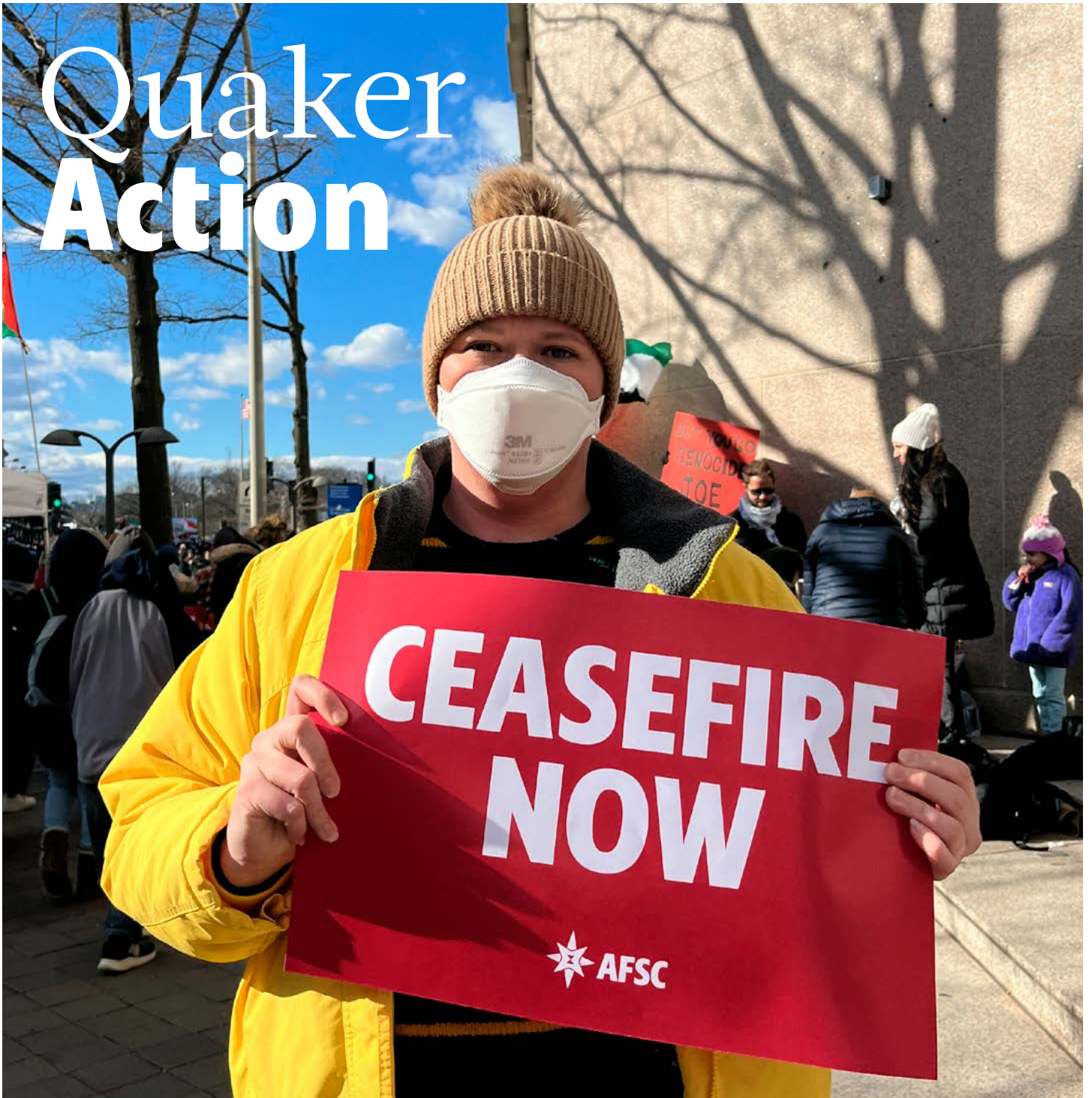


# Quaker Action



## Putting Quaker values into practice

A timeline of  
mobilizing for Gaza

pg. 7

Stopping militarized  
policing in California

pg. 13

6 principles for just,  
welcoming, dignified  
immigration

pg. 15



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

FALL 2024 VOLUME 105 NUMBER 2

# CONTENTS

John Lindsay-Poland and Jennifer Tu, AFSC staff members working to stop police militarization in California. PHOTO: BROOKE ANDERSON



## CONTENTS

2 LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY

3 ALUMNI NEWS

4 UPDATES FROM AFSC

6 PROTECTING CIVIC SPACE AROUND THE WORLD

An interview with Kerri Kennedy, AFSC's associate general secretary for international programs.

