

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK

TWO ISRAELI LIES ABOUT THE ASSAULT ON GAZA

The Israeli attack on Gaza, using U.S.-supplied weapons paid for with our tax dollars, has killed over 600 and wounded close to 3,000. Four Israelis have been killed by Hamas rocket fire. Israel has made several false claims in defense of its attack. Two of these are:

Lie #1: Hamas violated the truce and Israel's assault is designed to end the rocket attacks.

Hamas is a Palestinian political party that won the June 2006 election. It has a military wing which ceased its activities well before the election. But soon after, Israel imposed severe restrictions on delivery of food, medicine and fuel to Gaza with an intermittent blockade, and the Israeli military assassinated officials of this democratically elected government with air-to-ground missiles. Hamas retaliated by firing homemade rockets which reached nearby Israeli towns terrorizing the inhabitants.

During this period, Hamas repeatedly offered to negotiate a permanent truce with Israel. A truce was finally agreed upon in June 2008 under which Hamas was to stop the rocket attacks and Israel was supposed to end its blockade. According to the New York Times, Hamas was ³largely successful² in stopping the rockets, although some were launched by groups other than Hamas. However, Israel refused to ease its blockade and, in early November, sealed all of Gaza's borders and launched an attack that killed six Palestinians, effectively ending the truce.

Lie #2: Israel is only targeting military sites and seeks to protect innocent civilians.

The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places in the world. The presence of militants within a civilian population does not, under international law, deprive that population of their protected status, and hence any assault on that population, under the guise of targeting militants, is a war crime. Israel warned Gazans to leave the area prior to its assault, but there was no way to escape--the borders were sealed. The Israeli military has targeted schools (including those run by the U.N.), mosques, residential buildings, police stations, a prison, ambulances, a university and a hospital. It is expected that many of the seriously wounded will die due to lack of hospital facilities, personnel and medical supplies. This is not protection. It is criminal collective punishment.

Join us at the Grand Lake Theater every Saturday at noon to register your protest and your presence as we continue to urge the end of the US military and financial support for Israel's disastrous occupation.

The group with flags and signs supporting Israel is the San Francisco Voice for Israel, a local group who oppose Bay Area Women in Black 's criticism of the policies of the Israeli government and military. BAWIB is not anti-Israel. BAWIB believes Israel's occupation is wrong and deprives Palestinians of basic human rights. BAWIB calls for the end of the occupation and its violent effects on Israelis and Palestinians. The flyers distributed by Voice for Israel do not accurately reflect BAWIB.