



Dome of the Rock

# Al Aqsa

[www.aqsa.org.uk](http://www.aqsa.org.uk)



Al Aqsa Mosque

Quarterly — Newsletter 21 — July 2004

## THE APARTHEID WALL IS ILLEGAL, IMMORAL AND UNJUST

*The International Court of Justice has ruled that the fortified walls, ditches, fences and moats that make up the apartheid wall in Palestine, which Israel has tried to pass off as a "security fence", is illegal and should be dismantled. The wall has caused Palestinian people immense hardship already and is not even complete. Israel has separated farmers from their land, cut off villages from vital resources such as schools and hospitals, confiscated over 10% of the West Bank taking yet more land that has been in Palestinian families for generations, and uprooted thousands of fruit trees that sustained Palestinians communities.*

Israel continues with its war crimes by relying on US financial support to help fund the illegal wall, and US political support to protect it from sanctions and from any meaningful enforcement of International law.

The wall is being used by Israel to permanently deprive Palestinians of 40% of the West Bank which it uses for its illegal settlements housing over 400,000 Jewish people from all over the world. These areas include all the major hilltops, water aquifers, the best agricultural areas (including the Jordan River Valley) and completely surround East Jerusalem.

By fencing the Palestinian people into enclaves, Israel will starve them until they have no choice but to leave, or die. This tactic has been used by Israel in 1949, when 1500 residents in the Palestinian town of Al-Majdal were fenced in with no access to their fields, supplies or jobs until they 'voluntarily decided to join their relatives' in the refugee camps in Gaza.

### FoA Calls for Sanctions on Israel

FoA supports the calls made by Gerald Kaufman and Oona King for sanctions on Israel in a meeting in the House of Commons. A broad range of politicians are now prepared to speak out against the increasingly brutal Israeli occupation.

Europe has strong trading ties with Israel which need to be severed to pressure Israel to comply with international laws. In order to achieve this, everyone is encouraged to lobby their local MPs/MEPs to demand an end to the EU-Israel Trade Association Agreement. European governments continue with their inaction while Palestinian lives are lost daily and this can only be reversed with strong lobbying from ordinary people like us.

FoA urges everyone to contact their local MP's and MEP's and encourage them to take action. Contact should be kept up to ensure that they are taking steps towards sanctions. Please keep FoA updated on the progress you are making by emailing us at [info@aqsa.org.uk](mailto:info@aqsa.org.uk)

### Palestinian Homes Worthless to Israeli government

Over the past few months, Israel has stepped up its criminal activity of demolishing Palestinian homes to an all time high, drawing international condemnation. Many Palestinian families were given 2 minutes warning before the walls of their houses came crashing down. That is only enough time to gather small children together and escape with their lives. These families become completely reliant on relatives and handouts for survival. Many report that they spend their days wondering the streets as they do not want to become a burden on those who have taken them in.

On the other hand, Israeli settlers that are illegally living on land stolen from Palestinians in Gaza are being given as much as \$300,000 to vacate their homes by September 1st as part of Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan.

#### Mailing List

Friends of Al-Aqsa send out daily updates on the events occurring in Palestine. To join the mailing list, please visit [www.aqsa.org.uk](http://www.aqsa.org.uk) and subscribe your email to the mailing list.

## **British Parliamentary Delegation Come Under Israeli Gun-Fire**

The Israeli Occupation Forces in Rafah did themselves no favours on Friday 18th May when they opened machine gun fire on a British Parliamentary Delegation. The incident prompted Crispin Blunt, the chairman of the Conservative Middle East council, to declare: "This demonstrates that the Israelis do not want witnesses to what is happening here and in the West Bank... We will be asking for an explanation as to why this happened and an investigation into the actions of these soldiers."

The delegation comprised of Huw Irranca-Davies, the Labour MP for Ogmore, Crispin Blunt, the Conservative MP for Reigate, and Lady Northover, the Liberal Democrat international development spokeswoman. They all reported that they came under fire near the Rafah refugee camp, only metres from the spot where Student photographer and peace activist Tom Hurndall was shot last year as he attempted to shepherd Palestinian children to safety from Israeli gun-fire. Tom unfortunately died after spending 9 months in a coma.

Mr Blunt reported that they came under fire while inspecting areas that has been bulldozed by the Israeli Occupation Forces in its recent demolition spree at the refugee camp. Palestinian children were playing in the area when the shooting occurred. Mr Blunt stated that: "Once we realised they were firing at us we returned to the vehicles which were clearly marked with the UN emblem and another shot was fired, which hit a building dislodging a piece of plaster near [Lady] Northover... It is absolutely appalling. If the Israeli soldiers are prepared to do this to people who are clearly with the UN it is no surprise that so many Palestinians have been killed."

He recognised that "in a way we are lucky, we were able to leave and able to demand an explanation; these are not options open to the Palestinian people."

A joint statement was released stating: "If the Israeli Defence Force treat the UN in this fashion it is scarcely surprising that over 100 Palestinians died and over 400 were wounded in Gaza in the month of May alone."

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## **64% of Israeli Jews support encouraging Arabs to leave**

A poll conducted by the University of Haifa towards the end of May 2004 revealed worrying hostility emanating from Jewish Israeli's against the Arab population in Israel. 63.7% of the 1,016 interviewees believed that their government should encourage Israeli Arabs to emigrate from Israel.