7 A YEAR IN GAZA

Over the past year, the AFSC community has mobilized for a cease-fire and humanitarian response in Gaza.

13 RUBBER BULLETS AND TEAR GAS

Militarized policing is harming thousands of incarcerated people every year. Here's what communities can do to stop it.

15 6 PRINCIPLES OF IMMIGRATION

Everyone deserves a chance to build a good life, regardless of where they were born. Here are six principles guiding our approach to immigration—and how we're working with communities to uphold them.

# Quaker Action

Published by the American Friends Service Committee

## WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light within each person, we nurture the seeds of change and the respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions.

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## COVER PHOTO

March on Washington for Gaza, organized mainly by American Muslims for Palestine and endorsed by AFSC.

Photo: Zoe Jannuzi/AFSC



In August, amid the Democratic National Convention, AFSC organized a memorial for those killed in Gaza. PHOTO: @LOVEANDSTRUGGLEPHOTOS

## LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY

### In these trying times, it means a lot to have someone or something to rely on.

For me, it's my family and friends, my colleagues, and my faith that people around the world can work together to make a change for the better. Over the past year, that faith has been tested amid Israel's ongoing attacks on Gaza.

I want to thank you and everyone in the AFSC community for joining together to face this grievous moment in history. Some have disagreed with our demands for a cease-fire and peace and human rights for all. We have even lost some supporters and funding. But, as a Quaker organization, we are called to boldly speak the truth, whether it is popular or not. We will remain steadfast in that calling.

I am heartened to see an influx of new individuals, Quaker meetings, ally congregations, and other organizations who share our values join us in the last year. If this is your first Quaker Action magazine as an AFSC supporter, welcome and thank you! And to our loyal friends, your trust and support are greatly appreciated.

As you will see on the pages of this magazine, our collective efforts are making a tangible difference. It means the world to work alongside people of conscience and courage, especially when taking a stand can be risky. Together, we are creating the possibility for a better future.

Thank you for your support, your activism, and your solidarity.



Joyce Ajlouny  
GENERAL SECRETARY



### Including a simple line in your estate plans can help ensure AFSC's future for years to come.

To learn more, download our estate planning kit at [afsc.org/estate](https://afsc.org/estate), email us at [GiftPlanning@afsc.org](mailto:GiftPlanning@afsc.org) or call Alyssa Chatten at 888-588-2372 ext. 2.

# ALUMNI news

Masaru Edmund Nakawatase speaking during the first Alumni Dinner. PHOTO: JAMES WASSERMAN



**Masaru Edmund Nakawatase**, who worked with AFSC for 31 years, was recently honored with the Paul Robeson Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is given to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to social change throughout their lifetime.

**Masai Ehehosi** worked for AFSC in New Jersey's Prison Watch Program after being released from 14 years in prison. He passed away on April 1. Masai worked to close security housing units and end torture against imprisoned people.

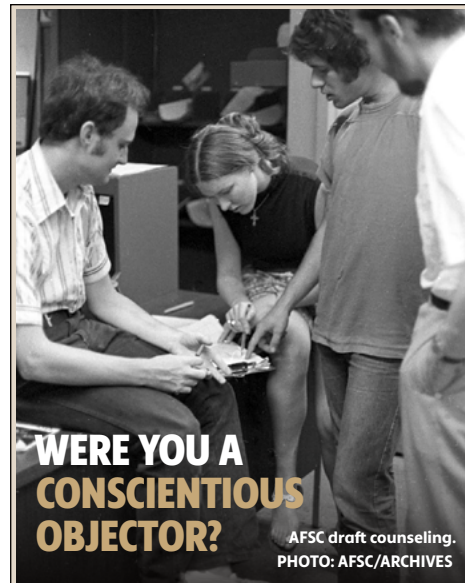
**Richard Erstad**, interim regional director of AFSC Latin America and the Caribbean, recently attended an AFSC staff gathering in Guatemala. While there, he encountered Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Rigoberta Menchu Tum**. Rigoberta had received the prize in 1992 for her human rights work and courageous advocacy for the ancestral peoples of her country. Richard said: "I walked over to greet her, and she said, 'Los Cuakeros, que tanto me ayudaron.' (The Quakers! How much you helped me.) She recounted her deep appreciation for the ways our then-staff in Guatemala and later with Peace Education—Phil Berryman and Angela Berryman—helped her in Guatemala on her first visit to the U.S., including connecting her to the QUNO office."

