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### 1. Who We Are

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) is a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the Israeli apartheid in Palestine by using nonviolent, direct-action methods and principles. Founded by a small group of primarily Palestinian and Israeli activists in August, 2001, ISM aims to support and strengthen the Palestinian popular resistance by providing the Palestinian people with two resources, international solidarity and an international voice with which to nonviolently resist an overwhelming military occupation force.

### 2. Why ISM?

Apartheid is not going to be defeated by words alone; occupation, oppression and domination are going to be dismantled the same way they were erected — through people's action. The Israeli army and apartheid in Palestine can be defeated by strategic, disciplined unarmed resistance, utilizing the effective resources Palestinians can mobilize — including international participation.

Palestinian-led, non-violent demonstrations against land confiscation are gathering momentum, and tripled in number since the beginning of 2010. Currently ISM supports demonstrations in approximately ten villages, including An Nabi Saleh, Al Ma'asara and Iraq Burin. Previously, ISM supported demonstrations in the villages of Budrus and Biddu. In these villages, peaceful community marches have succeeded in altering the Wall's path and even stopping Wall construction.

International participation in Palestinian-led non-violent resistance is important for a number of reasons:

1. Message to the global mainstream media: The Palestinian struggle is not accurately reported by the mainstream corporate media. Israelis and Palestinians are portrayed as two equal sides which can't live together, fighting over a piece of land. In reality, Israel's apartheid regime challenges Palestine's right to exist, and is met with a Palestinian struggle for freedom, self-determination and human rights. It is the responsibility of the international community to demand accurate reporting.

2. Personal witness and transmitting information: International presence alone can offer relief of day-to-day harassment and violence, especially when documenting with cameras, etc. International civilians joining Palestinians can bear witness and return home to talk to their communities about what is happening.

3. Break isolation and offer hope: The apartheid isolates Palestinians and cuts them off from the rest of the world and from each other. The presence of international citizens

sends a message to the Palestinian community – “we see, we hear and we are with you.” The belief that non-violent direct action can successfully challenge the apartheid is a cornerstone of our philosophy and message.

Internationals with the ISM are not in Palestine to teach nonviolent resistance. Palestinians resist nonviolently every day. The ISM lends support to the Palestinian resistance to the apartheid and their demand for freedom through the following activities:

- Direct Action – participating in nonviolent demonstrations, disrupting construction of the illegal apartheid wall, accompanying farmers to their fields and residing with or near families whose homes are threatened with eviction or demolition.

- Documentation – documenting and reporting to local and international media about the daily life under apartheid and countless human rights and international law violations by the Israeli military. The need for documentation is not just to show that there are illegal and unjust actions going on, but also to provide a real means of evidence for accountability to the police and courts, case by case.

### **3. Get Involved**

ISM offers many ways for you to get involved in the struggle for Palestinian freedom. Whether you're thinking of traveling to Palestine to work with us, or you'd like to work to educate your community about the reality in Palestine, we welcome your involvement. Please visit the websites of the support group nearest to you. Links to our international support groups are found to the left, and on the contact page.

If you would like to get information and updates from us, please send an email to: [palsolidarity-subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:palsolidarity-subscribe@googlegroups.com)

### **4. Volunteer in Gaza with the ISM**

9 December 2011 | International Solidarity Movement, Gaza

The International Solidarity Movement is appealing for activists to join our team in the besieged Gaza Strip. After being barred from Gaza in 2003 following the murders of Rachel Corrie and Tom Hurndall, ISM Gaza was reinstated in August 2008 when ISM and other volunteers traveled aboard the historic, siege-breaking voyage of the first Free Gaza Movement boat. ISM has maintained a constant presence in Gaza since that time, for over three years of Israel's crippling siege.

ISM volunteers refused to leave when Israel began bombing Gaza in December 2008. During the devastating 23-day assault, activists accompanied ambulances and provided vital testimony to the international media.

Daily life in Gaza is a harrowing struggle. In stark violation of international law, Israel enforces a three-nautical-mile fishing blockade. The Israeli-imposed 'buffer zone' swallows up a third of Gaza's farmland, which lies along the Israeli border. Farmers are routinely shot and killed simply for working their land well inside Gaza's borders.

