

NO TAX DOLLARS FOR WAR CRIMES

APRIL 15 ACTION TOOLKIT

This Tax Day, organize an event in your community to tell Congress to stop funding Israeli violence against Palestinians!

On Monday, April 15, AFSC invites people across the U.S. to visit the district offices of their senators and representatives to demonstrate that the [majority of Americans](#) want a cease-fire and do not want their tax dollars to support military attacks on Gaza.

Please join us this Tax Day to demand:

- An immediate and permanent cease-fire now.
- Unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza.
- Support for the release of all held captive and in prison.
- Funding for care, not killing: NO tax dollars for war crimes.

REGISTER YOUR EVENT AT
[AFSC.ORG/APRIL15](https://afsc.org/april15)

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WHY NOW? / DEMANDS

Historically AFSC and people of conscience have held events on April 15, Tax Day, drawing attention to the ways our tax dollars are misused to fund war and militarism instead of life-sustaining programs. This year, we want to highlight the work of activists across the U.S. and world who reject their governments' support for war crimes in Gaza.

Over the last six months, tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza have been killed using weapons provided by the United States. Israel has placed Gaza under hermetic closure—blocking access to food, water, fuel, electricity, medical supplies, and other goods. On Jan. 26, the International Court of Justice stated that Israel must “take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.” But humanitarian aid workers delivering vital assistance continue to be attacked and killed at unprecedented rates. The blockade and killing of humanitarian aid workers are causing widespread famine and starvation in Gaza. The U.S. must act to end the relentless Israeli bombardment and the restrictions which prevent the safe delivery of humanitarian aid.

AFSC mourns with those who have lost loved ones and all who are suffering, including the families of the nearly 32,000 Palestinians killed, and the 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals killed and taken into captivity by Hamas on Oct. 7.

Join us as we continue to hold our government accountable for funding violence rather than building a just and lasting peace for all. Together, we demand the U.S. government fund care, not killing:

Call for an immediate and permanent cease-fire now.

Nearly 32,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza over the past six months, approximately 12,000 are children. Over three-quarters of Gaza's 2.2 million people are internally displaced due to Israeli attacks and 70% of homes and other structures have been destroyed. A cease-fire is needed NOW.

Call for unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza.

The Israeli government has put in place a total blockade of Gaza, resulting in a completely preventable humanitarian catastrophe. The U.N. and other humanitarian agencies are being denied access to Gaza. The United States has completely halted funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the main provider of humanitarian aid in Gaza. One million Palestinians are experiencing catastrophic food insecurity and mass starvation. Thousands more people will die if access to food, medicine, and care is not secured.

Call for the release of all held captive and in prison.

Atrocities against civilians are never justified. The U.S. should call for actions to be taken to secure the immediate release of all civilians being held captive and in prison in violation of international laws that should ensure protections. All people deserve to live with peace, dignity, and freedom.

Fund care, not killing: NO tax dollars for war crimes.

For decades, the U.S. has offered uncritical support to Israel as it has systematically violated Palestinian rights. At a time when Israel is using U.S.-made or U.S.-funded weapons to kill tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, the Biden administration and Congress is sending more military financing and weapons to Israel. Yet, polling data (which can be found at bit.ly/majoritysay) suggests that a majority of Americans are against this. It is time to say NO to sending weapons to Israel. We do not want our tax dollars spent to kill civilians in Gaza or anywhere.

HOW TO DESIGN A POWERFUL ACTION

On April 15, we are asking everyone to call for funding care, not killing, and then to visit or hold a vigil in front of their local congressional office to honor those killed with U.S.-funded weapons in Gaza.

Here are some ideas to help you plan:

ADVANCE PLANNING

- **Find the district offices for your senators and representatives!** You can look up your congresspeople at <http://usa.gov/elected-officials>. You will have to go to their individual websites to find their district offices, usually under the “contact” section.
- **Research your location ahead of time if you can.** If you have not already been to the local office of your senator or representative, stop by ahead of time just to get a sense of where you might set up, what the security is like in the building, and anything else it would be good to know before Monday, Apr. 15.
- **Find allies:** Who are your existing partners in this work? Who should be involved? Reach out to them early so that they can be part of the planning if they would like to be.
- **Assess your resources:** What skills does your group have? How many people will participate? How much money and supplies do you have access to?
- **Make an action plan:** Think through the action from start to finish. Assign action roles, make a time schedule, list supplies and equipment needed, and finalize planning. Make backup plans just in case!
- **No action is too big or too small!** If you live in a rural area or an area where there is not much support for Palestine, even five people delivering demands to their member of Congress and holding a vigil outside the office can help show that people across the country support these demands.

