

PRESS RELEASE:May 8th, 2008**CONTACTS:**

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Hi-Res Photos/Video Available

**20 Jewish Activists Arrested, Disrupting Jewish Community Relations
Council's (JCRC) 60th Anniversary of Israel Celebration**
Jewish Activists Draw Attention to 60 years of Palestinian Forced Exile and Dispossession

San Francisco—In response to Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations, 20 Jewish activists were arrested, demonstrating Jewish opposition to Israel's 60 year-old policy of dispossession, and highlighting the often-silenced struggle of Palestinian refugees. For over two hours, 20 Jewish activists disrupted San Francisco's anniversary event, occupying the main atrium of the Jewish Community Center (JCC). In conjunction, over fifty Jewish and Palestinian supporters held a rally outside the center to call attention to ongoing Israeli policy of apartheid against the Palestinian population. With banners reading, "Jews in Solidarity with 60+ years of Palestinian Resistance," activists declared the anniversary "No Time to Celebrate."

"The dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza is a brutal example of Israel's long history of ethnic cleansing and collective punishment against Palestinians," said Sara Kershner, an anti-Zionist Jewish activist who was arrested. "We are here today to condemn the JCRC's celebration of this history along with unconditional economic and political support for Israeli policy."

The action in San Francisco, organized by local activists from the International Jewish Solidarity Network, is part of "No Time to Celebrate," a national Jewish campaign opposing Israel's 60th Anniversary celebrations, while simultaneously amplifying the American Jewish community's critique of Israeli policy. The Israeli Consulate and the Jewish Community and Relations Council (JCRC), who have attempted to silence any and all criticism of Israeli policy, were the sponsors of this event.

"As Jews of conscience, acting in solidarity with 60-plus years of Palestinian resistance, we're here today to promote an 'Independence' that does not depend on an ethnically or religiously exclusive state or on the displacement of indigenous people," said Eric Romann, IJSN organizer. "What we want is joint liberation, not isolation."

Throughout the month of May, Jewish organizations in cities across the U.S. and Canada are sponsoring celebrations of "Israeli Independence Day." Simultaneously, Palestinians around the world are mourning 60 years since the Nakba—Arabic for the "catastrophe"—of 1948, when Zionist militias destroyed and depopulated over 400 Palestinian villages and caused over than 725,000 Palestinians to become refugees in order to create the Israeli state¹.

Today, there are over 4.5 million registered Palestinian refugees, and more than one million not registered, scattered throughout the world². These Palestinian refugees are still awaiting the implementation of international law allowing the Right to Return to their homeland. The majority of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, descendants of those refugees who fled their homes and villages in 1948, are subject to Israel's crushing blockade and are undergoing intolerable living conditions. Israel's policies of preferential laws and treatment for Israeli-Jews—not Palestinian Israelis—within Israel-proper, and military impunity for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are reflective of a long history of horrific discrimination.

For more information about this campaign and other actions, please visit www.notimetocelbrate.org.

¹ United Nations Conciliation Commission, 1949

² UNRWA, December 2006