

We, the members of the Huntington Woods (MI) Peace, Citizenship and Education Project call for an immediate and unconditional cease-fire between Israel and Gaza.

We deplore the violence that Israel and Hamas have chosen to visit on each other. The random destruction and constant threat to life endured by the Israelis near Gaza cannot be accepted; nor can the Israeli domination of the lives of millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The policies of both Israel and Hamas have created unbearable hardships and suffering for both peoples. Nevertheless, Israel's current escalation of the conflict by a week of bombing and then a ground invasion have created a human catastrophe for the Palestinians far beyond the provocation of Hamas's rockets. Its scale is conveyed by the staggering disproportion in Israeli/Palestinian casualty figures and deaths of hundreds of Palestinian noncombatants.

None of this would be possible without U.S. military and diplomatic support. Our tax dollars pay for the American F-16 planes bombing Gaza; our United Nations Ambassador first blocked, and then abstained from, a cease-fire resolution in the Security Council. Concern for Israel's security should cease being a justification for a one-sided U.S. policy that ignores UN resolutions, international law, and Palestinian human rights. What would the American reaction be, for example, if a rocket fired from Gaza crashed into an Israeli school and killed forty Jewish children? Outrage should be impartial.

Instead, irresponsible American policies are sowing the seeds for unending violence. Among these is the U.S. Senate Resolution of January 8, 2009 and any similar resolution in the House which places the blame for this current crisis solely on Hamas and supports Israel's invasion into Gaza.

Instead, we urge our government in the strongest terms to demand an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza in tandem with the ending of rocket fire into Israel. This must be followed by an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza, including a resumption of free movement in and out of Gaza, including to the West Bank. And this should lead to negotiations, as suggested by Israeli author David Grossman, to be "mediated by the international and Arab communities" on tangible ways of ending the deprivation of Gaza and finally resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.