

PRESS RELEASE

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Northampton area residents to undertake fast for Palestine, calling for a permanent ceasefire and enforcement of the Leahy law

Calling on their neighbors and friends to join them, a coalition of Northampton peace activists have initiated a fast, starting December 12, 2023, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., which will be maintained until all of the area's elected officials support two main demands:

1. A permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the West Bank.
2. Enforcement by the President and Congress of the Leahy Law with respect to the Israel Defense Forces. This law prohibits shipment of U.S. weapons to gross violators of human rights.

The fast involves drinking water or juice during the fasting hours and eating light meals in the morning and evening before and after the fasting hours.

Area residents are urged to call their elected representatives to let them know of the fast and the demands.

Commenting on the purpose of the fast, Peter Kakos said: "To maintain their credibility as guardians of public well-being, all of our elected officials must take a public position in support of these two demands, both of which are essential to stop the slaughter of Palestinian people."

Below is the list of elected officials who will be contacted throughout the duration of the fast:

Mayor of Northampton – Gina-Louise Sciarra – (413) 587-1249
Northampton City Council President – Jim Nash – (413) 582-0637
Massachusetts State Senator - Jo Comerford – (413) 367-4656
Massachusetts State Representative Lindsay Sadoski – (413) 270-1166
U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern – (413) 341-8700 (Cong. McGovern has called for a ceasefire.)
U.S. Congressman Richard Neal – (413) 785-0325
U.S. Senator Ed Markey – (413) 785-4610
U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren – (413) 788-2690
President Joe Biden – (202) 456-1111

Nick Mottern, an organizer of the fast and the coordinator of BanKillerDrones.org in Northampton commented on the impact of Josh Paul's assessment of U.S. compliance with the Leahy law:

“On October 18, 2023, Josh Paul resigned from his U.S. State Department post in which he shared responsibility for approving U.S. weapons transfers, saying that weapons transfers to Israel for its current assault against Palestinians are “short-sighted, destructive and unjust.”

Mr. Paul also said [\[KK1\]](#) : further: ‘There is a Leahy vetting process for Israel. It has never found an Israeli unit to be guilty of gross violations of human rights. It’s a broken system.’”

Since, the October 7, 2023 attack in which the Israeli government has announced 1,200 of its citizens were killed, Israeli military attacks, fully supported by the United States politically and with U.S. weapons, have killed more than 18,000 Palestinians. According to Palestinian officials, 70 percent of those killed are women and children.

In addition, more than two million Gazans are living in fear of instant death or slowly dying from starvation, disease, lack of medical care, lack of housing, lack of sanitary facilities and lack of protection against the rain and cold of winter.

Participants in the fast also call on people owning stock in L3Harris, which has a plant in Northampton, to sell that stock and/or call for divestment in it because of L3Harris’s provision of equipment to the Israeli Defense Forces.

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