ISM Gaza volunteers accompany farmers and demonstrators in the 'buffer zone', as well as fishermen routinely harassed by the Israeli navy.

Visit [www.palsolidarity.org/category/gaza](http://www.palsolidarity.org/category/gaza) to watch videos and read reports by ISM Gaza.

Those interested in joining the ISM Gaza team are required to attend a preliminary training in their home country and must communicate with the volunteers in Gaza prior to arrival. Entering Gaza is an arduous process that may require some time to be spent in Egypt. All ISM volunteers in Gaza must agree to ISM principles as delineated on [palsolidarity.org](http://palsolidarity.org).

Also recommended:

- Previous experience in the West Bank with the ISM strongly encouraged; if not, experience with nonviolent direct action, preferably elsewhere in the Middle East
- A historical understanding of Palestine and some knowledge of the current political situation
- Arabic language skills highly recommended; if not English is necessary
- Cultural sensitivity
- Ability to stay in Gaza for an extended period of time (over a month)
- High degree of independence and self-sufficiency
- Ability to do deal with protracted stressful situations
- Experience with consensus-based decision-making

For more information about where to attend a preliminary training or other questions, please email [gazaism@gmail.com](mailto:gazaism@gmail.com).

## 5. ISM turns ten

7 January 2012 | International Solidarity Movement- Northern California

As one of the co-founders of the International solidarity movement (ISM) I often refer to ISM as my first baby. Well, my first baby is now an independent unruly and uncontrollable ten-year-old and I am one proud Mama. But I am one of ISM's many proud Mamas (some of whom are male). For a movement to come into existence it needs to be a vision shared by hundreds or thousands of people who find an opportunity to come together and make it happen. In truth ISM has hundreds of co-founders, and only few of us have been acknowledged.



Neta Golan and daughter

There is a word in Arabic, Nawal, that means a deep wish that is fulfilled. ISM is one of my Nawals and I am proud and grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in its birth. Now, more than ten years later it is obvious that ISM has a life of its own, independent from any of us that were involved in its beginning. This is the one of the sources of my pride in the movement and there are many. I would like to name a few:

Those of us who were involved in the birth of the movement know that we were making it up as we went along. We still are! ISM is constantly changing, adjusting and reinventing itself. In the first official ISM campaign in 2001 we had a small group of about 30 activists from around the globe and a forty person Italian activist delegation organized by the legendary Luisa Morgentini. Among us we were blessed to have Linda Bevis and Ed Mast from Seattle who had been involved in the then flowering global justice movement. Our mentors from the Christian Peace Makers Team that included Le Anne Clausen and Rick Polhamus coached us in the principles of consensus decision making. Linda and Ed made sure to show us how to apply those principles to all levels of our organizing and decisions taken during the campaign.

The flat, non-hierarchical structure that we adopted early on has proven to be key in the movement's growth and survival. The Israeli authorities have tried to chop off ISM's head several times by imprisoning, deporting and denying entry to people they consider leaders of our movement. They seem unable to understand that our movement does not have leaders.

We of course do have experienced and inspiring activists but from the outset in ISM being a hero on the field, or in your field, did not make you a leader, and when it came to making decisions everyone had to sit through the meetings with everyone else or accept the group's decision. We do still occasionally face problems when people translate their role or position in the movement into power over others, but I am happy to say that ISMers generally don't put up with that for very long.

As ISM has matured, more often than not, the principle of non-hierarchy is applied and we enjoy a working environment free (or almost free) of power struggles. This structure and the flexibility that it has afforded us has not only allowed us to weather the frequent turn over that results from the occupation's policy of denial of access, it has also made ISM a structure of empowerment for the thousands of activists who have worked with and through ISM.

ISM's mandate is that of a supporting participant in the Palestinian struggle against colonialism and Apartheid

The other element in ISM that I am proud of is our principle of being Palestinian led. Ghassan Andoni, another one of ISM's co-founders set this principle out as an essential condition for our work from day 1. This principle may sound like a contradiction to some since I just said that in ISM we do not have leaders. But being Palestinian led does NOT mean that we have Palestinian leaders. What it does mean is that ISM's mandate is that of a supporting participant in the Palestinian struggle against colonialism and Apartheid.