Clear evidence emerging from this poll as compared to similar polls conducted in 2001 and 2003, is that there is a rise in the Jewish Israeli public's extremism. In any other state in the world, such a poll would be condemned for its overt racist findings, however, as ever; Israel is treated as an exception.

## **Operation "Rainbow"**

Operation Rainbow was the name given by the Israeli government to the death and destruction they caused in refugee camps in Gaza in May/June 2004. Palestinian deaths in this period reached a genocidal 62, with the demolition of homes leaving 4,000 people homeless.

Israel claims these actions are necessary in 'self defence'. This false justification is made apparent by the fact that there have been no retaliatory attacks on Israeli's in months, yet the Israeli oppression, torture and murder continues unabated.

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## **Ex-Marine Mobilises 10,000 Observers to be sent to Palestine**

A former U.S. marine, Ken O'Keefe, is mobilizing 10,000 Westerners to be dispatched to the occupied Palestinian territories in September to act as international observers and help bring peace with Israel. Named the "P10K Force", they will expose the truth about the conflict and document human rights violation.

Mr O'Keefe also led the human shield anti-war movement in Iraq during the U.S.-led invasion. The P10K Force will use non-violent means in working for the respect of international law, to help end the unlawful Israeli occupation and bring about peace.

For years, Palestinians and several European nations have called for the dispatch of international observers to the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel's fervent opposition to such observers ensured it has never happened thus far.

For further details and to join the force, visit [www.p10k.net](http://www.p10k.net)

# Intifada Death Toll

Israel has been continuously condemned by the UN for its disproportionate responses to what the Israeli's term "Palestinian violence". Since the Al-Aqsa Intifada began in September 2000, there has been over 3 times the number of Palestinian deaths compared to Israeli fatalities. 3,123 Palestinians have been killed while in responsive attacks on Israeli's, 920 have been killed.

## Israeli pullout from Gaza will not end occupation

For Palestinians, Israel's planned withdrawal from Gaza next year will not end the occupation that confines them to a meagre piece of land.

The evacuation is not expected to include a pullout of Israeli naval patrol boats that fire over the fishermen's heads and block access to deep, rich Mediterranean waters offshore.

Israel will continue to control Gaza's airspace, coastal waters and border with Egypt. Israel is considering digging a dry moat on Gaza's southern border. Palestinians who want to cross from Gaza to Egypt will have to coordinate movements with Israelis on the border.

Israel, which has carried out frequent armoured incursions and air strikes in Gaza says it reserves the right to hit any perceived security threat there even after a pullout.

## Pledge 100

Help promote the work of Friends of Al-Aqsa by becoming a member or alternatively, join the 'Pledge 100' Campaign and donate £100 a year to the organization.

Pledge 100 appeal will hopefully help Friends of Al-Aqsa raise funds to further our campaign and work to truly make a change. Israel is feeling international pressure now, help us to maintain this pressure through intense lobbying by becoming a Pledge 100 donor.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to become a life member. Debit annually £10 / £100 [delete as appropriate] or

£\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm) from my bank account to: Friends of Al-Aqsa

Sort Code: 16-23-20, Acc No: 10036370, Royal Bank of Scotland, Leicester LE2 3GR

Name of Account Holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Account number: \_\_\_\_\_ Sort Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Post to: Friends of Al-Aqsa. P.O. Box 5127, Leicester. LE2 0WU.

## Preparing for 'The Peace Cycle'

On August 14th 2004, 100's of cyclists will gather at Hyde Park in London to begin a momentous journey - The Peace Cycle. 25 of them will cycle all the way from London to Jerusalem in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people and with the aim of spreading the truth about the occupation and Israeli brutality. The cycle ride will last for 6 weeks with the aim of reaching Jerusalem in time to mark the 4th anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Intifada on September 28th.

The cyclists leaving from London will be joined en-route by cyclists who are departing from other European capitals including Paris, Milan and Madrid. The eventual arrival of all the cyclists in Jerusalem will occur simultaneously and should number over 200.

The vision of The Peace Cycle is to bring worldwide coverage to the plight of the Palestinians and encourage unbiased reporting on the conflict. This will assist the people of the Middle East to work towards integration, not separation; and plural societies without walls dividing Jews from Palestinians, for the good of all societies and not just the powerful nations.

Over the past 55 years thousands of Palestinians and Jews have been killed in the Holy Land.

Muslim cyclists who have signed up to The Peace Cycle include Ferman Uddin and Imran Isat, both Friends of Al-Aqsa volunteers based in Leicester. Those wishing to sponsor this event send your donations to Friends of Al-Aqsa (marked for Peace Cycle).

# *Rally* For the Peace Cycle

Saturday 14th August

Start 1.00 pm

Hyde Park – North Carriage Drive  
London

*“Join the cycle of peace – end the cycle of violence”*

Come and see cyclist depart for Jerusalem

Speakers to include politician, showbizz and Palestinian activists

Join this unique occasion and help bring peace in the Holy Land

Nearest Tube Station: Marble Arch

*Bring your bicycles to ride out a short distance*

For further copies, more information about its projects or contributions please contact:

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