



Mourning the Violence in Lebanon, Israel and Gaza; End the Violence NOW!

We of Women in Black-Frederick view the unfolding tragedy in the Middle East with moral and spiritual repugnance. The destruction of precious human lives must end immediately.

We add our voice to those around the world calling for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon, Israel and Gaza. We condemn all violent actions occurring there, whether in the form of terrorism, collective punishment, militarism, suicide bombings, and forcible displacement of populations. We especially lament the loss of civilian life in Lebanon, Gaza and Israel.

The Children are Dying:

Last week, a group of hospital workers in the ancient city of Tyre worked frantically to prepare 82 civilian bodies for burial in a mass grave. Twenty-three of the victims were in a pickup truck bombed by the Israelis, as they were fleeing to safety. All activity halted with a call for the smallest size of coffin, for a doll-size baby born after its mother was killed.

On the other side of the border, two Israeli Arab brothers ages 3 and 9, were killed by a Hezbollah rocket while they were playing outside. They were killed in Nazareth, where Jesus spent His boyhood.

According to the sacred writings of the major faiths involved in the conflict, God commanded Abraham **not** to sacrifice his son. Yet all the combatants in this conflict continue to place their own interests above the lives of children. Deplorably, the United States has chosen to block efforts in the U.N. to bring about an immediate ceasefire.

Pope Benedict, speaking recently at Auschwitz, said "Violence does not bring peace, but only brings more violence." The use of violence leads to a continuing cycle of violence and retaliation. Military action encourages future violence as hearts are hardened and voices of conciliation are shouted down.

The end of the centuries-old conflict in Ireland has shown the United States can help to bring about peace when it works impartially with all parties. Unfortunately, this approach has not been a part of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Indeed, for a variety of reasons the ability of the U.S. to play the role of "honest broker" in this conflict is compromised in the extreme. The conflict there will continue to devour lives and treasure and destabilize world security unless we are ready to try a new approach.

Calls to Action:

- We call upon the United States Government to act at the highest level to bring about an immediate ceasefire and to create an appropriate environment for negotiations.
- We call for the opening of humanitarian corridors in Lebanon to bring aid to those whose access to water, food, medicine, shelter, and other basic needs have been destroyed. We further call on the Government of Israel to re-open points of entry to the Gaza Strip and to allow the free flow of desperately needed food, medicines, and other humanitarian supplies.

- Together with international partners, we call for the U.S. Government to broker negotiations to peacefully resolve all aspects of the crisis, particularly those rooted in injustice and a lack of basic security for all of the populations of the region.
- We call for all countries, including the United States, to stop sales and transfers of arms to the region.
- We call for the leaders of Hezbollah and Hamas to end their missile bombardments of Israeli civilians.
- We call for the Government of Israel to cease immediately its attacks on Lebanon and to pull its forces out of Gaza.
- We call on the U.S. Government and the world community to work toward a just and enduring peace in the region based on the even-handed application of international law.

We affirm the courage of those who daily face the devastation of war. We stand with the people who will live to endure war's physical and psychological damage. We affirm the right of all people in the region to live in peace and security.

Neither Israel's sustained attacks against civilian populations in Gaza and Lebanon, nor Hezbollah's rocket attacks against civilian targets in Israel, can be justified on the grounds of self-defense. The violence must end immediately and unconditionally.

It is imperative that the international community responds immediately to this growing humanitarian crisis regardless of what position we each come from about who and what is responsible for its start. Each day this goes on makes resolution more difficult and compounds the problems to be overcome. We call on the international community and U.S. citizens in particular to respond to the moral center of this tragedy, and speak out for those innocents who are dying. *We join over 60 sister vigils in Israel, the U.S. and all around the world in our call for an immediate end to the violence on all sides.*

Learn what some of the many Social Justice, Human Rights and Religious Groups who have spoken out are saying:

American Friends Service Committee: <http://www.afsc.org/news/2006/appeal-for-those-who-suffer.htm>

Amnesty International: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/>

Friends Committee on National Legislation: <http://www.fcnl.org/index.htm>

Jewish Voices for Peace: http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/publish/article_666.shtml

Sojourners: <http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=sojomail.display&issue=060720#2>

The Tikkun Community: <http://www.spiritualprogressives.org/>

United for Peace and Justice: <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/>

The Vatican: <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=45335>

World Council of Churches: <http://world.christianpost.com/article/20060715/22983.htm>

Take Action; Contact your government:

House Resolution 450 (HCON 450 IH) calls for President to press for immediate cease fire:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:H.CON.RES.450>:

Congressman Bartlett at: <http://www.bartlett.house.gov/> (202) 225-2721; (888) 297-8006.

Senator Mikulski: <http://www.mikulski.senate.gov/mailform.html> (202) 224-4654;

Senator Sarbanes: <http://www.sarbanes.senate.gov/pages/email.htm> (202) 224-4524.

President George Bush: comments@whitehouse.gov

About Women in Black:



All around the world, Women In Black stand in silent vigil, wearing black as a symbol of mourning, for the ravages of war and violence. WIB is an international grassroots movement of women united in their commitment to peace, restorative justice, human rights and nonviolence. WIB vigils are now present in 40 countries, and in 38 US states. The vigils are a public statement that violence and oppression, under any label, are unacceptable. **Vigil Schedule:** All are welcome; please wear black. **Third Wednesday**, intersection of Market and Patrick Streets in Frederick from 6:30 – 7 pm, and the **first Friday** of every month, 12 - 12:30 pm, at War Memorial Park, W 2d and N. Bentz Streets. For more information about Women in Black Frederick, MD. see www.wibfrederick.org **Email:** info@wibfrederick.org or call 301/834-7581.