

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

**We pray that God, the Most Glorified, the Most High brings peace and security to all of his creation so that we can fulfill his promise that He “created man from a male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another”.**

To New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Federal Senators and Representatives,

We, the undersigned Islamic Centers from throughout New Jersey, write you to express our profound disappointment in your reluctance to call for a ceasefire to end this carnage of innocent Palestinian civilians. We are also concerned about the role in part that you played in the dehumanization campaign of the Palestinian people indicating that they are less worthy than others of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Your initial statements in particular were devoid of any context and largely ignored the reality of death, despair and destruction long befalling millions of innocent Palestinian civilians. These statements and those of our national leaders have also put the lives of Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Americans in jeopardy including a rise in Islamophobia and putting our constitutional rights at risk as our students and professionals are subject to intimidation and harassment. As concerned citizens who value justice and peace on a global scale, we feel compelled to express our concerns about the direction of the one-sided support that you have provided.

With that said, we reached out to the incredibly diverse voices in our community and the overwhelming response to how we move forward is to demand the following from our elected representatives:

1. ***Ceasefire:*** *Call for an unconditional Ceasefire from all sides to the conflict*
2. ***Humanitarian Aid:*** *Call for an overwhelming and immediate humanitarian aid response with New Jersey in partnership with the Federal Government playing a central role in the effort.*
3. ***Voice of Peace:*** *Once the carnage stops that you all become leading and unequivocal voices in support of solving this conflict based on **International Law. No more. No less.***
4. ***Equality:*** *That you immediately commit to changing the false and insidious paradigm of viewing Israeli Lives as more valuable than Palestinian lives.*

The Muslim American community has worked tirelessly for decades to deepen its civic engagement with the belief that the United States, as a champion of democracy and human rights, would play a critical role in fostering a fair and just resolution to the complex issues facing our country, including those that have plagued the Middle East for decades. Members of our centers have met with you in civic spaces, homes, and places of business to engage in what they thought were serious dialogues on topics of concern to the Muslim community.

We now address you as bellwethers of a changing tide of sentiment between the Muslim community and our elected representatives. This division will mark a significant shift in public opinion of elected officials who are supposed to represent members of the Muslim community on issues affecting them. To date, only Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman has shown the courage and integrity to stand with the rest of the world's voices (120 countries) and vote for an immediate ceasefire.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142507>

Regarding Palestine, we have explained and documented the oppressive and violent 50+ year occupation of Palestinian lands. The Israeli Government has perpetrated numerous and well documented crimes against humanity, collective punishment, and inhumane treatment of the occupied civilian population that it is required to protect under international law.<sup>2</sup> In one case we asked for the absolute minimum of helping to protect Palestinian children from being subjected to military detention in grave violation of International, Humanitarian and US Law. We presented you with a current congressional resolution (**H.R. 3103) Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act**. The resolution notes the Israeli military detains **500 to 700** Palestinian children between the **ages of 12 and 17 EACH YEAR** and prosecutes them before a military court system that lacks basic and fundamental guarantees of due process. Your continued silence to the plight of these children foretold your silence as the now more than three thousand and counting children (800 under the age of 4) who have been mercilessly killed with this so called “precision” bombing campaign.

We are also troubled by actions like when Senator Booker cites AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL in referencing the human rights violations committed by Hamas but ignores the same organization’s detailed 280 page report titled “Israel’s Apartheid against Palestinians”.<sup>3</sup> Other leading human rights organizations including Israel’s own B’tselem have echoed the findings. We ask that you all please turn to the proverbial next page to read and analyze the report and cascade to your respective staffs.

We urge you as representatives of the largest per capita (3-5% of the population) Muslim American community in the country to stand for justice and support a balanced approach that promotes peace. We remain disheartened that your voices have largely been silent but alternatively heartened by the overwhelming response from people around the world, touching nearly every country, race, religion and background. We have confidence in the power of these worldwide voices crying out for peace and justice will be heeded by our leaders to **find a lasting and durable solution for all of the people of the Holy Land**.

We also note that in the meetings and discussions we have had with some of you over the past several weeks we have had our own humanity and morality questioned. Our response is clear and unequivocal, **we believe in the infallible words of God written in the Glorious *Quran* which condemns ANYONE who takes an innocent life**, irrespective of whether that life is Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or any other faith tradition. A more apropos question is: what humanity or morality does any leader have who remains silent and does not condemn a government that our taxes fund that openly states that it will starve 2.3 million people of which 70% are women and/or children under the age of 16?

In closing, we are certain that the path forward cannot look like the past, as much damage has been done by our elected representatives. Our faith in God Almighty, and that in His infinite wisdom, He will rightly guide us and our community and we will work in a unified way to ensure that our voices and our humanity are uplifted in a way that brings good to all who live and love this great nation. We remain committed to the principles of equality and justice and hope that we can find a path forward working with you and our national leadership to foster a more balanced and constructive approach based on International Law to bring peace to the Israeli and Palestinian people.

Sincerely,  
New Jersey Muslim Coalition

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>

## **New Jersey Muslim Coalition Signees**

1. Al Falah Center, Bridgewater
2. Al Hoda Islamic Center, Jersey City
3. Al Tawheed Islamic Center, Jersey City
4. Al-Ummah Community Center, Teaneck
5. Bayonne Masjid and Community Center, Bayonne
6. Bergen County Islamic Center, Hackensack
7. Da'awatul Islamia of Somerset, Somerset
8. Darul Islah, Teaneck
9. Darul Uloom, Paterson
10. Edison Muslim Community Center, Edison
11. Elzahra Islamic Center, Midland Park
12. Fusion Muslim Community Center, Paramus
13. Gracious Center of Learning and Enrichment Activities, Cherry Hill
14. Islamic Center of East Brunswick
15. Islamic Center of Essex County, Newark
16. Islamic Center of Ewing, Ewing
17. Islamic Center of Mercer County, Lawrence
18. Islamic Center of Morris County, Rockaway
19. Islamic Center of Passaic County, Paterson
20. Islamic Center of South River, South River
21. Islamic Center of Union County, Union
22. Islamic Center of Verona, Verona
23. Islamic Community Cultural Center, Parsippany
24. Islamic Congregation of North NJ, Paterson
25. Islamic Council of Hudson County
26. Islamic Council of Hudson County
27. Islamic Society of Central Jersey, Mon. Junction
28. Islamic Society of Monmouth County, Middletown
29. Islamic Society of North Jersey, Hackettstown
30. Jam-e-Masjid Islamic Center Inc., Boonton

## **New Jersey Muslim Coalition Signees (cont'd)**

31. Jamiah Masjid, Livingston
32. Masjid Al Salahuddin, Paterson
33. Masjid Al Wali, Edison
34. Masjid Al-Ferdous, Paterson
35. Masjid As-Saffat, Trenton
36. Masjid As'Habul Yameen, East Orange
37. Masjid Ash Shifaa, Newark
38. Masjid Darul Islam, Elizabeth
39. Masjid Muhammad, Newark
40. Masjid Nuha, Teaneck
41. Masjid Omar, Paterson
42. Masjid Shuhada, Mt Holly
43. Masjid Waarith ud Deen, Newark
44. Masjid-e-Ali, Franklin
45. Masjidullah, Plainfield
46. Minhaj ul Quran, Hackensack
47. MUNA Center of Paterson - Masjid Adam, Paterson
48. Muslim American Community Association, Vorhees
49. Muslim American Society of Central NJ, North Brunswick
50. Muslim Center of Greater Princeton, West Windsor
51. Muslim Center of Middlesex County, Piscataway
52. Muslim Center of Somerset, Franklin
53. Muslim Community of New Jersey, Fords
54. New Brunswick Islamic Center, North Brunswick
55. NIA Masjid & Community Center, Newark
56. Nida-ul-Islam, Teaneck
57. North Hudson Islamic Education Center, North Bergen
58. Plainfield Masjid, Plainfield
59. Quba School and Islamic Center, Camden
60. Tawheed Dawah Center, Jersey City