

Middle East News Network – Action Alert

August 15, 2013



This Thursday, Aug. 15, tell your Members of Congress in person or in writing that peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians need to be founded on justice and international law.

Peace Not Walls, along with other organizations in the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy, will send out action alerts monthly on every third Thursday. Each action alert will focus on different issues so that Members of Congress hear consistently that their constituents support a just and lasting negotiated resolution to the Palestinian Israeli conflict. This is the second of these monthly alerts.

As people of faith, we are hopeful that the renewed peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians will be a positive move toward bringing peace with justice to Palestine and Israel. While many have lauded this development, in order for there to be a just and sustainable resolution of the conflict, core concerns will need to be addressed. Without these foundations of justice, negotiations can be used as a [pretense](#) for ignoring ongoing injustices.

A just resolution of the conflict will require:

- **A commitment to respect human rights and international law and bring security to all;**
- **A viable two-state solution that addresses all final status issues;**
- **An end to all forms of violence;**
- **An end to the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem;**
- **An end to Israeli settlement construction;**
- **A shared Jerusalem;**
- **The dismantling of the illegal separation wall/barrier where it is on Palestinian land; and**
- **A just resolution for Palestinian refugees.**

Here's where you come in: The August recess (Aug. 5 through Sept. 6) is a great time to visit local offices of your representative and senators. They need to hear from you and other constituents that you strongly support peace between Israelis and Palestinians that follows international law and brings justice. Click here for [tips for making in-district visits](#).

In the 20 years since the Oslo Peace Agreement and in violation of international law the government of Israel has encouraged and subsidized a more than doubling of the number of Israeli settlers on occupied Palestinian land. [Reports](#) indicate that Israel is set to approve as many as several thousand housing units over the coming months in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These kinds of actions work directly against a vision of sustainable and just peace.

Just as the United States is swift to [hold Palestinians to account for actions](#) not in keeping with U.S. positions or international law, we should not hesitate to apply the same standard to the State of Israel. Since the 1967 war and subsequent occupation, the U.S. and international policies have been consistent in declaring the military occupation, the settlement building and the annexation of East Jerusalem to be against international law. And yet, there have been no consequences for these flagrant violations.

Rather than [seeing continued settlement expansion as inevitable](#), the U.S. government would do well to heed the action taken by the European Union which announced in mid-July that it would effectively sanction Israeli entities

in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. This action sends a clear signal that the settlements are illegal and are not to be used as a negotiating tactic against the Palestinians.

As stated in the [Oct. 5, 2012, letter](#) signed by ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and 15 other faith leaders, the U.S. has continued to give \$3 billion a year to Israel despite these and other violations. For any real progress to be made, we must confront violations of international law on all sides and firmly hold both parties accountable.

For the sake of both Palestinians and Israelis, it is time for a peace process that results in the enforcement of international and human rights law and ends the illegal military occupation of Palestinian land.