



# BRINGING CIVIL RIGHTS TO THE FOREFRONT

## Why We Give. . .

Interfaith Peace-Builders donors explain why IFPB's work is special to them. Every one of IFPB's supporters has a unique reason for supporting the organization and its mission. **What's your reason?**

**"Real social change happens through person-to-person contact, and this is what IFPB does best.** Co-leading an IFPB delegation three years ago gave me a totally fresh perspective on the occupation. Now I'm an IFPB sustainer, so I can help others share the experiences that IFPB opened my eyes to."

*Katherine Fuchs, 2009 IFPB delegation co-leader and monthly donor  
Program Director, Alliance for Nuclear Accountability*



"My relationship with IFPB has continued to grow through mutual support of our separate journeys to the same hope for a Just Peace in the land. In fact, the staff and the ever growing community of former delegates are an extended family. **My wife and I especially support IFPB's focus on younger delegates and people of color** who resonate to the experience in refreshingly hopeful ways and are an investment in the future. "

*Bill Plitt, 2006 IFPB delegate and donor to general program and scholarship fund  
Director of Education and Community Outreach, Friends of Tent of Nations North America*

"My 2009 trip to Israel/Palestine with IFPB made a lasting impression on me. I will forever feel a kinship with the Israelis and Palestinians I met, as well as my fellow delegates and the IFPB staff because we have shared a once-in-a-lifetime experience. **I support IFPB because I want more and more Americans to know the real situation there** and IFPB does just that by being excellent stewards of both their mission and their funds."

*Shirley Meckley, 2009 IFPB delegate and monthly donor  
Retired Human Resources Executive*



"While I traveled with IFPB I met many dynamic and optimistic activists, both Palestinian and Israeli, committed to justice and committed to one another's futures as well. From the conversations with former IDF soldiers now working to end the occupation to a meeting with a leader of the Jewish settlers of Hebron to an overnight home-stay with families in the West Bank village of Bil'in and meetings with organizers there, **I feel like I was able to understand both the political and historical complexities of the situation and the human suffering and difficulties that have resulted from it.**"

*Kazim Ali, 2011 IFPB delegate -donor to general program and scholarship fund  
Poet, Writer and professor of Creative Writing and Comparative Literature at Oberlin College*

**Join these IFPB supporters in keeping Interfaith Peace-Builders strong  
DONATE TODAY AT [WWW.IFPB.ORG/DONATION](http://WWW.IFPB.ORG/DONATION)**

# A Landmark Month for Interfaith Peace-Builders!

Interfaith Peace-Builders organized four delegations between October 10 and November 12, bringing more than 80 people to Palestine/Israel. Among the four was a special trip of Civil & Human Rights activists sponsored by the Dorothy Cotton Institute, IFPB's second African Heritage Delegation, and the first IFPB delegation to visit the Gaza Strip since 2003.

Members of the delegations included civil rights leaders such as **Dorothy Cotton** (member of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s executive staff), **Vincent Harding** (who drafted King's famous *Beyond Vietnam* speech), **Richard Deats** (former Executive Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation), **Aaron Dixon** (founder of Seattle's Black Panther Party), **Cindy and Craig Corrie** (parents of Rachel Corrie), **Huwaida Arraf** (founder of the International Solidarity Movement and the Free Gaza Movement), **Father Sean McManus** (founder of the Irish National Caucus), and others.

Through these delegations, and other efforts, Interfaith Peace-Builders is playing a leading role in bringing a civil rights discourse to peace-building in the Palestinian-Israeli context.

## Civil & Human Rights Delegation October 14 – 24, 2012

The Civil & Human Rights Delegation was an historic trip of 23 prominent leaders – both veterans of the U.S. Civil Rights movement and the next generation of human rights leaders – to the West Bank and Israel to meet with the leaders of the Palestinian nonviolent resistance movement and their Israeli allies. In a region wracked by violence, this movement stands as perhaps the most salient modern test of the power of nonviolent resistance to bring about social justice and social change. As such, it presents a special opportunity to learn lessons transferable to others throughout the world seeking nonviolent paths to justice and peace. The delegation was sponsored by the *Dorothy Cotton Institute* in partnership with Interfaith Peace-Builders.

