

The Muslim Observer



We Stand Together for Peace in Face of War

November 21, 2012 by [TMO](#)

By: Lara Khadr, Shahar Ben-Josef, Sarah Jaward, Jeff Lockwood, Abbeygail Epelman, Jacob Smith, John McDowell, Rachel Kaminsky, Brian Merlos, Rashid Beydoun, Hamzah Latif, MollyManly, Ariana Segal

As young Americans – Arab and Israeli, Christian, Jewish and Muslim – who are concerned and committed to transforming the all-encompassing Arab-Jewish conflict, our feelings of helplessness associated with current events in Israel-Palestine is overwhelming. Our feelings of guilt, shame, and utter horror boil beneath the surface as news and social media buzz with updates about death tolls and stances taken by world leaders. We are young adults who want to “walk a path where there are no footprints.” As graduates of the Tectonic Leadership Program, we seek to alter the course of human interactions by introducing people to new ways to dialogue effectively across dividing lines. Our relationships are built on the idea of allyhood. As Tectonic Leaders, we strive to care about “the other” as much as we care about “our own”, and we seek to utilize tension to find new solutions by developing deeper understandings of ourselves each other.

The escalation of violence in Israel and Gaza in the past week is part of a seemingly never-ending cycle that apparently, we should be accustomed to. We must ask: what is achieved through violence? The deaths of innocent civilians, whether they be Israeli or Palestinian, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, will not lead the politicians to concede, nor will it in any way change the status quo. One of the greatest barriers to transforming the Arab-Israeli conflict is paranoia; there is a multitude of Israeli and Palestinian civilians who live in fear and are being conditioned to hate each and every day.

At first glance, it seems obvious and easy to blame the politicians for the war that they have started. But we must remember that we elected these politicians, we gave them our trust and our support, and it is up to us to tell them that we do not support these actions. It is easy to argue that while innocent Israelis and Palestinians pay the price of the uptake in violence, the politicians

continue to define their strength by their willingness to “protect” their people by launching attacks on “the other” and by promulgating hate. Easier still to believe that politicians focus only on maintaining the survival of their people, but not on evolution and progression to ameliorate their people’s well-being. We must ask our politicians to be truly strong and courageous, to face peace negotiations with open hearts and open minds, and with a willingness to make real compromise by caring equally for the social, political, and economic welfare of “the other” as much as they do for themselves.

Now is the time for us to change this thinking that has dominated the discourse surrounding the Arab-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts for decades. Blaming politicians and justifying or legitimizing acts of violence is an automatic response. No one wants to think that “their people” did anything wrong, and everyone views “their own” as the true victim. The common man feels powerless. But it is time to move past this way of thinking. While there is great power in advocating for one side or the other and it may seem intuitive to do so, there is also great limitation in focusing all of one’s energies and attention on who is right and who is wrong. In order to move forward, we must look past our differences and embrace our common humanity.

Together, as Tectonic Leaders, we recognize the horrendous impact of persistent rocket attacks and grueling air strikes, because those who bear the brunt of the violence, death, and destruction, are innocent. As Arabs, Israelis, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Americans, and most importantly, as human beings, we call for an immediate end to this round of violence. Together, we can create change, and now, more than ever, we must stand together.

Standing for peace in a time of war is the only true test of courage. We stand for peace. We ask you to join us.

For more information, see tectonicleadership.org.

14-48

Related posts brought to you by [Yet Another Related Posts Plugin](#).

Filed Under: [*The Muslim Observer](#), [14-48](#), [Community News](#), [Culture](#), [International](#), [MMN News Services](#), [Opinion](#), [Organizations](#), [Regional](#), [SE Michigan](#), [Volume 14](#)

Tagged: