Many non-Arab Americans are ashamed that our country has, for so long, failed to show care for the human rights of the Palestinians. Justice demands that we consider the people of a land, not just its governance.

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE for Palestinian Human Rights

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WHY CARE NOW ABOUT PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS?

THE REASON FOR CARING NOW ABOUT PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS IS THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF *ALL* PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST!

The Congress and Administration need to acknowledge that peace in the Middle East, as in any region of our shrinking globe, is ***indivisible.*** *Violations of human rights by anyone, anywhere in the Middle East can lead to war - the ultimate violation of the human rights of everyone, everywhere.*

Peace, justice, and the respect for human rights must become the paramount American goal in the Middle East. The concern of AAPHR is that the awful situation in the Gulf obscures, once again, American awareness of Israeli shootings, beatings, home demolitions, illegal arrests, land confiscations, building of illegal settlements, tree uprootings, and many other types of daily oppression of the Arabs - Christians and Muslims - who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Those violations have again been brought to the attention of Congress. On May 9, a joint hearing before two subcommittees of the House Foreign Affairs Committee heard testimony from witnesses from the Lawyers Committee on Human Rights and the Human Rights Watch. They described actions that are "simply not tolerable" and do not even "serve Israel's national interests well". They called on Congress to act in the interests of the Palestinian people, the State of Israel, and the United States.

But later, the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council resolution to place a UN observer team in the Occupied Territories! That led many Palestinians to say "We have given up hope." In Palestinian eyes, the United States is guilty of colossal hypocrisy. When Israel invaded Lebanon with 28,000 Palestinian and Lebanese deaths, culminating in the infamous massacre at the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps, the U.S. did not condemn Israel. On the contrary, we continue our massive military and economic aid. But then there is no oil in Lebanon. Are human lives less important?

Time, August 27, presented a masterful analysis of the Middle East:

> Is the U.S. a reliable friend to the Arabs? Read page 27.
>
> Why are grassroots Arabs disenchanted with the West? Read page 27.
>
> How real is the human rights issue, and what is its source? Read page 52.
>
> Is there a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Read page 20.

Some people on Capital Hill say that before taking a stand on the Israeli-Palestinian issue they need to hear from their constituents. However, they should consider how many of their constituents belong to the religious community. Voters in that community have, through their national organizations, articulated strong positions. They expect the the persons they elected to ***know*** those positions. It is an evasion of accountability to wait for each voter to add an individual endorsement of what his or her national religious organization has said. This is a clearly a ***moral*** issue; and the religious community has acted. The Roman Catholic Church and all the major Protestant denominations have taken clear positions, based on moral grounds, regarding the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Many Jewish organizations also are critical of the policies of the Israeli government. ***It is time for elected officials to seriously take into account what the religious community is saying.*** They can begin by contacting Churches for Middle East Peace, a coalition of 14 Catholic and Protestant organizations, at 110 Maryland Avenue, Washington, DC 20002.

AAPHR is a not-for-profit, tax exempt, educational corporation, serving as an information clearinghouse. We have no paid staff but do have expenses for printing, postage, phones, etc. Contributions are essential to our work on the issue our name specifies - Palestinian human rights. Please send your check today.