OFFICE VISIT

- **Plan your visit.** Before your vigil, send a small delegation inside to hand-deliver your demands in writing. A printable version of this is available at afsc.org/April15
- **Assign roles.** Assign one person to introduce your group; one person to read your demands, one person to highlight the devastation in Gaza, one person to describe why you want your tax dollars to fund care (not killing), and one person to thank the staffer for their time and deliver the leave-behind.
- **Make connections to your local community.** Make clear to the staffer that your group feels strongly that your tax dollars should go to fund care, not killing. What would your community look like if your tax dollars were used to fund schools and health centers instead of the bombs the Israeli government uses to destroy schools and health centers in

Gaza? Think about what issues your community cares about and describe your vision of the world if your tax dollars went to fund the life-sustaining issues you care about instead of war, violence, and militarism.

- **Be strategic.** When in a meeting with your Congressional office, we recommend not giving the staff any printed information until you leave, so that their attention remains on your group and your demands.

LOCAL ACTION PROGRAM

- **Ensure that your action serves as a platform to hear from Palestinians and/or Jewish allies.** If you cannot schedule a speaker from those communities, you can read aloud from “Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire,” an anthology of essays and poems by Palestinian writers and artists from Gaza. Available free in e-book form at <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/1861-light-in-gaza>
- **Consider reading some of the names of children killed in Gaza since Oct. 7.** Al Jazeera has released a list of many of the names of children killed in Gaza. See here: <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2024/israel-war-on-gaza-10000-children-killed/> Every 15 minutes, a Palestinian child is killed, meaning that now at least one out of every 100 children in Gaza have been killed by Israeli attacks. Children are also more likely to die of starvation or malnutrition. Without a cease-fire and full access to humanitarian aid, many more children will die, even without an active aerial bombing campaign.
- **Inspire and connect participants.** Music, chanting, grounding exercises, and candle-lighting all can help to build a sense of community. If your group is not faith-based, connect to your shared values. If you are from a faith tradition, ground the event in scripture or prayer.
- **Include visuals to clearly communicate our demands and name the senator or representative you want to influence.** We want all members of our audience – event attendees, media, elected officials, social media followers, and others – to understand the depth of our conviction and our demands on Tax Day. You can download and print signs here: afsc.org/posters-palestine
- **Do not forget to take photos and videos and share them on social media.** Use the hashtag #DefundWarCrimes. Please also send us photos of your memorial along with the location to socialmedia@afsc.org
- **Find more tips on holding a powerful vigil from AFSC.** The Action Hour landing page, found at afsc.org/actionhour, has many useful resources for your organizing and activism. In the “Resources” section, you will find 12 different guides to help you strengthen different components of your actions for Gaza. In particular, check out “8 Steps to Hold a Powerful Vigil.”

POST-ACTION

- **Debrief the action:** What were the action highlights? Where was there room for improvement?
- **Follow up:** Reach out to participants and members – keep them updated. Make calls to media – get the story out. Provide jail support if necessary and keep track of ongoing legal issues.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Now that you've decided what you're doing and when, it's time to invite others to join you.

Register your event at: afsc.org/April15 so others know there is an event in their area.

You can also create a Facebook event to reach more people in your networks.

Download social media graphics and posters at afsc.org/April15

Use the hashtags **#DEFUNDWARCRIMES**

Here's some promotional language you can adapt for your event.

Sample Invitation/Facebook language

On Tax Day April 15, we are holding a vigil at [insert Member of Congress's office] and raising our collective voice to demand that Congress stop giving billions in taxpayer money to Israel, helping to bomb and kill nearly 32,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including over 12,000 children. Congress should fund care, not killing.

Our event is part of a national day of action coordinated by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Together, we are demanding the U.S. call for an immediate and permanent cease-fire, full access for humanitarian aid, release of all held captive and in prison, and an end to U.S. military funding to Israel.

We ask that you join us in urgent action by coming to our event on (DATE AND TIME) at (LOCATION).

CONTACTING THE MEDIA

One important way to amplify the effect of your action is to get the press to cover it. To get reporters there, you have to let them know in advance.

You can modify the template below to create your own media advisory. The media advisory should be emailed to reporters in your area several days before the event, and then followed up with calls to make sure they got it and to encourage them to attend.

