



CAIR
NEW JERSEY

**AMERICA'S LARGEST ISLAMIC CIVIL
LIBERTIES AND ADVOCACY GROUP**

Open Letter to New Jersey Elected Officials

Address Root Cause of Violence - Israel's Occupation of Palestine

October 10, 2023

Respected New Jersey Elected Officials,

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

It has been more than 72 hours since Israeli forces attacked the Gaza Strip, killing at least 765 Palestinian civilians, with at least 140 of them children. Another 3,720 civilians — at minimum — have been injured. These numbers are increasing by the hour.

This issue hits close to home. Just last week, Palestinian-American constituents of Wayne, New Jersey, the Asfour family, had their farm violently attacked by Israeli settlers in the Occupied West Bank. They were forced to watch as Israeli settlers set their property on fire, spray-painted “revenge,” and destroyed the family’s livelihood and historic olive grove.

And this week, Palestinian American families in New Jersey, many of whom trace their roots back to the Gaza Strip, are forced to watch as the Israeli Defense Forces — once again — unleash unprecedented levels of violence.

Enough is enough.

The Muslim community has long called for an end to Israel’s illegal occupation, Palestinians’ right to return to their ancestral lands, and the right to self-determination. This remains our call. We write to you today as a consolidation from within your constituency. **The undersigned community organizations further urge your respected offices to take the following actions:**

- 1. Address Israel’s heightened levels of violence and settlement expansions as of late;**
- 2. Review Israel’s continued harassment of Palestinians and Palestinian Americans especially who seek to visit their homelands especially in light of Israel’s admission to the U.S. visa waiver program;**
- 3. And to meet with our community to take lead and introduce you to medical and legal experts on Israeli state oppression.**

It goes without saying that we wish no harm to any innocent soul. To quote directly from the Qur’an, “Whoever takes a life — unless as a punishment for murder or mischief in the land — it



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will be as if they killed all of humanity; and whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity” (Chapter 5, verse 32).

Islam holds all life as sacred, from people to animals to even the trees. But the reality is this: Israel’s aggressions in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank pose a “substantial obstacle to peace,” according to the United Nations.

During the first nine months of 2023, Israeli authorities killed more Palestinians in the West Bank in 2023 than in any year since 2005. The Israeli state has also demolished or seized nearly 300 Palestinian properties in the first quarter of 2023, according to the UN, and displaced at least 413 Palestinians, including 194 children. Israeli forces do not spare olive groves and farmland either: harvest season is regularly disrupted by Israeli settlers, who physically assault farmers, vandalize or set fire to their trees, or harvest and steal their produce, according to the UN.

Palestinian and Muslim Americans make up a thriving segment of your constituency. They — we — are committed businesspeople, medical and legal professionals, educators, engineers, elected officials, and much more.

Our ask is this: In the same ways that your office expressed support for the Ukrainian people’s sovereignty, resistance, and will, we ask you to do the same for Palestinians, who’ve lived under Israeli occupation for the better half of the last century.

Sincerely,

Council on American-Islamic Relations, NJ Chapter
American Muslims for Palestine, NJ Chapter
Palestinian American Community Center



Signatories:

Bayonne Masjid and Community Center
Muslim Center of Greater Princeton
Masjid Waarith ud Deen
Islamic Center of Morris County
Al Tawheed Islamic Center
Masjid Salahuddin
Masjid As-Salam

Center for Islamic Life at Rutgers University
Islamic Community Cultural Center
Islamic Center of Passaic County
AUCC Masjid Al’Nuha
Islamic Congregation of North Jersey
The Gracious Center of Learning and Enrichment Activities
Islamic Center of Jersey City