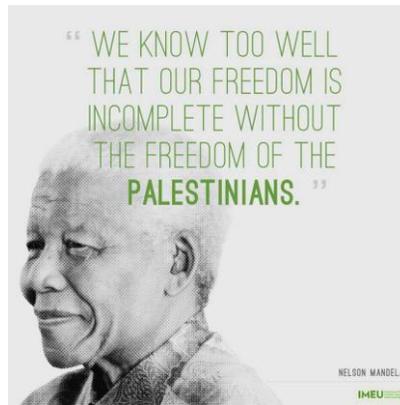




For Immediate Release

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Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel Mourns Death of Nelson Mandela, Recalls South African Icon's Support for Palestine

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—Members of the **Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel**, a human rights group based in Albuquerque, New Mexico known primarily for its billboard campaigns in nearly a dozen cities nationwide, celebrate the life and legacy of former South African president Nelson Mandela, who passed away at the age of 95 last week. While noting his commitment to freedom, peace and reconciliation, the Coalition also shares his belief that until everyone is free, no one is truly free. The following members share their thoughts and reflections of how the struggle in South Africa mirrors the struggle in Palestine for freedom, equality and justice.

- “Nelson Mandela said it best: ‘We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.’”
—Susan Schuurman, cofounder, Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel
- “Now is the time to celebrate and remember the legacy of Nelson Mandela. He supported freedom and justice movements around the world, including Palestinian human rights. No exceptions. After 27 years in prison, he became the leader who inspired his countrymen to rise above long standing racial and tribal hatreds. To the shock of millions, South Africa transformed without a bloody civil war. He forgave those who had oppressed him and his people and helped forge a society free of the shackles of apartheid. Everyone was invited to the table to create a new order of governance. Those of us who have been for decades involved in the struggle for Palestinian human rights, take heart from the life of Mandela. Indeed, one person’s life can change the course of world events.”
—Iris Keltz, Jewish Voice for Peace ABQ and Friends of Sabeel ABQ



- “Nelson Mandela is a role model for the world. As world leaders gather to praise him, may they also follow his example in the pursuit of peace, human rights, and social justice. His message of nonviolence that grew out of his years of imprisonment shows the way to a better and safer world. His steadfast commitment to the end of apartheid and oppression in South Africa was extended by him to other regions of the world where these evils likewise exist. He was a friend to the Palestinian people and to all people who suffer from occupation and repression. We can best celebrate him by spreading the ideas that he stands for.”
—Sally McMillan, *United Nations Association ABQ Chapter*
- “Of the many things we learned from Nelson Mandela, three stand out: No one is free until all are free; stand up to power and speak truth; and the only true victory is one in which you turn your enemy into your partner.”
—Alan Wagman, *Jewish Voice for Peace ABQ*
- “Recognizing that Palestinian people live under oppression similar to that suffered by black South Africans, Mandela said: ‘We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.’ This history is erased as the worldwide media rushes to turn him into a commercialized icon while politicians who considered him a terrorist now want to make him respectable. In contrast to this whitewashing of the past, Mandela also said: ‘When a man is denied the right to live the life he believes in, he has no choice but to become an outlaw,’ and in this way he sanctioned the anti-imperialist struggles of all peoples, including those under occupation, such as the Palestinians.”
—Benay Blend, *Jewish Voice for Peace ABQ*
- What a shining example of peace with justice was Nelson Mandela. His support of justice and peace for Palestine and its people is most pertinent today. Apartheid, as President Carter has written, is clearly real for oppressed Palestinians in the so-called Holy Land which is mainly controlled by the Israeli government, its soldiers and its settlers. These realities I personally observed in several areas in Palestine and Israel, in March 2013. The Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem (which is in Palestine) headed by Sami Awad, the Tent of Nations led by Daoud Nassr, the Bethlehem Bible College directed by Dr. Bishara Awad, and the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem and its leader, Rev. Naim Ateek—all these Christian Palestinians daily emphasize non-violence in the face of ongoing Israeli injustices. What President Mandela said in South Africa regarding the need for social change applies equally to Israel as it constantly mistreats Palestinians who have had land stolen, roads closed, leaders jailed, resources taken, homes demolished, and communities displaced. The U.S. is the main support for this inhumane treatment of Palestinians, especially via AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee). For people who want to see a movie which depicts these realities, both past and present, *The Stones Cry Out* by Yasmine Perni is a must-see. 2014 is the year for people throughout the world to become aware of the real picture of Palestinians’ lives, and thereafter, line up as change agents to push for real peace with justice.”
—Rev. Glen Thamert, *Friends of Sabeel ABQ*



- “We in the ANSWER Coalition offer our condolences to the family of Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and to the millions of South Africans mourning the death of a great leader. One of the world’s preeminent figures, he was someone whose very name seemed to embody the spirit of the word *liberation*. His 27 years in the prisons of the apartheid South African regime spawned perhaps the world’s most significant movement to demand freedom for a political prisoner, and he became a symbol of the overall struggle of Black South Africans against the brutal apartheid system. Mandela never abandoned his position on international solidarity, including unconditional support for the people of Palestine, Cuba, Africa, the Philippines, and all struggles against imperialist domination. The apartheid system was completely supported by U.S. imperialism. In fact, even though the U.S. government positions itself as a supporter of Nelson Mandela, it was the CIA, working with the apartheid regime, that captured Nelson Mandela, leading to his 27-year-long imprisonment. The House of Representatives only voted to call for Nelson Mandela’s release from prison in 1986 when it was clear that the fascist apartheid regime’s days were numbered, leading the United States and Britain to abruptly shift course and broker a negotiated end to the white supremacist system. A mass worldwide anti-apartheid movement had completely isolated South Africa. Even with that, the U.S. government still retained the African National Congress on the official U.S. ‘terrorist list’ for many years following. While much will be said in coming days and weeks, it falls on us first and foremost to recognize the tremendous accomplishments Mandela made to the struggle of South Africans for freedom, which inspired the hopes and dreams of many burning with revolutionary desires the world over. In this moment of deep sorrow, we take solace in the heroic accomplishments of the South African freedom struggle, and its leader: Nelson Mandela.”

—Preston Wood, ANSWER New Mexico Coalition

- “Veterans for Peace joins the international community in celebrating and remembering the life of Nelson Rolihlahla ‘Madiba’ Mandela. Nelson Mandela was not a pacifist, as he once used violent resistance as a means to achieve justice. But he also understood that violence was not the answer and that the time had come for him to work for peace and to make common effort with enemies who hated him and his people. He is quoted as saying, ‘Hating clouds the mind. It gets in the way of strategy. Leaders cannot afford to hate. If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.’ Nelson Mandela Present!”

—Charles R. Powell, Veterans for Peace ABQ Chapter

- “Nelson Mandela said, ‘Only free men can negotiate, prisoners can’t enter in contracts.’ In a memo to Thomas Friedman, he defined the choices: solidarity with Palestinians or the policies of Israel. ‘If you want peace and democracy, I will support you. If you want formal Apartheid, we will not support you. If you want to support racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing, we will oppose you.’”

—Rita Erickson, Friends of Sabeel Albuquerque