

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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President Biden Must Not Visit Israel Until Israel Halts its Expulsions of Over 1,000 Palestinians from Masafer Yatta

Israel's is in the midst of the largest ethnic cleansing of Palestinians since the 1967 Six Day War. Over 1,000 Palestinians in the Masafer Yatta region in the southern occupied West Bank face forced removal to make way for an army firing zone. A decades-long legal battle ended with Israel's highest court ruling that the evictions could proceed. Residents are refusing to leave, hoping their resilience and international pressure will keep Israel from carrying out the evictions. Alas, evictions are happening.

Barbara Leaf, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, traveled to Israel last week in advance of President Biden's visit scheduled mid-July. Leaf asked Israel to halt the Masafer Yatta expulsions and other home demolitions, and to declare a settlement moratorium.

Leaf made it clear to Israel that the U.S. doesn't just want President Biden's visit to be disrupted by crisis. The White House is demanding that Israel make permanent, fundamental, not cosmetic change its behavior.

LA Jews for Peace calls for President Biden's visit to be postponed until Israel makes real change in its policy towards Palestinians. It does little good if Israel calls a temporary halt to Palestinian evictions, only to resume them the day after the President's departure.

LA Jews for Peace calls on Israel to curb settler violence towards Palestinians in the Masafer Yatta region and throughout the West Bank. Settlers from the Mitzpe Yair outpost (illegal under Israeli law) near Masafer Yatta beat Palestinians protesting the expulsions, and even assault Israeli activists supporting the Palestinians.

LA Jews for Peace calls on the Biden Administration to reset its Israel-Palestinian policy that has been a disappointment during the Administration's sixteen months in office. Biden restored funding of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which had been halted by the Trump administration. But the Administration has failed to fulfil promises to open a consulate in East Jerusalem or allow the PLO to reopen its Washington office. In reviewing its accomplishments, analyst Mitchell Plitnick says the Biden Administration¹ "continues to disregard the Palestinian people." With a trip to the region in a month, **LA Jews for Peace** demands the Biden Administration stand up for human rights by insisting Israel recognizes Palestinian human rights.

¹ <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/06/biden-administration-continues-to-disregard-the-palestinian-people/>