Do you have news or stories to share? Email us at [alumni@afsc.org](mailto:alumni@afsc.org)



**Tonya Hstand**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**May Takayanagi**, whose family was interned in World War II camps, was a longtime AFSC staff member in New England. May passed away in March after a lifetime of working for peace and justice.



April 2025 is the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

Over the next year, we plan to highlight and reconnect with war resisters, conscientious objectors, draft counselors, and others involved with AFSC. If you're one of them, we'd love to connect with you.

 REGISTER TODAY  
[afsc.org/action/CO](https://afsc.org/action/CO)

Get Alumni Network updates and join our Facebook group!

[AFSC.ORG/ALUMNI](https://afsc.org/alumni)

# Updates

FROM THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE



The SUN Bucks program helps families afford groceries when school is out. Photo: Pexels/Kamaji Ogino

## UNITED STATES

### NO HUNGER SUMMER

Millions of children in the U.S. rely on school breakfasts and lunches for the nutrition they need. But when school is out, many kids don't get enough food to be healthy and thrive.

That's why Congress created a new federal program called SUN Bucks. During the summer, the program provides \$120 in grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-age children. It could benefit as many as 30 million children.

Unfortunately, as of this writing, 12 states have chosen not to participate in

the program. Those states include Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. In addition, Tennessee plans to abandon the program in 2025. As a result, over 9 million children may lose out on this vital benefit.

To help those children, AFSC has launched the No Hunger Summer campaign. We're advocating for leaders in these holdout states to adopt SUN Bucks and make it permanent.

Do you live in one of these states? Join our No Hunger Summer campaign today! ■

Learn more,  
[AFSC.ORG/NOHUNGERSUMMER](https://afsc.org/NOHUNGERSUMMER)



**Rick Wilson**  
ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
DIRECTOR



Housing advocates from Greensboro's Keep Gate City Housed movement. Photo: E Henderson

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**STOPPING EVICTIONS**

No one should have to worry about losing their home. But last year, more than 16,000 people in Guilford County, North Carolina faced eviction. That's why AFSC and volunteers launched the campaign "Keep Gate City Housed" earlier this year.

The campaign connects people in Guilford County with the Tenant Education Advocacy Mediation (TEAM) program. This legal resource program provides people with free legal representation, mediation services, and help applying for rental assistance.

Working with partners and community members, we successfully advocated for the city to expand funding for TEAM and allocate an additional \$1.47 million in rental assistance for residents. Our organizing and advocacy efforts involved tenants, homeowners, landlords, local Quakers, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greensboro, and longtime community partner Guilford for All.

Evictions make us all less safe. In this campaign, we saw that the people of Guilford County care about their neighbors and are willing to organize and speak out so they can stay in their homes. ■



**CC Crawford**  
NORTH CAROLINA  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[AFSC.ORG/NC](https://www.afsc.org/nc)

**AFGHANISTAN**

**EVACUATING FAMILIES**

In 2021, AFSC pledged to help our former staff, colleagues, and their family members evacuate from Afghanistan. Many were at risk because of their involvement with an American organization and supporting democratic causes in their country.

Initially, AFSC helped 18 people leave the country. Since then, we have been trying to help dozens more. The process has been incredibly challenging. Some people had to relocate every few weeks as Taliban actively searched for them. AFSC staff helped them navigate daunting obstacles. We have helped people obtain passports and other documentation, advocated with the U.S. State Department, coordinated evacuation routes, and more.

Today, we're happy to report that we have successfully evacuated 65 of our former colleagues and their families! They have safely relocated to Pakistan, where they will live as we assist them in applying for asylum in the U.S. In the meantime, we're providing them with housing, food, and funding to cover their immediate needs. Thanks to all who donated to support our efforts! ■

To read a story from one evacuated family, visit [AFSC.ORG/AFGHANISTAN](https://www.afsc.org/afghanistan)



**Kerri Kennedy**  
ASSOCIATE GENERAL  
SECRETARY FOR  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

**Protecting civic space around the world**

An interview with

**KERRI KENNEDY**  
ASSOCIATE GENERAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

**Q | In many places, we're continuing to see government restrictions on freedom of speech and other rights. How are communities working to protect their freedoms?**

Today, we're seeing people show up in ways they haven't before, especially young people. In the U.S., students have courageously protested what's happening in Gaza and called for their universities to divest. In the best cases, this has led to dialogue and even agreements from some universities to take steps toward divestment.

