



## PALESTINE & ISRAEL

### **WOMEN IN BLACK say: Only Justice, Equality and Inclusion can bring Peace**

#### **Palestinian women suffer under occupation**

Because the Israeli military controls the roads in both Gaza and the West Bank, mothers often cannot take their children to school, young women are prevented from reaching universities, and doctors cannot reach their clinics in the smaller towns and villages. Pregnant women and the sick, however desperate, often cannot pass the checkpoints to reach a hospital, and incidents of women giving birth at checkpoints are not unknown.

Palestinian women have also suffered because of the plunging standard of living. According to research done by MIFTAH, an independent organization founded by Palestinian parliamentarian Hanan Ashrawi, the unemployment rate in 2007 stood at 45% in the Gaza Strip and 25% in the West Bank, with an estimated 19% of the West Bank population living in official poverty, and 51% in Gaza. Due to the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and severe restrictions on border crossings through Israel's "separation Wall", which snakes through the West Bank, the Palestinian economy is losing millions of dollars daily. In December, Israel attacked the Gaza Strip with a devastating air and ground campaign that left at least 1,400 Palestinians dead by the time a cease-fire was unilaterally declared by both sides on Jan. 18, 2009. Much of the region's civil infrastructure and many homes were left in ruins, and Israel has prevented humanitarian aid from being delivered.

It is Palestinian women who figure out how to cope with closures of cities and towns, the destruction of homes, the blocking of roads through roadblocks and checkpoints, and the economic siege. And as is the case in any community under such economic pressures, social and household tensions rise, and families have to sustain unbearable strains: how to feed their families when even flour and cooking oil run low, how to care for traumatized children, how to look after the sons confronting the soldiers. It's the women who must hold their families together.

Both Palestinian and Israeli women remain vocal in demanding an end to Israeli occupation, and see a viable Palestinian state as necessary to ensure their rights as women.

**Many women are organising to resist militarism and oppression in Israel and Palestine. Here are some addresses from which you can obtain more information and find out how you can give your support.**

*Jerusalem Center for Women [www.j-c-w.org](http://www.j-c-w.org)*

*ASWAT (Voices) for Gay Palestinian Women [palgaywomen@yahoo.com](mailto:palgaywomen@yahoo.com) Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling*

*Jerusalem [www.wclac.org](http://www.wclac.org) Coalition of Women for a Just Peace [www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org](http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org)*

*New Profile (Civilisation of Israeli Society) [www.newprofile.org](http://www.newprofile.org) Jews for Justice for Palestine UK [www.jfjfp.org](http://www.jfjfp.org)*

*Bat Shalom Feminist Center for Peace in the Middle East [www.batshalom.org](http://www.batshalom.org)*

**We invite you to sign a letter to the British Government, urging it to use its influence to bring about a just and sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine based on international law and human rights. To achieve this will require:**

- ? **An end to the illegal Israeli occupation and military operations in Palestine.**
- ? **Immediate dismantling of the Israeli-built Apartheid 'Wall'.**
- ? **Immediate cessation of all violence and actions against civilians, assassinations, closures, house demolitions, land confiscation, settlement building, water deprivation, denial of access to schools, hospitals and places of work and worship.**
- ? **An end to suicide bombing missions by Palestinians.**
- ? **Immediate final status negotiations leading to a viable sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel on the basis of the June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967, borders.**
- ? **The recognition of Jerusalem as two capitals for two states, and the immediate ending of all unilateral actions leading to the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem.**
- ? **Israel's recognition of responsibility for the plight of Palestinian refugees as a prerequisite to finding a just and lasting resolution of the refugee question in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions.**
- ? **An end to human rights violations, equality and full human rights for women in Israel and Palestine, and equal citizenship for individuals of all ethnic and religious identities in Israel and Palestine.**
- ? **Full involvement of Palestinian and Israeli women in negotiations for peace.**
- ? **Cessation of military-related loans, trade and transfers to Israel and other states in the region.**
- ? **An end to the oppression of women by patriarchal family and religious authority in both countries.**

**WOMEN IN BLACK: Women in Black against War began in Jerusalem in 1988, and is now a worldwide network of feminist groups**

**Further info from PO Box 14072, London N16 5WB, [wibinfo@yahogroups.com](mailto:wibinfo@yahogroups.com)**

**Women are welcome to join our silent vigils, women only, wear black if you can.**

**Wednesdays 6 to 7 pm, Edith Cavell statue, St. Martins Place, London WC2 Website: [www.womeninblack.org.uk](http://www.womeninblack.org.uk)**

**Donations for leaflets etc most welcome**