



## Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel

Peace & Justice Center, 60 Lake Street, Burlington, VT 05401

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Dear Margaret Atwood,

3 April, 2010

We are writing to you as American citizens who share grave concerns about the ongoing refusal of the Government of Israel to comply with basic principles of justice and international law. Today, as for decades, Palestinians are being pushed off their lands. The world watches as their homes are demolished, their olive groves uprooted and they are forced to live in squalid conditions without access to clean water, food, medical care, and school supplies, cut off from family and community by hideous concrete walls like animals in a pen. The brutal siege and ongoing inhumane blockade of Gaza, with a population of 1.5 million people, more than half of whom are children, has been condemned by the UN and governments around the world. Using the never-ending "peace process" as a front, the Israeli government has succeeded in creating ever more invasive facts on the ground which prevent a just solution for Palestinians, and a secure future for Israelis and the world.

As a writer you have consistently explored issues of colonization and structures of political power and oppression. How then can you reconcile accepting a prize from a country whose government has consistently oppressed its non-Jewish citizens, denied them equal rights under its own laws, and ruled over 3.5 million Palestinians under military occupation for more than four decades?

We urge you to support the academic, cultural and economic boycott of Israel and Israeli institutions and refuse to accept the Dan David prize. The Israeli government and its citizens, many of whom continue to close their eyes to the plight of the people they oppress, need to see that citizens of the world will no longer accept the status quo.

We believe, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu said while resisting apartheid in South Africa, that "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." It is of great importance when people of conscience and stature stand up to oppression. We sincerely hope that you will stand up for justice, and for the people of Palestine, and refuse to accept the Dan David Prize.

Thank you,

Muhaideen Batah  
Mark Hage  
Mark Estrin  
Katharine Shapiro  
Miriam Ward  
Marmete Hayes  
James Brooks  
Lauren Kael  
Jean Archibald  
Debra Stoleroff

Helen and Jules Rabin  
Carolyn and Andrew  
Shapiro  
Anita Rapone  
The Rev. Frederick K.  
Neu  
Nancy Farrell  
David Symons  
S'ra DeSantis  
Nina Parris

Robert Green  
Hilary Martin  
Peter Lackowski  
Kristen Peterson-Ishaq  
and Mousa Ishaq  
Richard Steen  
Sam Mayfield

*Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel*