

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

Los Angeles, CA. Feb.15, 2024 Contact: info@LAJewsforPeace.org

Israel Continues to Ethnic Cleanse Gazans, Despite ICJ Provisional Ruling of Genocide

Israel is in the process of stealing almost 20% of the Gaza strip in the name of security. This will force Gaza's population of over 2 million persons into even more crowded conditions than before Oct.7 when they were already impoverished. It is unfathomable to **LA Jews for Peace** that despite the January International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that Israel may be committing genocide, Israel is unfazed and is proceeding with this action.

Israel announced that it wants a 1-km buffer zone between itself and possible terrorists in Gaza. **LA Jews for Peace** has no objection to a barrier per se. But Israel indicated that it wants to build that buffer zone inside Gaza¹ and **LA Jews for Peace** strongly objects to that. Building a barrier on the other guy's land would violate law and practice, and will contribute to ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

A 1-km wide zone on the Gaza side along the entire Israel boundary will take 20% of Gaza's land, forcing the 2.3 million Gazans into 20% less space than before Oct.7 when the Gaza Strip was already overcrowded. Israel's destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and over 50% of its houses since Oct.7 makes present living conditions impossible.

On-going IDF operations are destroying all structures inside the proposed buffer zone in preparation for that buffer.²

Building a buffer zone inside Gaza amounts to theft because Israel is taking Palestinian land without compensation. Law and custom dictate that if you build a barrier on your border, it must be on your side of the boundary line. That is what the US does with its wall along our southern border with Mexico. The US - Mexican boundary is located in the middle of the Rio Grande river and the U.S. builds its wall on the U.S. side. When Americans want to fence-in their property, they build the fence inside their property. And the essence of the 2004 ICJ opinion on Israel's separation wall is that the wall is illegal because it is built inside the Wet Bank on Palestinian land.

LA Jews for Peace identifies Israel's claim that it needs a buffer zone inside Gaza for security as just a pretext for just another de-facto annexation land grab. It is no different from Israel's recent authorization for 13000 more Israeli-only housing units in occupied East Jerusalem. Both actions are in blatant defiance of international law, meant to intentionally render more untenable any peace otherwise on the horizon.

LA Jews for Peace calls on the U.S. government, the only world power with any influence over Israel, to demand that Israel builds its buffer on its own land, even if that means appropriating Israeli farm land.

¹ Alex Kane, *Jewish Currents*, Feb.6. <https://jewishcurrents.org/an-israeli-buffer-zone-could-shape-gazas-post-war-reality>

² *LATimes*, Feb.9, 2024, A3. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2024-02-02/la-fg-gaza-analysis-destruction-buffer-zone>