

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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Israel Reaps What it Sows

LA Jews for Peace condemns Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel and mourns lives lost and wounded. And **LA Jews for Peace** condemns Israeli's military retaliation and mourns lives lost and wounded. Hamas and Israel are the actors in the present war, but they are enabled by the United States and its allies who consistently back Israel in its denial of Palestinian individual and collective rights, including Israeli's almost 20-year siege of the Gaza Strip.

We must remember that Israel holds about two million people in the Gaza Strip under a siege that makes life unbearable. Israel's siege has destroyed the economy (unemployment is about 50%). Israel's siege has destroyed the infrastructure (electrical power is limited to a few hours each day, there is no clean drinking water, and sewage disposal is almost non-existent). Israel's siege prevents Gaza residents from travel for jobs, education, health care, or family obligations. And Israel's regularly bombing has killed thousands and destroyed homes, business, factories, farms, and civic buildings.

Is it any wonder that Hamas leads Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip in their fight for liberation?

The first steps to end the present and long-term carnage are for Israel to lift its siege on the two million people in the Gaza Strip and to end its occupation/apartheid in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Alas, there is little hope of that happening with Israel's present radical, far-right, Jewish-supremacist, government that is supported, and even rewarded, by the United States, most recently by admission to the U.S, Visa Waiver Program.

The U.S. and Israeli allies must not simply condemn Hamas and any Palestinian effort to fight for liberation, offer condolences for killed and wounded, and stand ready to further arm and support Israeli aggression. They must take responsibility for allowing the present situation to develop. The U.S. and its allies must stop supporting occupation/apartheid. They must build a comprehensive and just peace between Israelis and Palestinians that guarantees long-term security for both people. Anything short of that will surely lead to repeated wars. There is no alternative.