For trip reports and photos see [www.ifpb.org/del45](http://www.ifpb.org/del45)



*Dorothy Cotton began many of the meetings with Palestinian and Israeli activists by leading the group in singing freedom songs from the Civil Rights movement in the United States.*



*Jeff Halper, founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, speaks to delegates during the 2012 Olive Harvest Delegation.*

## Trees of Peace: Olive Harvest Delegation October 22 – November 3, 2012

IFPB's annual Olive Harvest Delegation included 32 participants this year. The delegation focused on the Palestinian olive harvest which takes place each autumn, and included an extended stay in the Jenin area where the group was hosted by the *Palestinian Fair Trade Association*. The 32 members of the Olive Harvest Delegation participated in the olive harvest, learned about the importance of the trees for Palestinian farming communities, and gained insight on the power of self-sustaining economies in the West Bank. Delegates also enjoyed our first-ever homestay in Akka; Board Member Hanan Idilbi arranged housing with her family members and friends there, giving delegates a unique opportunity to meet and speak with Palestinian citizens of Israel. They return motivated to reach and teach others!

For trip reports and photos see [www.ifpb.org/del42](http://www.ifpb.org/del42)

## PURCHASE FAIR TRADE PALESTINIAN OLIVE OIL Support Palestinian farming communities and IFPB!

Interfaith Peace-Builders partners with *Canaan Fair Trade* to make high quality Palestinian olive oil and other products available in North America. Browse available items at:

[www.ifpb.org/education/oliveoil](http://www.ifpb.org/education/oliveoil)



*The African Heritage Delegation with Mahmoud Jiddah, of the African Palestinian Community in Jerusalem.*

## **African Heritage Delegation October 22 – November 3, 2012**

Interfaith Peace-Builders' second African Heritage Delegation included 15 people from a diversity of backgrounds and communities around the country. IFPB's African Heritage Delegations grow out of ongoing efforts within African American communities to address issues of peace and justice in Palestine/Israel. In addition to other meetings, participants on this delegation met with representatives of African-Palestinian and African-Israeli communities, Jews of color (Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews), Palestinian refugees, and others. The delegation returned to the US on the eve of the US Presidential Election and the re-election of Barack Obama. Now the work begins in earnest, as the African Heritage delegation members begin to translate their experience into action!

**For trip reports and photos see [www.ifpb.org/del43](http://www.ifpb.org/del43)**

## **Voices of Conscience: Delegation to the Gaza Strip November 4 – 11, 2012**

The last time an Interfaith Peace-Builders delegation was able to visit the occupied Gaza Strip was in 2003. For years since, we've been planning to go back, but have been thwarted by the Israeli siege of Gaza. This 21-member delegation focused on the realities of Palestinian life in the Gaza Strip. Participants had the unique opportunity to hear directly from Gazans regarding their hopes for peace and the role of the United States and other international actors in promoting a resolution to the conflict. . The trip was a transformative one for the delegates who witnessed the effect of the Israeli imposed siege on the small coastal territory and witnessed attacks by the Israeli military.