The Palestinian people have been engaged in popular struggle since the colonization of Palestine began. Palestinians do not need anyone to tell them what to do, teach them how to do it or to save them but often, they do need our support – and that is what ISM is here for. The call from the Palestinian activists to us has never been clearer. We are called on to engage in and promote Boycott Divestment and Sanctions of Israel (BDS) and to counter Israel's attempts to isolate the Palestinian people by breaking the siege and coming to Palestine via water, air and land. The siege has taken its most brutal form in the besieged Gaza strip but it exists in a less complete version in the West bank, to which access is severely limited. While in Palestine we are invited to witness and to join in Palestinian popular protest and to carry Palestine's message back to our home countries.

As I write these words the Arab revolutions and the Occupy Wall Street movements are once again proving the potential of leaderless mass mobilization. It saddens me that in the global solidarity movement with Palestine, some experienced activists, some of whom grew up as activists in ISM, disregard these principles and have fallen back on the old fashioned vertical politics of top-down coalitions, charismatic leaders, and a version of professional activism where experience is used as a tool to withhold power rather than something we have a responsibility to share with others.

The last principle I will mention that ISM is organized around is that we participate in non-violent popular struggle – a form of resistance in which every one and not just a select trained and armed group of people can engage. We did not invent any of these principles. But we were fortunate and smart enough to learn and adopt them and by doing so ISM has set a standard and an example of what solidarity can be.

Neta Golan, an Israeli citizen and a founder of ISM, lives in the West Bank town of Ramallah with her Palestinian husband and three daughters – an illegal act under Israeli apartheid law.

## **6. Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is the ISM position on suicide bombings?
2. Does ISM protect terrorists?
3. What is the ISM doing to protect Israeli civilians?
4. Is the ISM affiliated with any political party?
5. Does the ISM support suicide bombers and terrorists? You have a statement on your website that says that, don't you?
6. But wasn't Tom Hurndall, one of your members, carrying a gun when he got shot?
7. What about Rachel Corrie? Wasn't she killed while trying to protect a house with a tunnel in it used to smuggle arms to terrorists?
8. On your website, you give advice to volunteers on how to lie to the Israeli authorities so you can get into the country and the occupied areas. Why tell lies?
9. Why don't you try and protect innocent Israelis from terrorist attacks? Why don't you protect buses and cafes in Israel which are often the targets of suicide bombers?
10. You're just anti-Semitic, aren't you?
11. Is it true that ISM volunteers were photographed holding guns and posing with members of armed resistance groups?

### **What is the ISM position on suicide bombings?**

Attacks on innocent civilians, be they Israeli or Palestinian, are forbidden under most understandings of international law and ISM seeks nothing more for Israelis and Palestinians than the implementation of international law. We oppose the tactic of suicide bombings, especially those that have been carried out against civilian targets. We don't however think that it is a more brutal tactic than dropping a bomb from a fighter plane on a civilian-occupied apartment building, firing a tank shell down a crowded city street, or placing dynamite in a family home. They are all brutal and repulsive acts.

But besides stopping Israeli and Palestinian attacks on innocent civilians, compliance with international law requires ending a long list of Israeli violations, starting with Israel's military occupation of Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, and including the occupation's cornerstones: construction of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories, seizure and destruction of Palestinian land and homes, restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement within the Occupied Territories with checkpoints, road blocks and curfews, denial of Palestinian rights to health, education and employment, arbitrary detention and multiple forms of collective punishment.

In order to stop attacks on Israeli civilians, we must look at the source of violence and address that, instead of arguing about whether one act of violence is worse than another. We need to treat the disease of all the violence and not just one of its symptoms. Occupation forces and policies are degrading and dehumanizing; they injure, kill the soul and make life near impossible for Palestinians, and all this even when the Israeli army is not actively attacking (i.e. carrying out operations in Palestinian villages, towns and cities).

That some Palestinians have turned themselves into weapons is not something inherent to Palestinians or Muslims. Rather, it is a tragic weapon of those who have nothing else to fight with. This does not justify the action. The ISM maintains that all military tactics should be stopped by all sides in favor of nonviolent alternatives. Most importantly, we've concluded from experience that as long as the occupation continues and the Palestinian

people are denied freedom, human rights and self-determination, there will be those who will use violence against the underlying, systematic and foundational violence of the occupation.

