by Israel and Palestine. We are convinced that such an undertaking will revive the peace process.