



September 10, 2024

Colonel Chad Holesko, Commanding Officer
180th Fighter Wing
Ohio Air National Guard

Dear Colonel Holesko:

Three weeks ago, 14 U.S. air bases and two aircraft carriers in the Middle East were put on standby to provide air defense for Israel, including F-16s. U.S. personnel and planes were prepared to go to war to protect Israel from a counterattack by Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah in retaliation for Israel's assassination of a major Hamas negotiator on Iranian soil, and an important Hezbollah leader in Beirut.

We are here today for two reasons:

1. To inform you that the U.S. government, including the Departments of State and Defense, is in violation of several Federal statutes by supporting the Israeli military. The attached [letter from Veterans For Peace](#) carefully documents these laws and describes how they are being broken. Israel is committing genocidal mass murder against Palestine, using U.S. weapons, planes, and munitions unlawfully being provided by the State Department, which systematically ignores evidence of genocide and war crimes being committed by Israel.
2. To perform our duty as citizens to see that these laws are enforced, since the authorities charged with doing so have demonstrated they will not. We are peacefully using our bodies to block ingress and egress from this base to stop the U.S. from aiding and abetting genocide.

Israel has killed from 50,000 to 200,000 Palestinians in a continuing genocide in the Gaza Strip. And now the Israeli military is invading the West Bank, killing and injuring hundreds more Palestinians. Israeli cabinet ministers are howling for an all-out invasion of Lebanon to vanquish Hezbollah.

The U.S. has pledged repeatedly to defend Israel. But "defending Israel" means that our F-16s and pilots protect Israel's nonstop offensive war of mass murder and scorched earth in

Palestine (using their F-16s). The U.S. government and military are serving as accomplices in committing the international crime of genocide, the intentional extermination of Palestinians and ejecting them to confiscate their lands. The U.S. “defense” of Israel also empowers Israel to attack Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

If the Israeli government has its way, the U.S. will be sucked into a war with Iran. Since Russia and China are allies of Iran, U.S. offensives could ignite a regional war that will pull them in as well. A regional war will increase the chances that Israel, Russia and the United States might use nuclear weapons.

The only way to prevent the Middle East firestorm Israel wants is to remove the U.S. military from Israel’s plans. All U.S. military planes, including the F-16s of the Ohio Air National Guard, must be stood down from the Israeli Genocide. The fates of our pilots and indeed the fate of the world must not be put at risk for Israel’s terrible military misjudgments.

Our public officials charged with enforcing these laws have chosen not to, so we are resorting to the time-honored method of nonviolent resistance to prevent a much greater harm, in this case the ongoing genocide in Palestine and the very real threat of a war that would end life on our planet.

The People demand: No U.S. defense of the Israeli Genocide!

Sincerely,
Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition

By
Terry Lodge, Co-Convenor

Veterans For Peace

By 
Mike Ferner, Special Projects Director