In Kenya, thousands of youth organized through social media to peacefully protest the president's proposed tax hikes. They faced violence from police, and dozens were killed. But their efforts forced the president to withdraw the tax plan. Since then, youth have persisted in demonstrating despite the risks.

These are examples of the power of nonviolent activism, which we know is more effective in achieving political change than violent resistance\*.

\*"Between 1900 and 2006, campaigns of nonviolent resistance were more than twice as effective as their violent counterparts," according to political scientist Erica Chenoweth, an expert on civil resistance. More: [www.ericachenoweth.com](http://www.ericachenoweth.com).



PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER DESCAND

**Q | With wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and elsewhere, many are saying that the international rules-based system is failing us.**

**What does AFSC see as the future for peacebuilding?**

The international rules-based system faces significant challenges, specifically in enforcement. Some mechanisms like the International Court of Justice have operated as intended, such as in its landmark finding that Israel's actions in Gaza are plausibly genocidal. But there's no effective enforcement to ensure findings like these are followed through.

South Africa, which has lived through apartheid, brought this case to the ICJ—which I view as a hopeful sign of activism in the international system. Organizations like AFSC must reinforce these mechanisms, particularly by supporting communities and countries that are stepping up. We must also hold our own governments accountable. That is especially critical in the U.S., where political interests can override U.S. and international laws and

conventions. Lack of enforcement of our own Leahy Law is a good example of this.

**Q | Elections have taken place in many countries this year. Are there lessons learned that could help bolster democracy as we prepare for U.S. elections in November?**

We can learn a lot from what's happening around the world. In South Africa, the African National Congress lost its majority for the first time since the end of apartheid, but the transition of power was peaceful. The ANC accepted the results. Now there's a move to a national government of unity for the first time in 30 years.

In the U.S., AFSC is working with coalitions to protect election integrity, ensuring every vote is counted and every person can safely participate in elections and protests. We're also preparing to defend against harmful policies that may arise from the next administration. ■

# OCTOBER

■ OCT. 7

“To end violence in Palestine and Israel we must address root causes”

AFSC issues a statement mourning all who had been killed, urging respect for International humanitarian law, and calling for an end to the apartheid system Palestinians had lived under for decades.

In the following weeks, AFSC supporters send tens of thousands of letters to Congress calling for a cease-fire, humanitarian access to Gaza, and the release of all hostages and civilians held captive.

■ OCT. 8

AFSC Gaza office is bombed by the Israeli army

The office was housed in a protected building intended to serve as a shelter from attacks.

Soon after, AFSC staff and their families are forcibly displaced. They must run for their lives and seek shelter elsewhere in Gaza.

■ OCT. 20



Gaza Action Hours for a Cease-fire Now

AFSC launches a weekly online gathering for people to receive updates and make calls to Congress together. Over time, more than 6,000 people register.

# A YEAR IN GAZA

How the AFSC community mobilized for peace and human dignity.



(Left) Blockade at the State of the Union. Photo: Jake Ratner (Middle) Children’s activities in Gaza. Photo: AFSC/Gaza (Right) Procuring aid packages. Photo: Maryam Azzam

It’s been nearly a year of devastation in Gaza, Israel, and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. Almost all of our AFSC community has been involved in efforts to aid Palestinians displaced in Gaza, advocate for humanitarian access and an end to genocide, and resource a growing movement for divestment.

We have told parts of these stories in press releases and online, but we haven’t pulled them together before. In the following pages, we share milestones from the past year to illustrate the many complementary strands of our work.

Our efforts today build on our longstanding work and trusted reputation in the region. AFSC first began working in Palestine and Israel in 1948, when the United Nations invited the organization to set up the refugee camp system for Palestinians in Gaza. We also provided humanitarian relief to people displaced inside the new Israeli state.

Guided by our Quaker values, we have since worked for a just and lasting peace that respects the civil and human rights of both Palestinians and Israelis.



