

Sandy Spring Friends Meeting
17715 Meetinghouse Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

June 9, 2010

TWO PAGES

President Barack Obama
The White House
FAX: 202-456-2461

Dear Mr. President:

In the aftermath of the Israeli response to nonviolent activists delivering humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza that left nine people dead, we implore you to act now to stop the blockade on Gaza.

The situation violates international human rights standards and is inhumane:

- **The World Health Organization reports that 95% of Gaza's water fails to meet WHO standards thus leaving thousands of infants at risk of poisoning.**
- **The percentage of children younger than five who have anemia is estimated at 48%.**
- **Seventy-five (75) million liters of untreated sewage are pumped into the Mediterranean Sea every day because the blockade does not permit piping and spare parts.**
- **The World Food Program says Gaza requires a minimum of 400 trucks *every day* to meet basic nutritional needs. An average of just 171 trucks worth of supplies enters Gaza *every week*.**

The 2009 Israeli bombing destroyed Gaza's industrial zone causing the elimination of 120,000 jobs. The bombing also destroyed or damaged 15,000 homes and apartments and one third of all schools. Cement, steel girders and other building materials are not permitted to be imported into Gaza, thus leaving families homeless, people unemployed and children without schools.

As members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) we are committed to resolving conflicts through nonviolent means and are opposed to all forms of violence. We believe that there is that of God in every human being and therefore the life of every person is sacred. Everyone has the right to live a full life and reach his or her full capacity. The blockade of Gaza is inconsistent with these principles.

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In your 2009 Cairo speech you stated: “There must be a sustained effort to listen to each other; to learn from each other; to respect one another; and to seek common ground.” In keeping with your stated intention, we call on you to reach out to Hamas. This diplomacy has the potential of ensuring much greater security for Israel than what has been provided by the blockade, enabling humanitarian and economic relief to the people of Gaza, and providing the basis for resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

We trust you will consider this request and do the right thing.

Sincerely yours,

**Bette Hoover, Clerk
Sandy Spring Friends Meeting**

The above facts are available from the website of the American Near East Refugee Aid agency (ANERA), an agency which receives funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development.