The Palestinian community is almost completely united its call for an end to violence on all sides, starting with an end to occupation. The ISM joins the broader Palestinian community in this call.

The ISM seeks to bring about an end to violence by actively resisting the occupation through nonviolent means. The Israeli government has long worked to crush peaceful resistance, making it very difficult for Palestinians to act nonviolently on a large scale. We're working to develop an alternate way of resisting – nonviolently- that can be effective. We will continue and we invite you to join us.

### **Does ISM protect terrorists?**

Those who wish to silence our voices have accused the ISM of "harboring and protecting terrorists." "The Israeli government has worked to make every Palestinian man, woman and child out to be a suspected "terrorist" "This is the Israeli government's justification for the brutal force it has been using against a largely unarmed population. It is the rationale for using collective punishment, for keeping Palestinians locked up in their towns and villages, and for stripping people of their human rights. The ISM supports Palestinian communities in protesting collective punishments such as checkpoints, roadblocks, massive round-ups, curfews and home demolitions, and encourages popular nonviolent actions against them. For this reason, volunteers with the ISM are falsely accused of "protecting terrorists." "

There are two specific incidents which are often cited in attempts to discredit the ISM:

1. The arrest of Shadi Sukia.

2. The visit paid to the ISM office in Rafah by two British citizens who later carried out an attack in Tel Aviv.

The first incident occurred on March 27th 2003. Jenin had been placed under a military curfew for several days. Israeli military patrols were arresting people on site regardless of their reason for being out of their homes. 23-year-old Shadi Sukiya appeared at the ISM office in Jenin in the middle of the night. He was soaking wet, shivering and terrified. The ISM members present did not speak sufficient Arabic and Sukiya spoke no English. He was given a change of clothes, a hot drink and a blanket.

Soon afterward Israeli soldiers entered the building and arrested Sukiya. The soldiers that entered the ISM office systematically damaged much of the personal belongings of the ISM volunteers there. Despite later claims that they had been in a dangerous situation, the soldiers took the time to pile the volunteers' clothing on the floor and break raw eggs on top of them. In briefings made to the Associated Press, the Israeli military claimed that Sukiya was senior member of the Islamic Jihad, a pistol had been discovered in the ISM office and that two ISM volunteers were hiding Sukiya. By the time that the military left the building and the immediate area, all of the ISM volunteers in Jenin were present either in the office or outside the building. None of them were detained, arrested or even seriously questioned, indicating the absurdity of the later claims made by the military.

When asked for proof of the allegations, the military changed its story: "The information originally released was wrong," said an Israeli military spokesperson and it was now "unclear" where the pistol had been found. Somewhat chastened, the Associated Press, which had originally run the story, published a retraction on March 29th 2003, entitled "Army backtracks on details about militant arrest at International Solidarity Movement."

The second incident occurred on Friday, April 25th, 2003 when the ISM held a public memorial service for Rachel Corrie, an American ISM volunteer crushed to death by an Israeli military bulldozer. About 15 minutes prior to the service a group of six British citizens arrived at the ISM apartment including two young British Muslims, Asif Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif. The other four British citizens were hoping to organize a summer camp in Gaza in conjunction with local Palestinians from Rafah, three Italians, and some others. The ISM group of five people offered the visitors tea, and after about 15 minutes of small talk everyone left to attend the service. Anyone – Palestinian, Israeli or international – was free to come and pay their respects. Hanif and Sharif were later described as a quiet pair, saying little except to claim that they were “alternative tourists.” A few minutes after the service began, an Israeli military tank appeared and used smoke and tear gas to scatter the mourners. Hanif and Sharif left and were not seen by or in contact with anyone with the ISM again.

Shortly thereafter, the two carried out a suicide bombing. Their entire association with ISM had been for less than an hour. Before attending the service, the two had never made contact with the ISM, never registered to join us and never attended our mandatory training and orientation.

In November 2008, London newspaper the Jewish Chronicle published a letter falsely claiming that ISM activist Raphael Cohen had “sheltered” the bombers. Raph sued the newspaper and in April 2009 won £30,000 in damages (plus an apology and legal costs) in the British high court (see press coverage in The Guardian and the Press Gazette). Raph donated part of his damages to the ISM.

