

I have spent my life advocating for Palestinians and Israelis to use nonviolent means to resolve their conflicts. I was expelled by the Israelis because they feared Palestinian unity and mass nonviolent action. I have personally advocated with Hamas leaders to abandon armed struggle and embrace nonviolent campaigns.

Palestinians and Israelis are killing each other today. I grieve for the unspeakable deaths in Palestine and Israel. I weep for the injured and the captured, particularly the children. In this century alone, until last week, more than 10,000 Palestinians and 1300 Israelis have been killed in the conflict. Why can't we stop this cycle of violence?

I urge Hamas and the Israeli government to agree to an immediate ceasefire, including an immediate halt to rocket attacks towards Israel and Israeli military attacks on Gaza. Each party must stop using violence and must commit to living and working with each other as neighbors. Human life and dignity are precious. Both sides should immediately release all hostages/captives. Vengeful attacks only deepen hatreds and mistrust. Here are some practical nonviolent steps:

For Palestinians: Stop the killing of Israelis. Welcome Israelis as neighbors and recognize their history. Keep struggling for equal rights. Work to end apartheid with Israelis even if you don't fully agree on all politics. And for heaven's sake, choose our leaders through regular elections.

For Israelis: Stop killing Palestinians. End the siege of Gaza. Reverse the land grabs in the West Bank and Jerusalem which breed hopelessness and outrage. End apartheid and stop seeking Jewish supremacy. Support a right of Palestinian return and reparations. Stop the pogroms and the threats to the Al Aqsa mosque. Immediately, reverse the cuts of water, fuel and food to Gaza.

For the International Media: Cover this conflict the way you would have liked to have seen slave rebellions and or anti-colonial massacres covered in previous centuries. Stop using the word "terrorists" to describe actors on either side. Both are motivated by perceptions of security and historical identity and are not simply trying to create fear, i.e. "terror", in the other.

For Americans: There is no military solution. Stop supplying weapons. Let's support Israelis and Palestinians equally. Show a positive example by improving our treatment of Native Americans and ending the vestiges of our domestic racial apartheid. And if you say you also like Palestinians, why don't you open up the immigration doors and allow millions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere to come to the US.

For the international community: The two-state solution, unfortunately, is no longer an option. Support solutions that provide equal rights to all peoples in the region. Keeping Gaza as an open-air prison is criminal and have it declared, as such, by international and political bodies. Provide humanitarian aid and denounce apartheid. Support the hundreds of civil society groups working for a just peace and co-resisting against apartheid.

Humanitarian Aid organizations: Urgent humanitarian action is needed, including the establishment of a humanitarian corridor inside and out of Gaza, for the safe movement of people and the delivery of essential supplies. This includes opening Erez and Kerem Shalom / Abu Salem crossings to allow for the movement of people and goods and remove the ban on access to the sea.

Soldiers and armed actors:

Don't cut another's life short. Don't cut your life short. Don't seek revenge. I applaud Israelis who are refusing military service to engage in a senseless attack on Gaza. Arms are for hugging, not for harming others. We can do this.

Mubarak Awad helped launch the 1st intifada and was exiled from Jerusalem by the Israeli government in 1988. He was Founder of the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence, Founder of the National Youth Advocate Program and Founder and current President of Nonviolence International.