
WITNESSES FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE

"Indifference is not felt by everyone. For those who do care, the only answer is to stand witness to this reality. To share the information with others. To speak truth to power. And, thereby, to break the cycle of helplessness and despair, and create a better place for us all." Gila Svirsky, Coalition of Women for Peace, Israel.

Many of you will have read of the work of Human Rights Observers in Israel-Palestine. Some of these observers belong to groups based in Israel. Bat Shalom (Peace House) is a feminist group that has been campaigning for peace, justice and equality for all in Israel and Palestine since 1989. Every day members of another Israeli women's group, Machsom Watch (Checkpoint Watch) stand at checkpoints between Israel and the West Bank to monitor Israeli soldiers to ensure the rights of Palestinians are respected.

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) has placed hundreds of observers in Israel and Palestine, in the face of mounting opposition from the Israeli state. Army Chief of Staff Lt. General Yaalon has recently given the order to "take the ISM out," because it limits the "freedom of action" of his troops.

In March, a US ISM observer, Rachel Corrie, was run down and killed by an Israeli bulldozer while trying to prevent it from demolishing Palestinian homes. A UK ISM observer, Thomas Hurndall, from Manchester, remains in a coma after being shot in the head by an Israeli soldier.

This June, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, in partnership with members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, is sending the first Ecumenical Accompaniers (observers) to Israel-Palestine. Their mission is to report human rights violations, support acts of non-violent resistance alongside local Christian and Muslim Palestinians and Israeli peace activists and to offer protection through non-violent presence. When they return home the Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) will speak in public meetings about their witness. The EAs from Britain and Ireland will join 36 others from different countries as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme of the World Council of Churches. A WPJF Public Meeting on 22 October will feature a speaker from this programme.

If you are interested in this opportunity for action please contact: Eleanor Chowns & Lynda MacInnes, EAPPI programme co-ordinators, QPSW, Friends House, 020 7663 1144, eappi@quaker.org.uk or visit www.quaker.org.uk/eappi. Information for this article was supplied by Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

WHERE NOW FOR THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT?

So, what can all the anti-war protesters do now we are all being told that the war in Iraq is over? Whatever you do, PLEASE don't go home and do nothing! For Iraqi people, the war and its effects are far from over. Below are some suggestions of issues you can raise with people like:

Your MP: **Ian Lucas**, (2 Mount Street, Wrexham, LL13 8DN) and **Martyn Jones**, (Foundry Buildings, Gutter Hill, Johnstown, Wrexham, LL14 1LU).

Geoff Hoon, Sec. of State for Defence, (Old War Office Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB),

Jack Straw, Foreign Sec., (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AH),

Tony Blair, (10 Downing St, London, SW1).

Demand that:

The US and UK end their illegal occupation of Iraq. **Iraqis** be allowed to decide their own political future free from foreign interference.

While occupying forces remain, they adhere strictly to international human rights and humanitarian law. At the moment, they are failing to maintain law and order, and failing to ensure that food and medical supplies reach those who need them.

Saddam Hussein's \$300 billion foreign debt be cancelled to allow Iraq to begin to reverse the devastating effects of war and sanctions.

No further countries are attacked in this so-called "war on terrorism". Ask for a commitment from your MP or minister that further conflicts won't be created with countries such as Iran, Syria and North Korea.

There must be an immediate ban on the use of cluster bombs, depleted uranium weapons and weapons like the MOAB.

The US and UK pay compensation to people in Iraq who have suffered injury, lost family members, property or businesses as a result of the invasion and occupation of Iraq by the US and UK.

If you want more details about any of the above, have a look at the Voices in the Wilderness website at www.voicesuk.org, (look under Voices Library / Briefings / 10 Demands).