STOP U.S. MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL  
AFSC

Aiding refugees in Gaza in the 1940s. Photo: AFSC/Archives. D.C. Protest for Gaza. Photo: Matthew Paul D’Agostino



Distributing aid in Rafah. PHOTO: AFSC/GAZA

## COURAGEOUSLY DELIVERING HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

On Oct.29, AFSC’s Gaza team make their first distribution of humanitarian relief—handing out food parcels to over 500 families. Since then, they have provided water, food, and hygiene kits to many more displaced people.

Like most humanitarian workers, our staff members face grave danger. They have lost loved ones and been displaced multiple times themselves, a plight that has continued up until today. But their courageous efforts have saved lives when people had few places to turn for help.

With little aid being allowed to enter Gaza, AFSC staff rely on longstanding partnerships to find and purchase food and other essentials locally. Despite the personal hardships, they have not wavered in their efforts.

“Every aid delivery, every medical intervention, and every act of compassion brings hope to individuals and families struggling to survive,” says Gaza Office Manager Firas Ramlawi. “Every life we touch adds to a reservoir of hope, driving us forward in our efforts to alleviate suffering and contribute to a brighter future for all affected by the crisis.”

# NOVEMBER

■ NOV. 13

## A new partnership with Egyptian relief organizations

Trucks of food, blankets, medicines, and other necessities are prepared. Some trucks are held back for months because of Israeli policy limiting border access, among the hundreds of other aid trucks awaiting entry.



No Tax Dollars for War Crimes Day of Action. People in over 20 U.S. communities build memorials in front of local congressional offices and urge elected officials to support a cease-fire and end U.S. military funding for Israel. Since then, AFSC staff have continued to meet with representatives on Capitol Hill.

■ NOV. 25

## Supporting Gaza patients stranded in the West Bank

AFSC begins distributing medicine and winter clothes to 168 Gaza patients stranded in Ramallah. Working with the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development, we also provide families with hot meals.



Recreational activities for children. PHOTO: AFSC/GAZA

■ NOV. 26

A day of activities for children at a shelter in Rafah. During a brief cease-fire, our Gaza team works with local partners to bring moments of joy to displaced children living in a U.N. school. In the following months, our team would do the same for thousands more children.

# DECEMBER



PHOTO: AFSC GAZA

■ DEC.23

AFSC opens its first open-air kitchen in Rafah. In the following months, we open more kitchens, serving an estimated 3,000 meals daily.

## EXPOSING WAR PROFITEERS

AFSC launched a new research project tracking corporations directly involved in the genocide in Gaza. The list was compiled by AFSC's Action Center for Corporate Accountability, which supports economic activism on all AFSC issues. The list has become a key resource for activists, organizations, and elected officials advocating to end foreign arms supply to Israel and impunity for corporations that profit from genocide.

# JANUARY

■ JAN. 26

The International Court of Justice determines that Israel's actions in Gaza may constitute genocide. AFSC immediately calls on the U.S. and all governments to support a permanent cease-fire and hold Israel accountable.

■ JAN. 30

\* Figures are based on the units of aid distributed and number of children who have taken part in recreational activities.

## AFSC's humanitarian relief efforts surpass 100,000 people\*

# FEBRUARY

■ FEB. 14

"To Gaza, with Love." People around the world join AFSC in sending messages of love to Gaza on social media.

■ FEB. 21

AFSC begins distributing aid in the north of Gaza and in Gaza City through our partner Palestine Tomorrow.

■ FEB. 23

Aiding people with serious illness. In Rafah, AFSC distributes fresh vegetables and water to dozens of cancer and kidney patients who had been displaced from shuttered hospitals.

# MARCH

■ MARCH 1

AFSC General Secretary Joyce Ajlouny meets with White House officials. She is part of a delegation of faith leaders imploring the administration to help stop Israel's assault on Gaza and the worsening humanitarian crisis.

■ MARCH 10

Celebrating Ramadan. AFSC staff hire a cattle breeder in Rafah to slaughter sheep for Ramadan meals. An estimated 1,400 people receive meals of meat, rice, and dates. Throughout the holy month, AFSC staff also distribute fresh vegetables and other foods to 700 families per day.

