

Letter to President George W. Bush on the Gaza Crisis

By [Ralph Nader](#)

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Region: [USA](#)
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Dear George W. Bush,

Congressman Barney Frank said recently that Barack Obama's declaration that "there is only one president at a time" over-estimated the number. He was referring to the economic crisis. But where are you on the Gaza crisis where the civilian population of Gaza, its civil servants and public facilities are being massacred and destroyed respectively by U.S built F-16s and U.S. built helicopter gunships.

The deliberate suspension of your power to stop this terrorizing of 1.5 million people, mostly refugees, blockaded for months by air, sea and land in their tiny slice of land, is in cowardly contrast to the position taken by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956. That year he single handedly stopped the British, French and Israeli aircraft attack against Egypt during the Suez Canal dispute.

Fatalities in Gaza are already over 400 and injuries close to 2000 so far as is known. Total Palestinian civilian casualties are 400 times greater than the casualties incurred by Israelis. But why should anyone be surprised at your blanket support for Israel's attack given what you have done to a far greater number of civilians in Iraq and now in Afghanistan?

Confirmed visual reports show that Israeli warplanes and warships have destroyed or severely damaged police stations, homes, hospitals, pharmacies, mosques, fishing boats, and a range of public facilities providing electricity and other necessities.

Why should this trouble you at all? It violates international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter. You too have repeatedly violated international law and committed serious constitutional transgressions.

Then there is the matter of the Israeli government blocking imports of critical medicines, equipment such as dialysis machines, fuel, food, water, spare parts and electricity at varying intensities for almost two years. The depleted UN aid mission there has called this illegal blockade a humanitarian crisis especially devastating to children, the aged and the infirm. Chronic malnutrition among children is rising rapidly. UN rations support eighty percent of this impoverished population.

How do these incontrovertible facts affect you? Do you have any empathy or what you have called Christian charity?

What would a vastly shrunken Texas turned in an encircled Gulag do up against the 4th

most powerful military in the world? Would these embattled Texans be spending their time chopping wood?

Gideon Levy, the veteran Israeli columnist for Ha'aretz, called the Israeli attack a "brutal and violent operation" far beyond what was needed for protecting the people in its south. He added: "The diplomatic efforts were just in the beginning, and I believe we could have got to a new truce without this bloodshed.....to send dozens of jets to bomb a total helpless civilian society with hundreds of bombs-just today, they were burying five sisters. I mean, this is unheard of. This cannot go on like this. And this has nothing to do with self-defense or with retaliation even. It went out of proportion, exactly like two-and-a-half years ago in Lebanon."

Apparently, thousands of Israelis, including some army reservists, who have demonstrated against this destruction of Gaza agree with Mr. Levy. However, their courageous stands have not reached the mass media in the U.S. whose own reporters cannot even get into Gaza due to Israeli prohibitions on the international press.

Your spokespeople are making much ado about the breaking of the six month truce. Who is the occupier? Who is the most powerful military force? Who controls and blocks the necessities of life? Who has sent raiding missions across the border most often? Who has sent artillery shells and missiles at close range into populated areas? Who has refused the repeated comprehensive peace offerings of the Arab countries issued in 2002 if Israel would agree to return to the 1967 borders and agree to the creation of a small independent Palestinian state possessing just twenty two percent of the original Palestine?

The "wildly inaccurate rockets", as reporters describe them, coming from Hamas and other groups cannot compare with the modern precision armaments and human damage generated from the Israeli side.

There are no rockets coming from the West Bank into Israel. Yet the Israeli government is still sending raiders into that essentially occupied territory, still further entrenching its colonial outposts, still taking water and land and increasing the checkpoints This is going on despite a most amenable West Bank leader, Mahmoud Abbas, whom you have met with at the White House and praised repeatedly. Is it all vague words and no real initiatives with you and your emissary Condoleezza Rice?

Peace was possible, but you provided no leadership, preferring instead to comply with all wishes and demands by the Israeli government-even resupplying it with the still active cluster bombs in south Lebanon during the invasion of that country in 2006.

The arguments about who started the latest hostilities go on and on with Israel always blaming the Palestinians to justify all kinds of violence and harsh treatment against innocent civilians.

From the Palestinian standpoint, you would do well to remember the origins of this conflict which was the dispossession of their lands. To afford you some empathy, recall the oft-quoted comment by the founder of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, who told the Zionist leader, Nahum Goldmann:

"There has been anti-Semitism the Nazis Hitler Auschwitz but was that their [the Palestinians] fault? They only see one thing: We have come here and stolen their country.

Why should they accept that?"

Alfred North Whitehead once said: "Duty arises out of the power to alter the course of events." By that standard, you have shirked mightily your duty over the past eight years to bring peace to both Palestinians and Israelis and more security to a good part of the world.

The least you can do in your remaining days at the White House is adopt a modest profile in courage, and vigorously demand and secure a ceasefire and a solidly based truce. Then your successor, President-elect Obama can inherit something more than the usual self-censoring Washington puppet show that eschews a proper focus on the national interests of the United States.

Sincerely,

Ralph Nader

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About the author:

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. He has founded many organizations including the Center for Study of Responsive Law, the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), the Center for Auto Safety, Public Citizen, Clean Water Action Project, the Disability Rights Center, the Pension Rights Center, the Project for Corporate Responsibility and The Multinational Monitor. Visit his website at <http://nader.org/>

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