The claim that the International Solidarity Movement “protects terrorists” is untrue and is only maintained by those who seek to discredit the thousands of principled volunteers from around the world who are bearing witness to the cruelty of occupation and working non-violently to bring it to an end. It is one of a series of claims that attempts to discredit ISM volunteers and should not be taken seriously.

### **What is the ISM doing to protect Israeli civilians?**

We believe that in order for the cycle of violence and counter-violence to stop, the root cause of the conflict – Israeli military occupation and violence – must be addressed. By uniting our efforts against policies that breed violence, we can help build and sustain a stable and secure environment that protects everyone equally.

The ISM works in the Occupied Palestinian Territories because the occupation is the root cause of the ongoing violence. Our mission is not to provide protection against attack, but rather to bring international support to Palestinian communities and grassroots organizations engaged in nonviolent resistance. We believe that ending the occupation and achieving justice for Palestinians will bring peace for Israeli civilians. A stronger, more successful Palestinian nonviolent movement to end of the occupation will similarly provide Palestinians with a viable option to achieving justice that does not involve violence or attacks on civilians.

Unfortunately, the Israeli government continues to oppress Palestinian nonviolent resistance, endangering Israeli civilians by leaving Palestinians with little hope and few options.

There are a variety of organizations active in Israel with a mandate to protect or assist Israeli citizens. Many of these organizations are well-financed by international citizens and flush with resources. There are few international organizations working with similar mandates in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. For these reasons ISM remains committed to supporting nonviolent Palestinian resistance in the Occupied Palestinian

Territories.

### **Is the ISM affiliated with any political party?**

No. The ISM is not affiliated with any one political party. The movement is open to all individuals and groups who choose nonviolent direct-action and other forms of unarmed resistance as a method for confronting and challenging the Israeli occupation. We work with grassroots community organizations, town and village councils, NGOs and Palestinian political parties.

The ISM is not funded by any Palestinian political party, nor by the Palestinian Authority. Funds are raised from private citizens in communities around the world, primarily in the US and Europe. If you want to support the work ISM does, please consider a financial donation.

### **Does the ISM support suicide bombers and terrorists? You have a statement on your website that says that, don't you?**

The ISM does not support or condone any acts of terrorism – which is not legitimate armed struggle. The ISM does not associate, support, or have anything to do with armed or violent resistance to the occupation. The ISM does not assist or engage in any kind of armed resistance, no matter what form it may take.

The statement in question is taken from the ISM Mission Statement:

“As enshrined in international law and UN resolutions , we recognize the Palestinian right to resist Israeli violence and occupation via legitimate armed struggle. However, we believe that nonviolence can be a powerful weapon in fighting oppression and we are committed to the principles of nonviolent resistance.”

This right to resist occupation applies not only to the Palestinian people, but to all peoples who are faced with a military occupation. The ISM regards all people as equals with equal rights under international law. We believe that nonviolent action is a powerful weapon in fighting oppression and are committed to the principles of nonviolent resistance.

### **But wasn't Tom Hurndall, one of your members, carrying a gun when he got shot?**

No. The initial Israeli military report on the shooting of Tom Hurndall did indeed make that allegation. Since then, under intense pressure from various organizations and by an investigation by the Hurndall family, the Israeli military has retracted that claim.

### **What about Rachel Corrie? Wasn't she killed while trying to protect a house with a tunnel in it used to smuggle arms to terrorists?**

No. Rachel killed while attempting to save the house of a pharmacist, Dr. Samir Nasrallah of Rafah in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military has never shown any evidence of a tunnel under Dr. Nasrallah's house or even in the surrounding area. Sadly, the house was finally demolished in September 2003, leaving Dr. Nasrallah and his family to join the thousands of other Palestinian civilians made homeless by the Israeli military and government over the past 35 years.

Recently, Rachel's family have dedicated a foundation in her name committed to conflict resolution and advocacy for Palestinian rights. They are currently engaged in law suits

aimed at both the Israeli government and the Caterpillar corporation which makes the militarized D9 armored bulldozer that was used to kill Rachel.