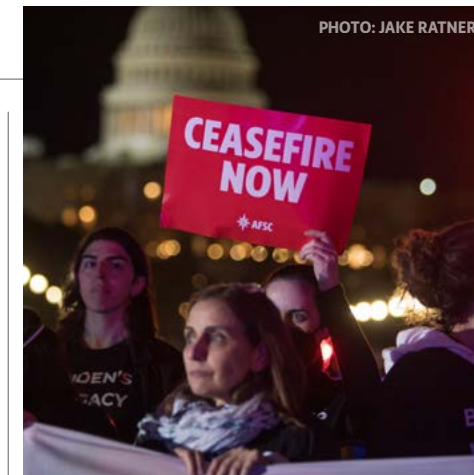


PHOTO: JAKE RATNER

■ MARCH 7

Civil disobedience at the State of the Union. Hundreds of people block the route of President Joe Biden's motorcade in Washington, D.C. AFSC staff and governance members are among them.

■ MARCH 19

AFSC staff conduct high-level meetings with members of the European Commission, urging them to support a cease-fire and humanitarian access.

■ MARCH 24

The U.S. government cuts funding for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, the main aid provider in Gaza, despite the threat of famine. Israel also bars the agency from northern Gaza.



"Kites for Gaza" solidarity event in Iowa. PHOTO: JON KRIEG/AFSC

### KITES FOR GAZA

On March 28, around 500 Palestinian children fly kites on a beach in Rafah to memorialize the thousands of children who had been killed by the Israeli military.

AFSC staff organized the event, helping displaced children make kites out of materials at hand. "This activity, set against the backdrop of tents that have become a temporary home for many, aims to send a poignant message to the world," said AFSC's Firas Ramlawi.

Two days later, AFSC held a solidarity "Kites for Gaza" event in Washington, D.C. at the Cherry Blossom Kite Festival. Among the hundreds of kites flown were 44 white kites to honor Palestinian poet and professor Refaat Alareer. He was 44 when he was killed by an Israeli airstrike in Gaza.

## APRIL

### APRIL 5

## AFSC's humanitarian relief efforts surpass 500,000 people

### APRIL 10

Israeli settlers attack an AFSC aid truck. The truck was carrying over 26 tons of flour from Amman, Jordan to Gaza.

### MID APRIL

Thousands of students set up encampments on college campuses across the U.S. AFSC accompanies dozens of student groups and community campaigns calling on universities, cities, and others to divest from war, occupation, and apartheid. Our support includes a hotline and online toolkit for divestment.

### APRIL 12

A Quaker vision for peace in Palestine and Israel. At least 125 Friends meetings, churches, schools, and organizations have signed on to this Quaker statement calling for past and ongoing injustices to be addressed.

### APRIL 15

AFSC holds a second No Tax Dollars for War Crimes day of action.



PHOTO: MUSAEM MURTAJA

### APRIL 28

AFSC staff organize a Goals for Gaza soccer tournament for youth living in camps in Rafah. Dozens of young people participate and hundreds more spectate. Solidarity matches take place in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and other locations around the world.

## MAY

### MAY 2

AFSC is forced to pause humanitarian relief efforts. As Israel expands airstrikes and begins a ground invasion in Rafah, our staff are among the hundreds of thousands forcibly displaced and seeking shelter once again.

### MAY 8

AFSC and partners publish documentation of Israeli war crimes and other violations of U.S. and international law. Our groups call for an immediate suspension of arms transfers from the U.S. to Israel.

### MAY 11

A visit with the pope. AFSC general secretary Joyce Ajlouny joins Nobel Peace Prize laureates to meet Pope Francis at the Vatican. They issue a declaration calling on all nations to commit to peace, justice, and human rights for all. The declaration also decries the human toll of the attacks on Gaza and called for international action.

### MAY 9

Staff resume limited humanitarian operations. Just over a week later, we begin a massive distribution of nearly 400,000 gallons of drinking water to reach 250,000 Palestinians.

## JUNE

### JUNE 4

AFSC partners with Gaza Community Mental Health Programme in Al Khwalda and Al Amal camps. We give out soap, towels, sanitary napkins, and other hygiene essentials to women as they receive psychological support.

### JUNE 7

Apartheid-Free Communities: AFSC marks one year since the launch of this initiative urging communities to cut ties with Israeli apartheid. Over 370 groups have joined our efforts.

### JUNE 20

Supporting mothers and newborns. AFSC and local partners start distributing diapers and baby formula to more than 2,500 families in the Middle Area and Khan Younis.

