



Open Letter from Bernie Sanders

Artwork By Vera Tamari

EDITOR'S NOTE: Antonio Cabral, local activist and longtime supporter of the Esperanza, shares with us an open letter from Bernie Sanders. (The Esperanza does not endorse candidates.)

Dear Antonio,

As Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee it goes without saying that I spend most of my time focusing on domestic issues. How do we improve our dysfunctional health care system and lower the cost of prescription drugs? How do we make childcare and higher education affordable for working class families? How do we increase wages in America and make it easier for workers to join unions? These, and many other issues, are what I and the Committee focus on.

But, given the enormous international crises the world is now experiencing, I must tell you that I find myself spending more and more time on foreign affairs — especially the horrific war taking place in Gaza.

In my view, the current issue we face with Israel-Gaza is not complicated. While we recognize that Hamas' barbaric terrorist attack began this war, we must also recognize that Israel's military response has been grossly disproportionate, immoral, and in violation of international law. In essence, the right-wing Netanyahu government of Israel has not just gone to war against Hamas. It has gone to war against the entire Palestinian people and the results have been catastrophic.

Most importantly for Americans, we must understand that Israel's war against the Palestinian people has been significantly waged with U.S. bombs, artillery shells, and other forms of weaponry. In other words, we are complicit in this war.

Since October 7th, over 22,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bombs and over 57,000 have been wounded. Seventy percent of these victims have been women and children.

Since the beginning of this war 1.9 million Palestinian men, women, and children have been driven from their homes — 85% of the total population of Gaza. Despite the sharing of coordinates with Israeli forces, 40 UN facilities have sustained direct hits, 61 UN installations have suffered collateral damage, and 134 UN workers have been killed. The UN reports that over 234,000 housing units have been damaged and more than 46,000 homes completely destroyed, amounting to nearly 70 percent of the housing stock, a figure confirmed by academic analysis of satellite radar data. Today, not only are the vast majority of people in Gaza

homeless, they lack food, water, medical supplies, and fuel. A recent UN report indicates that half of the population of about 2.2 million are at risk of starvation and 90 percent say that they regularly go without food for a whole day. The chief economist at the World Food Program said the humanitarian disaster in Gaza was among the worst he had ever seen. This cannot be allowed to continue.

To put this in historical perspective the destruction in Gaza is now equivalent to that of Dresden, where 2 years of bombing during World War II made the city's name synonymous with total destruction. Robert Pape, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, has documented that the Allied bombing of Dresden from 1943 to 1945 severely damaged 56% of its non-industrial buildings, half of its homes, and killed about 25,000 people. Meanwhile, the horrific fire-bombing of Japanese cities in 1945 destroyed 40% of the urban area of the 66 cities attacked, leaving 30% of Japan's population homeless. Gaza has passed these nightmarish thresholds in less than months.

My friends, we cannot turn our backs on the kind of suffering and inhumanity that is currently taking place in Gaza — especially when it is significantly caused by U.S. military support.

If thousands of innocent people can be killed by indiscriminate bombing. If millions of impoverished men, women, and children can be driven from their homes and denied the food, water, medical care, and fuel they need. If many hundreds of thousands of children undergo extraordinary psychic trauma as they witness horrific scenes of death and wanton destruction. If all this is accepted and allowed to happen without a response from us, then what we become responsible for is not just the

nightmare in Gaza. It is the nightmare for all of humanity. Human cruelty and barbarism, already widespread on this Earth, will descend another notch lower — setting the stage for even worse horrors in the future.

Congress is working to pass a supplemental funding bill that includes \$10 billion of unconditional military aid for the right-wing Netanyahu government to continue its brutal war against the Palestinian people. Enough is enough. Congress must reject that funding. The taxpayers of the U.S. must no longer be complicit in destroying the lives of innocent men, women, and children in Gaza.

Together we must find a better way forward.

In solidarity, Bernie



Artwork By Josh MacPhee, bit.ly/just-seeds