

united for peace & justice

Summary of UFPJ's Work on Palestine to Date

July 14, 2008

UFPJ's Position on Palestine

UFPJ is a broad-based coalition that came together in October 2002 to prevent and now end the occupation of Iraq. In February 2005 UFPJ's member groups adopted a strategic framework mandating this focus. See <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=1872>.

While we focus on Iraq, we do so within the broad context of the Bush administration's sweeping empire building agenda abroad and its assault on people's rights at home. So we look at the war in the context of the costs of war, especially to communities of color; a broad moral context in which faith-based organizations play a central role in challenging the immorality of the war & occupation; and a broad regional context in which the occupation of Iraq is linked to the other major U.S.-backed occupation in the region, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. UFPJ has done extensive work on Palestine and will continue to do so.

In June 2003 UFPJ's member groups, participating in the coalition's first national assembly, adopted a unity statement which included the following: "U.S. political, economic, and military aid is fueling Israel's rise as an unchallengeable regional military power and sustains Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem and its denial of equal rights to Palestinians." See <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=1871>.

In May 2004, UFPJ's Steering Committee adopted a more developed position on Palestine drafted by its Palestine-Israel Just Peace Working Group, a body that came together at UFPJ's first national assembly in June 2003. This position advocates for an immediate end to the Israeli occupation, equal rights for Palestinians, and addressing the rights of Palestinian refugees in a manner consistent with human rights and international law. UFPJ's strategy to achieve that goal is to focus on ending all forms of U.S. aid -- military, political, and economic -- that sustain Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and its denial of equal rights to Palestinians. See <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=2317> and <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=2318>.

At UFPJ's 3rd National Assembly in June 2007, UFPJ reaffirmed commitment to Palestinians, stating, "UFPJ opposes U.S. military and economic aid to Israel as this aid facilitates the continuation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the apartheid policies of the Israeli government." See <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/downloads/strategicframework.pdf>.

Activities UFPJ Has Undertaken to Widen Support for Palestinian Rights

- June 2003, February 2005, June 2007: National Assembly elects representatives from the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation to UFPJ's Steering Committee.
- Nov. 9, 2003: In response to a call from Palestinian civil society, UFPJ organizes national day of action to make Israel's Apartheid Wall fall.
- March 16, 2004: On the one-year anniversary of Israel's murder of U.S. peace activist Rachel Corrie, UFPJ calls for actions to commemorate Rachel's death and pressure the U.S. government to end aid to Israel's occupation.

- June 5-11, 2004: Marking the 37th year of Israel's occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, UFPJ calls for national week of action to end to U.S. support for Israel's occupation.
- November 29, 2004: UFPJ calls on antiwar movement to participate in Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.
- August 29, 2004: On the eve of the Republican National Convention in New York City, pro-Palestine activists organize dynamic contingent in UFPJ's August 29th "No to the Bush Agenda" march, attended by a half million people.
- February 19-21, 2005: UFPJ's 2nd National Assembly of member groups virtually unanimously adopts proposal to support and publicize the Weapons Watch campaign, a campaign led by Jewish Voices for Peace, the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, et al. to halt U.S. arms transfers to Israel until it complies with human rights standards and international law.
- April 13, 2005: UFPJ calls on antiwar movement to participate in April 13 National Day of Action against Caterpillar to end sales to Israel of weaponized bulldozers used to destroy Palestinian homes.
- July 12, 2005: UFPJ encourages its member groups to attend 4th national conference of U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.
- At the March 20, 2004, August 29, 2004, April 29, 2006, and January 27, 2007, mass demonstrations focused on the Iraq war, UFPJ supporters carry hundreds of UFPJ posters emblazoned with "Occupation: Wrong in Iraq, Wrong in Palestine -- End U.S. Support for Israel's Occupation!"
- July 9, 2005: In a statement responding to the London bombings, UFPJ declares, "It is time for the U.S. to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan, time to end U.S. support for Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, time to stop supporting repressive regimes in the Middle East and other places, and time to remove U.S. military bases from oil-rich countries like Iraq and Saudi Arabia."
- September 24, 2005: At its antiwar march, UFPJ publicizes the call for a Palestine solidarity contingent/feeder march. Collaborating with the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, UFPJ collects 10,000 postcard signatures to Caterpillar to end bulldozer sales to Israel. Speakers make connections between the occupation of Iraq and Palestinian territories at the rally. Also, the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation organizes a "Palestine tent" during UFPJ's post-march peace and justice festival at the Washington Monument.
- April 29, 2006: Following its March for Peace, Justice and Democracy, which drew more than 350,000 demonstrators to New York City, UFPJ hosts a Peace and Justice Festival, which includes a Palestine tent, featuring Q&A sessions on Israel and Palestine, an Arabic-style "cafe" with big rugs and comfy pillows, Arabic music, a folkloric dance performance, and fair trade olive oil from the West Bank.
- June-August 2006: UFPJ calls on its members to take action against Israel's attack on Gaza and Lebanon. UFPJ condemns attacks on civilians, calls for an unconditional ceasefire, encourages peaceful negotiations, and targets the White House for its support of Israel's military actions. In less than 72 hours, UFPJ collects signatures from more than 300 organizations and individuals on an open letter to U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton, calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. On July 21, UFPJ delivers the letter to Bolton's office, accompanied by 200 concerned people who demonstrate in the rain outside the U.S. Mission to the U.N. UFPJ supports and disseminates Just Foreign Policy's sign-on letter from American Jews supporting ceasefire in Lebanon.

- June 10-11, 2007: UFPJ joins the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, a member organization of UFPJ, in co-sponsoring a two-day mobilization in Washington, DC to protest the 40th anniversary of Israel's illegal military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. More than 5,000 people march and rally for peace, declaring that "40 years of Israel's occupation is enough." Hundreds of activists meet with their congressional representatives and senators the following day to call for a change in US foreign policy in the Middle East.
- June 22-24, 2007: UFPJ's 3rd National Assembly adopts "Challenging U.S. Support for the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Territories and Working for a Lasting Peace in the Middle East Region" as part of the coalition's comprehensive program of work.
- January 26, 2008: UFPJ joins peace groups in Israel and around the world in a call for an International Day of Action. The call was in response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis faced by the 1.5 million residents of Gaza.
- Ongoing: UFPJ distributes to its member groups Phyllis Bennis' monthly talking points that make connections between the occupations of Iraq and Palestinian territories.
- Palestinians and allies that have spoken on Palestine at UFPJ press conferences, demonstrations, assemblies, educational events, etc. include: Damu Smith, Black Voices for Peace; Degaulle Adili, Palestine Activist Forum of NY; Josh Ruebner, Kymberlie Quong Charles, and Nadia Hijab, U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation; Lamis Deek, Al-Awda NY/NJ; Monica Tarazi, American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee-NY; Ora Wise, Jews Against the Occupation; Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies; Rabab Abdulhadi, Center for Arab-American Studies, U. of Michigan-Dearborn; Rania Masri, Institute for Southern Studies; Suheir Hammad, poet; and Ziad Abu-Rish, Stop U.S. Tax-Funded Aid to Israel Now-Philadelphia