**For trip reports and photos see [www.ifpb.org/del44](http://www.ifpb.org/del44)**



*The delegation met with young Palestinian activists in the Rafah Refugee Camp in the southern Gaza Strip along the border with Egypt.*

**participants on interfaith peace-builders  
delegations root their activism in the life stories  
of those who live in palestine / israel**

### **\$1000 SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!**

**Students and Young Professionals  
apply for 2 scholarships to join May or  
August 2013 delegations to Palestine/Israel!**

**APPLY AT:**

**[ifpb.org/1000scholarship](http://ifpb.org/1000scholarship)**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:  
January 18, 2013**

**reach deeper**

**[www.ifpb.org](http://www.ifpb.org)**

### **2013 DELEGATIONS:**

**May 25 - June 7, 2013**

**August 10 - 23, 2013**

**Oct./Nov. 2013**

# Voices on the Ground

Interfaith Peace-Builders' delegates filed many excellent Trip Reports from their recent delegations. Here are a couple excerpts. For all the trip reports from these delegations visit [www.ifpb.org/delegations/recent\\_reports.html](http://www.ifpb.org/delegations/recent_reports.html)

## Meditations on a Security State

*By Elandria C. Williams, member of the 2012 African Heritage Delegation*

Jerusalem is a city of contradictions with some of the most powerful religious iconic sites in the world within one of the most high security and oppressive places. The irony of visiting in the morning the Church of All Nations, where Christ prayed his last prayer before he was turned over to the Roman Empire, and then, that evening, witnessing an Israeli settler verbally attack a 5 year old Palestinian girl at her own home just a few blocks away (with no repercussions) is mind blowing. Empire building and security are the name of the game, reminiscent to struggles in the US around Native American removal to Jim Crow to the Prison and Military Industrial Complex.



*The African Heritage Delegation in Bil'in with Iyad Burnat.*

We are in a place where the "other" (whether refugee from Darfur, Palestine, or Morocco) and people who work for social justice in the United States and around the world, must come together and stand against the inhumane treatment of Palestinians. We must mobilize around issues as diverse as home demolitions, African refugees being considered "infiltrators" and tearing down of shelters, discrimination against Mizrahi (North African) Jews, and mandatory conscription.

Our guide in Jerusalem's Musrara neighborhood today provided a way: art is one of the most significant tools we have to shine a light and bring people together. Through art, recognizing our common struggles and humanity, combined with the political sanctions and divestment campaigns, we can change not only what is happening here in Israel but also at home in the United States as well.

## An Ongoing Terror

*By Michele Bahl, member of the Voices of Conscience Delegation to the Gaza Strip*

Since the siege, which started in 2006, there has been a medication shortage in the Gaza Strip. Israel controls everything that comes in, and we were told that cancer medications are not allowed. There are so many things that are not allowed, such as materials to rebuild from the Israeli bombings, and utility vehicles to collect garbage. People are dying in Gaza not because there are a shortage of hospitals, but because there are a lack of supplies due to the severe restrictions that Israel imposes on the people of Gaza.

I haven't seen one Israeli soldier here, but the population of 1.7 Gazans feels Israel's presence all the time. It is a terrifying presence. During Operation Cast Lead, which took place in December 2008 – January 2009, Israel killed hundreds of innocent civilians. There is no place that people feel safe in Gaza due to the reality that Israel can attack Gaza and cause widespread destruction at any time.

There is ongoing terror that people face every day, but Americans never hear about it. I believe if my fellow Americans were aware of the ongoing systematic violence that Israel carries out, they would be outraged and want to do something to stop it. If I didn't believe this, I would have no hope. . . The many people we spoke with made it clear that the cause of the suffering of the Palestinian people is political, not humanitarian.

"We have the right to plan for our future, if even for one minute. It is a dream for us."

"Everyone wants to trust tomorrow, but you cannot trust tomorrow in Gaza."

Gaza is an open air prison and I will work as hard as I can when I return to the United States to expose this truth and do whatever I can to work toward change. This is what the people in Gaza have been imploring our delegation to do.



*The delegation visited this UNWRA administered school in the Al Shati (Beach) Refugee Camp in Gaza City.*

*We need your support! The only way to maintain the quality programming Interfaith Peace-Builders is known for is by generous donations from people like you.*

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY AT [WWW.IFPB.ORG/DONATION](http://WWW.IFPB.ORG/DONATION)**