

Cease-fire is needed in Gaza

GUEST COLUMN

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Veterans For Peace is an organization of former soldiers and allies who know too well the costs of war — the obvious, visible wounds; the unseen wounds that curse us and our families for generations; and the cost to society of maintaining a military larger than the next seven nations combined. Bitter experience taught us that war is insanity and suffering.

We call for an immediate cease-fire, release of prisoners and hostages, and unimpeded humanitarian aid for Gaza.

We oppose all targeting of civilians. We deplore Israel's crushing response to the unjustifiable Hamas attacks on Israel on Oct. 7. We also recognize this breach of peace did not start on Oct. 7. It has gone on for decades. Over \$150 billion of our tax dollars have provided Israel unlimited weaponry, and diplomatic cover has allowed it to expand its occupation.

Our government fans the flames beneath the pressure cooker of occupation and our taxes make us complicit. We should not be shocked at a violent response after Palestinian homes are destroyed to make way for Israeli "settlers" and Gaza is locked down, year after year, by a draconian air, sea and land blockade. This cycle of violence, coupled with the reality that war is an uncontrollable force with its own agency and purposes, results in the terrors we witness.

Neither side has a military path to victory. Only a political process will answer the grievances of the Palestinian people, create a democratic system that provides rights for all the people of Israel and Palestine, and finally bring lasting security and peace. Without that political process, the cycle of violence will magnify, dooming more generations of Israelis and Palestinians.

Put aside, for a moment, the hideous inhumanities dealt to Jews and Palestinians over the past days, weeks, years, and decades. Focus on the suffering of today, with over 30,000 Gazans killed, with 85 percent of the population displaced, with starvation and disease rampant. We must, as Pope Francis said on Dec.

25, deplore "the appalling harvest of innocent civilians." Allow your human sensibilities to be outraged as U.S. planes, bombs and shells, gifts from the U.S. taxpayer to Israel, are being used to massacre civilians.

Then proceed to do everything you can to end hate and wage peace here at home. A place to start is to go to [whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov), scroll to the bottom where it says "contact," and send your message to President Biden.

Veterans for Peace include: Ed Flaherty, Iowa City; John Jadryev, Iowa City; David Hempel, Iowa City; Robert Mueller, Mt. Pleasant; Art Roche, Dubuque; Ross Porch, Iowa City; Mike Finley, Iowa City; John Ivens, Chrystal River, Fla.; Mary Martin, Boyce, Va.; Louis DeGrazia, Iowa City; Kathy McGowan, Iowa City; David Quegg, Iowa City; Pamela Fitzgerald, Iowa City; Gordon Goldsmith, Iowa City; Jerry Bloomer, Burlington; Frank Potter, Dubuque; Patrick Cummings, Davenport; Dennis Bricker, Iowa City; Harold Frakes, Brighton; Robert Fischer, Decorah; David Martin, Iowa City; Jim Laughlin, West Branch; Sam Bakken, Iowa City; Pat Bowen, Iowa City; John Fyotek, Iowa City; Joe Michaud, Iowa City; and Matt Erickson, Davenport.

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