Tips for contacting reporters:

1. Email the media advisory (see the template below) to the reporter with a personal note at the top. Paste the advisory in the body of the email. If you don't have a reporter's email you can look up their news desk online.
2. After you have emailed, follow up by phone to make sure they received it.
3. When they answer, you can say something like "Hello, my name is [your name] and I am calling on behalf of [your organization]. I'm calling to follow up on the advisory I sent you about an event in support of Gaza happening outside [Congressperson's office]. Did you receive the release?" If they say no, ask if you can resend and confirm the correct email address. If you get a voicemail, you can just leave a message with the event details.
4. If you do get a real person, tell them a little bit about the details of the event and why they should come to cover it. Try to get a commitment from them to report on it. If they are not sure, ask them when you can follow up.
5. Reporters get a ton of calls and emails, so they'll be trying to rush you. Make sure you're prepared to resend the release if they didn't get it. Don't feel bad if it seems like they are blowing you off, just be as polite and persistent as you can be!

MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press contact: Name, Phone, Email

Protesters build memorial at [Senator/Rep name] office, demand Congress stop funding war crimes in Gaza

[A subheading further describing event can go here if needed]

CITY (DATE) - On Apr. 15, Tax Day, constituents of [Senator/Rep name] will gather at the [Senator/Rep's] office in [location] to hold a vigil for nearly 32,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza. This action in [your city/town] is part of a national day of action demanding that Congress fund care, not killing.

Participants are asking their members of Congress to stop funding the Israeli military as it commits war crimes and ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank. Instead, participants are calling on their government to publicly support an immediate and permanent cease-fire, the release of all held captive and in prison, and full humanitarian access to Gaza. The day of action is organized by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker organization that has worked in Gaza since 1949.

What: Name of the event

Who: Speakers/participants and their organizational affiliations /participants and their organizational affiliations

When: Date and time

Where: Address and any specific details that folks will need to get there

Visuals: [Include a note about the great photo opportunity you're creating for the press]

For more information about the national day of action, visit <http://afsc.org/April15>

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[A short description of your organization can go here]

The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.

MESSAGING GUIDE

This messaging guide is designed to unify our message and impact while avoiding narratives that don't help our cause. It can be adapted to your local context.

Key points

- Everyone deserves to live in safety and peace. But peace in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory will never be possible as long as our Congresspeople continue to spend billions of taxpayer dollars on weapons and bombs for the Israeli military.
- We are here to mourn the nearly 32,000 people in Gaza who have been killed by the Israeli military since Oct. 7, as well as all those who have died – Israelis, Palestinians, and others – as a result of the ongoing Israeli military occupation. We urge all parties to release civilians held captive and in prison in violation of international law.
- We are urging our members of Congress and the Biden administration to:
 - **Call for an immediate and permanent cease-fire now.**
 - **Call for unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza.**
 - **Call for the release of all held captive and in prison.**
 - **Fund care, not killing: NO tax dollars for war crimes.**
- People of many different faiths – including Jews, Muslims, and Christians – are participating in these actions. This is part of a national day of action organized by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in coordination with communities across the country.

Background

- Violence did not begin with the attacks from Gaza. Even before Oct. 7, 2023 was one of the most violent years in Palestine in more than a decade. At least 247 Palestinians – including 47 children – had been killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers before the end of September 2023.
- Gaza has been under a violent blockade for years. For over 17 years, the people of Gaza have lived under an Israeli-imposed blockade that severely limits travel, trade, and everyday life for its over two million residents.
- Israel has instituted an apartheid system for Palestinians. A consensus has emerged in the human rights community – including Israeli and Palestinian human rights

organizations and international groups Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International – that Israel’s treatment of Palestinians constitutes apartheid.

Find more background resources on our website: afsc.org/topics/gaza-israel

DAY OF ACTION CHECKLIST

Materials to have on hand

- Materials to give to the staffer at your member of Congress's office – you can print these materials at afsc.org/April15
- Banners, posters -- you can print our posters at afsc.org/April15
- Fully charged phones to document the event and stay in touch with organizers
- Bullhorn or sound system
- Just in case box (Contents of box: packing or duct tape, scissors, stapler, huge markers, sidewalk chalk, extra paper, first aid kit)

Suggested roles

- Emcee:** Welcomes attendees, introduces speakers, and facilitates program.
- Speakers:** Speak directly to the situation in Gaza and why you are here today.
- Security/police liaisons:** Help keep participants safe by directing them to correct locations; isolates provocateurs from the event attendees; and, liaises with police if they appear.
- Marshalls:** Keep event participants focused on the event and direct the movement of the group; block traffic if marching.
- Press point person:** Greets press, gets their contact information, explains the program to the press, and then directs them to people to be interviewed.
- Documenting:** Takes pictures and/or video.