

LA Jews for Peace Critical of Mayor's Public Support for Israel's War & Blockade of Gaza

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LA Jews for Peace (LAJP), joining a chorus of critics, calls for a meeting with Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa to express disappointment in the Mayor's public support of Israel's relentless bombing and blockade of Gaza. Following a similar request from the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), LA Jews for Peace requests the Mayor sit down with diverse members of the LA community, including Jewish peace advocates, to discuss the history of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the role Los Angeles leaders can play in promoting world peace, rather than massive human suffering, and the complicity of the US government in funding Israel's militarism.

"We ask that our mayor set aside his personal political ties to work for the greater good," says Marcy Winograd, co-founder of LA Jews for Peace. "In backing Israel's bombing and blockade of many innocent Palestinians in Gaza, he is, perhaps unintentionally, fueling the fire of hatred and violence," adds Winograd. "We, members of LA Jews for Peace, hope the Mayor and the city council members who appeared with him at the press conference, Wendy Greuel, Janice Hahn, Jack Weiss and Dennis Zine, will think this through and open their hearts and minds to various points of view."

LA Jews for Peace supports the Muslim Public Affairs Council's request that the mayor call for the following: (1) implementing an immediate cease-fire in Gaza; (2) opening Gaza's borders to international aid to address the dire needs of the wounded and starving; and (3) admitting journalists into Gaza to report on the growing humanitarian crisis and violations of international law.

Jeff Warner, the Co-Chair of LA Jews for Peace, notes the Mayor and the media are ignoring another side to this tragic story. "I do not defend the rockets - there is no excuse for Gazans shooting into civilian towns," says Warner. "However, I can understand why the Palestinians in general and the Gazans in particular, are very upset. The problem is that Israel has had Gaza under siege for almost two years, choking off food and medical supplies. Even during the six-month cease-fire, Israel still did not open the crossings into Gaza, and that was one of the agreements of the cease-fire. This is an important point that is ignored by most American leaders," adds Warner.

LA Jews for Peace has organized protests in front of the federal building and Israeli consulate to call for diplomatic, not military solutions to the Israeli siege of Gaza and to demand a cut off of US military aid to Israel. On Wednesday night, beginning at 5 pm, LA Jews for Peace will join hands with the American Friends Service Committee to lead a silent candle-light cease-fire vigil in front of the Israeli consulate in Los Angeles. Previously, LAJP sent a delegation to City Hall to vigorously protest Mayor Villaraigosa's \$200,000 junket to Israel to sign contracts for Israeli security consultations at LAX and the Port of Los Angeles.

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