For more information on Rachel's life and death as well as the work her family is pursuing for peace and justice, visit the Rachel Corrie Foundation.

**On your web-site, you give advice to volunteers on how to lie to the Israeli authorities so you can get into the country and the occupied areas. Why tell lies?**

Over the course of the last four years, the Israeli government has pursued a policy of refusing entry to international human rights workers (HRW). This is not limited to ISM volunteers and others have been targeted as well including the Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron, Amnesty International members, Human Rights Watch members and even employees of the United Nations.

Under both Israeli and international law, HRW have the right, as international observers, to visit both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The ISM does not advise its volunteers to lie, but it is now commonly understood that to declare your intention to work with ISM will, most likely, result in the Israeli government violating international law and refusing you entry.

The broad result of this policy has been to weaken Palestinian nonviolent resistance. By limiting the options Palestinians have for the expression of their political desires, Israel promotes greater instability and violence. The ISM is committed to breaking this cycle and supporting broad-based nonviolent resistance.

**Why don't you try and protect innocent Israelis from terrorist attacks? Why don't you protect buses and cafes in Israel which are often the targets of suicide bombers?**

The ISM believes the root cause of the conflict is the illegal occupation that seizes Palestinian land, oppresses the Palestinian people, violates international law and drives people to desperate acts of violence. ISM volunteers are committed to ending the occupation so that violence of all kinds directed at both Israelis and Palestinians will stop.

The Israeli public is protected by a modern, well equipped security apparatus which includes sophisticated intelligence, surveillance and counter-terrorist units in addition to regular military and paramilitary units. The Palestinian people have nothing of the kind. Although most of our time is spent in the Occupied Territories, in Israel our volunteers do use Israeli buses and visit cafes like everyone else. Furthermore, the safety and well-being of our Israeli volunteers is of equal concern. The bottom-line is that ending the occupation is the first step toward peace and security for everyone in the region.

**You're just anti-Semitic, aren't you?**

No. Our number of active volunteers varies, but conservative estimates are that 15-20% of them are Jewish. Many Jewish organizations, both within and outside Israel, support the aims and efforts of the ISM. Two of the ISM's founders, Neta Golan (Israeli) and Adam Shapiro (USA) are Jewish. The ISM is opposed to the continuing illegal occupation of the Palestinian people, the land confiscation, the checkpoints, the house raids, the assassinations, curfews, closures, house demolitions and other forms of collective punishment and humiliation the Israeli government and military force upon a largely defenseless population; the ISM is not opposed to any person, group or political entity based on race, religion or ethnicity.

**Is it true that ISM volunteers were photographed holding guns and posing with**

## **members of armed resistance groups?**

No. At ISM's training in Palestine, as a condition for joining ISM in Palestine, all activists are required to commit to supporting only non-violent resistance. At the training, all activists are also instructed never to touch any weapon, or even anything that resembles a weapon.

In September 2006, photos were posted on the internet showing five foreigners posing with members of the Palestinian police in Jericho while holding their weapons, along with the claim that four of the foreigners were volunteers with the ISM. The article accompanying the photos also claimed that the fifth, unnamed foreigner (whose name we have since learned is Paul Cinato) with the obscured face in the photos went undercover in order to try and sabotage those, such as the ISM, who support Palestinian non-violent resistance.

At the time the photographs were taken, these individuals had not yet become ISM volunteers. They went to Jericho of their own volition without coordinating or discussing their plans with the International Solidarity Movement. They had not attended ISM's mandatory intensive non-violence training and were new to the country. The fifth foreigner encouraged them to join him in the photographs and have their pictures taken holding guns. These individuals regrettably followed his lead.

Upon learning of this incident, ISM activists informed these individuals that touching weapons violates ISM's policies and that they would not be permitted to volunteer unless they agreed never to handle weapons. All except Cinato apologized and deleted the photographs of future ISM volunteers. Cinato did not attend ISM training and subsequently disappeared. Following their training, the others worked diligently and without incident with the ISM and Palestinian communities in support of non-violent direct action.

For more information:

ISM Responds to Internet Photos, Reaffirms Commitment to Non-violence

ISM Freedom Summer Campaign Approaches – Slander Campaign Against ISM Stepped-Up