

JVP Policy Briefing: Lift The Gaza Blockade

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Jewish Voice for Peace urges all Members of Congress to join Representatives Danny Davis, Keith Ellison and Barbara Lee in writing statements to demand Israel end the blockade of Gaza.

The military blockade is not working – Israel has blockaded Gaza for seven years but has been unable to prevent the smuggling of rockets and ammunition. Military action will never solve this political conflict.

Israel agreed to end the blockade in the ceasefire agreement from August 27, 2014 but has not done so. A very limited amount of goods purchased from Israel have been allowed in and a few shipments of agricultural products were allowed out, but these limited steps are far from a complete end to the blockade.

The blockade is collective punishment of the ordinary citizens of Gaza, 50 percent of whom are under the age of 18, 70 percent of whom are women and children and 80 percent of whom live below the poverty line according to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency. Collective punishment of civilians is a significant violation of international law and the Geneva Conventions.

In June, 2010 The International Committee of the Red Cross, a traditionally neutral organization, stated, "The whole of Gaza's civilian population is being punished for acts for which they bear no responsibility. The closure therefore constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law."

Israelis and Palestinians alike deserve to live free of terror and with basic freedom of movement. The best way to do this is with a clear ceasefire agreement that includes ending the blockade with appropriate security to prevent weapon smuggling.

Promoting economic development and social interaction in Gaza, and its connection to the West Bank and the rest of the world, is in the long-term interest of Israelis as well as Palestinians and all the region's people.