

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



Join us at Downtown Crossing, Boston

Monday, November 29th

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

to express our solidarity with Palestinians and to let our Senators know that we are tired of paying for Israel's colonizing occupation and theft of the Palestinian people's land and lives.

Massachusetts taxpayers give Israel, one of the world's top 20 economies, nearly \$130 million each year as part of the \$3.8 billion the US government gives to Israel yearly. And now Congress is poised to give it another \$1 billion for Raytheon's Iron Dome system.

**No More Billions for Israel's Crimes
Fund OUR Needs in These Hard Times**

We want that money back to fund desperately needed housing, education, daycare, healthcare, climate change resiliency and much more right here in Massachusetts!

We'll hear speakers from groups that can find better uses for the money and we'll march to the JFK building to deliver our letter that has been signed by 28 MA-based organizations to Senators Markey and Warren. BABAM will lighten our step with music in the streets.

COME JOIN US AND LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD!

Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, DsSA-Boston, JVP-Boston, Mass Peace Action, Boston Palestine Solidarity Network

Sara Driscoll and Nancy Murray for the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine along with folks from Jewish Voice for Peace-Action - Boston, Massachusetts Peace Action, BDS Boston, Boston Palestine Solidarity Community

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MASSACHUSETTS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Two decades of ruinous wars in the Middle East have killed up to a million people and extracted more than \$6 trillion from US taxpayers, while military contractors have reaped colossal profits. The end of the Afghanistan war has not stopped the Senate Appropriations Committee from proposing a \$29 billion increase to the Pentagon's budget, bringing it to some \$726 billion. Included in this amount is \$1 billion for Israel's Iron Dome.

This additional **\$1 billion is on top of the annual \$3.8 billion** in military aid the US gives every year to Israel, a country that ranks in the world's top 20 economies, with a per capita GDP well above that of the UK, Japan and France. Most of those funds are used to purchase US armaments, further inflating the wealth and power of the 'military-industrial complex' that President Eisenhower warned the nation about 60 years ago.

What do these tax dollars mean for Massachusetts?

The proportional share of the yearly \$3.8 billion in military aid to Israel shouldered by Massachusetts taxpayers amounts to approximately **\$130 million annually**, a sum that could be applied to addressing urgent needs within the Commonwealth that have been intensified by the pandemic.

It is difficult to imagine residents favoring more funding for the bloated US arms industry – in this case Massachusetts-based Raytheon - the builder of the Iron Dome whose head reaped \$19,397,106 in total compensation in 2020 – at a time when so many Massachusetts residents are struggling to feed themselves and their families, to avoid eviction, to help their children make up for a lost year of schooling, to find affordable child care and cope with rising health care costs. Hit the hardest are

communities of color that have played such crucial 'front line' roles since the pandemic began.

What would taxpayers prefer – to give \$130 million to Israel for weapons purchases or use it to improve schools and support a thousand teachers, or provide 85,000 people with food assistance?

What do these tax dollars mean for Palestinians?

The more Americans know about how the military aid given Israel is used to kill and oppress Palestinians, the more likely they are to oppose it. **It helps sustain a discriminatory Apartheid system**, as detailed by the Israel human rights group B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and two former Israeli ambassadors to South Africa, Ilan Baruch and Alon Liel, among many others.

While Israel's illegal settlements are being expanded throughout the West Bank, Palestinians are being driven into small enclaves surrounded by walls and checkpoints, as growing numbers lose their land, livelihoods and homes. The Gaza Strip, blockaded from the world for 14 years, has been called an open air prison and a lab to try out advanced US weapons.

On a 2017 visit, Mandla Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela, stated in an interview that "what we have experienced in South Africa is a fraction of what the Palestinians are experiencing. We were oppressed in order to serve the white minority. The Palestinians are being eliminated off their land...and this is a total human-rights violation. I think it is a total disgrace that the world is able to sit back while such atrocities are being carried out by Apartheid Israel."

What should the US Congress do?

- Congress **should stop giving Israel everything it wants and start enforcing its own laws.** The pass given to Israel over the decades to exempt it from the human rights protections in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 and the Leahy Laws must be brought to an end. This would be in line with the wishes of a considerable majority of Democratic Party voters, who are against giving Israel unrestricted military aid if it continues its settlement expansion, according to a May 2021 Arab American Institute poll.

- Massachusetts Representatives **should stand with Rep. Ayanna Pressley and Rep. Stephen Lynch as co-sponsors of H.R. 2590**, 'Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living under Israeli Military Occupation Act.' This bill provides a sorely needed measure of transparency on how the aid the US gives Israel is used by requiring the Secretary of State to certify that none of the funds support Israel's military detention and abuse of Palestinian children, seizure of Palestinian

property and displacement. Senators Markey and Warren should sponsor a **Senate version of H.R. 2590**.

- The Massachusetts delegation **should reject an additional \$1 billion in funding** for Israel's Iron Dome if this provision is in the final version of the FY22 Defense Appropriations Act. This weapon is not, as argued, 'purely defensive' but rather is part of Israel's system of domination, shielding it as it carries out massive military assaults on what is essentially a captive and defenseless population in the Gaza Strip. Israel is a country whose per capita GDP exceeds \$43,000. If it considers the purchase of Iron Dome receptors from Raytheon to be an urgent matter, Israeli taxpayers can pay for it. **US taxpayer funds are urgently needed at home!**