

**Subject:** Ceasefire Now for Palestine

**From:** Saffi Khan <khan.saffi21@gmail.com>

**Date:** 10/28/23, 10:32

**To:** response@ocgov.com

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Dear Orange County Board of Supervisors,

The situation in Palestine and Israel is top of mind for many people right now, especially your Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab citizens. I am concerned about the country's one-sided stance to "Stand by Israel." Taking such an absolute stand could be harmful to this nation's reputation. Our nation's failure to acknowledge the loss of Palestinian life and the humanity of Palestinians can make Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab citizens feel marginalized, unrecognized, and may create a hostile environment and lead to retaliatory actions against them. I, and many in my community, are in a state of grief over the loss of lives, and the nation's failure to acknowledge that suffering in its unabashed support for Israel is concerning and has compromised my wellbeing.

Following are some of the historical elements of the conflict that deeply trouble me and why I believe the nation should take a more nuanced approach in their statements to ensure that Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab citizens feel seen, valued, respected, and welcomed in the nation:

\* Many Palestinian Americans have lost relatives, immediate family, colleagues, or friends in Palestine since much of the country became Israel under Britain's Balfour Declaration in 1948. o When Israel was formed, a tragic event (called the Nakba) resulted in Israel taking control of hundreds of towns and villages, the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages, and the death of thousands of Palestinians. Many Palestinian-Americans have families that were displaced or, worse, killed in the Nakba.

\* Palestinians in Gaza live in what [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_\\_https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15\\_\\_;!!KL1yqy0aGX2drUI!iG01M7qC-k0xPJ2py11Nn0teUIFZB375Sz6q5g5j6Pmuhu6UWrqq9UQWU5QmF7dslnAdgX50Ye0RwRqIV5r5\\$>](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15__;!!KL1yqy0aGX2drUI!iG01M7qC-k0xPJ2py11Nn0teUIFZB375Sz6q5g5j6Pmuhu6UWrqq9UQWU5QmF7dslnAdgX50Ye0RwRqIV5r5$>) Human Rights Watch and [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_\\_https://www.btselem.org/node/214231\\_\\_;!!KL1yqy0aGX2drUI!iG01M7qC-k0xPJ2py11Nn0teUIFZB375Sz6q5g5j6Pmuhu6UWrqq9UQWU5QmF7dslnAdgX50Ye0Rwb7UkQK0\\$>](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.btselem.org/node/214231__;!!KL1yqy0aGX2drUI!iG01M7qC-k0xPJ2py11Nn0teUIFZB375Sz6q5g5j6Pmuhu6UWrqq9UQWU5QmF7dslnAdgX50Ye0Rwb7UkQK0$>) B'Tselem and others call the "world's largest open-air prison." This means that individuals are not allowed to enter or leave Gaza, electricity and water are cut off at a moment's notice, and Palestinians are subjected to abusive checkpoints when trying to go to work or move about the territory.

o Some Palestinian Americans have loved ones that they cannot visit due to travel restrictions prohibiting them from getting in and out of Israel.

\* In recent years, Israel has expanded its borders against international law, leaving Palestinians with a small percent of the land they were granted by the Balfour Declaration. The Israeli government in recent years has given settlers unprecedented license to steal land from Palestinians. Settlers often abuse local Christian and Muslim Palestinians, openly parade and defile their places of worship, and destroy income-generating crops. Notably, many of these actions have drawn condemnation from the [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_\\_https://press.un.org](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://press.un.org)

[/en/2023/sc15203.doc.htm\\_!!KL1yqy0aGX2drUI!iG01M7qC-](#)

[k0xPJ2py1lNn0teUIFZB375Sz6q5g5j6Pmuhu6UWrqq9UQWU5QmF7dslnAdgX50Ye0RwfzfsADx\\$>](#) United Nations.

o Many have experienced loss of family or ancestral property due to settler activity.

\* The death toll of the conflict in Palestine-Israel is disproportionately borne by the Palestinians. [\[k0xPJ2py1lNn0teUIFZB375Sz6q5g5j6Pmuhu6UWrqq9UQWU5QmF7dslnAdgX50Ye0RwRS-GhP1\\\$>\]\(#\) Between 2008 and 2021, at least 5,739 Palestinians and 251 Israelis were killed. According to the UN, the conflict has taken the lives of 23 Palestinians for each Israeli. Over the same time, at least 121,438 Palestinians and 5,682 Israelis were injured.](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/18/mapping-israeli-occupation-gaza-palestine_!!KL1yqy0aGX2drUI!iG01M7qC-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

o It is very plausible that people may have experienced loss amongst their loved ones in Palestine.

The nation's current one-sided statement and stance in support of Israel with no support of the Palestinian people, their humanity, their lives, and their rights makes me feel that my experience, my identity, my heritage, my family, and my beliefs are not welcome and valued in the nation and puts Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim citizens at risk. I would request that a statement supporting and recognizing the issues brought forth by my letter be issued by you.

Sincerely,

Saffi