## JULY

### JULY 19

The International Court of Justice rules that Israel's occupation of Palestine (including Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem) is unlawful. The historic decision calls for an immediate end to the occupation and new settlements.

## AUGUST

### AUG. 15

## AFSC's humanitarian assistance in Gaza reaches over 1 million people



PHOTO: JON KRIEG/AFSC

Today, AFSC is unwavering in our demand for a permanent cease-fire for Gaza. We are also committed to supporting people who have been displaced even after a cease-fire is achieved. That includes helping to rebuild what has been destroyed.

It also means working for a future in which everyone's human rights are respected—a future in which everyone can live in safety and peace.

### "NEVER UNDERESTIMATE WHAT YOU ARE DOING,"

says Serena Awad, one of AFSC's staff members in Gaza.

### "EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW THAT EVERY PROTEST YOU GO TO, EVERY DONATION YOU MAKE, EVERY WORD YOU SPEAK, TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THE TRUTH—IS SAVING A LIFE. JUST KEEP DOING WHATEVER YOU CAN."

To contact Congress, donate to AFSC's humanitarian relief efforts, and more,

VISIT [afsc.org/crisis-gaza](https://afsc.org/crisis-gaza)

# Rubber bullets and tear gas—excessive force in California prisons and jails.

BY JOHN LINDSAY-POLAND

*Militarized policing is harming thousands of incarcerated people in California every year. Here's what communities can do to stop it.*

In California's Santa Rita jail, a man with mental illness was confined for months in a cramped cell measuring only 7 by 7 feet. Here, he faced the harsh reality of militarized policing firsthand. Prison staff deployed a weapon known as a "Stingball" in that tiny cell. When the Stingball exploded, it released dozens of rubber bullets that ricocheted off the walls at explosive speeds. The attack left the man with bruises four to six inches wide on his neck, chest, and legs.

Not too far away, in Contra Costa County, deputies at Martinez Jail used

similar weapons against incarcerated individuals four times in 2022 alone. In one case, the objective was simply to get a person to take medications.

These brutal examples are among thousands that illustrate the pervasive use of force in California's prisons and jails. AFSC's California Healing Justice Program has documented the issue in our recent report, "22,000 Uses of Force: Hidden Violence of Militarized Weapons in California Prisons and Jails."

Our report found that over just three years, **from 2021 through 2023, California prison staff used:**

**RUBBER BULLETS** 3,145 times

**TEAR GAS** 113 times

**BATONS** 1,226 times

**PEPPER SPRAY** 11,751 times, averaging over 10 uses daily

These numbers represent an extraordinary level of force being routinely deployed in a population of just 95,000 people.

The use of militarized force goes beyond prisons and jails. Throughout U.S. history, we have seen law enforcement use these types of weapons against civilians

across the country, from college campuses to homes where SWAT teams deploy. Typically, there are alternatives to the use of state violence. In the spring of this year, some students taking part in university protests over the crisis in Gaza were met with dialogue and agreements, while most faced excessive police force.

Far too often, the use of militarized weapons against ordinary people goes unreported and even becomes normalized. It is behind prison walls where this pattern is the most alarming and pervasive. It is a human rights crisis that has long evaded public scrutiny and demands immediate attention.

## DOCUMENTING THE CRISIS

AFSC has been working with communities across California to document and stop police militarization. We first began requesting California government documents on the use of police weaponry in 2021. It startled us to learn that most uses of police violence, by far, were occurring inside state prisons and jails. Even more disturbing, over three-quarters of these uses of force were against people with a mental health diagnosis.

Stopping this form of state violence requires increased transparency and accountability. In 2021, California took a crucial step in that direction by passing AB481, after years of advocacy by coalitions that included AFSC. The groundbreaking law is the first of its kind in the nation. It requires all law enforcement agencies in the state to publish and seek annual approval by local elected officials of policies for militarized equipment acquired from any source. That includes armored vehicles, assault rifles, tear gas, drones, and robots. AB481 also mandates annual reports on the use of the equipment.

Since the passage of the law, AFSC has worked with activists across the state—from

Chula Vista at the U.S.-Mexico border to suburbs like Los Altos, to cities such as Sacramento, Oakland, and San Francisco—to analyze the arsenals and use policies of militarized gear owned by law enforce-



This summer, AFSC organized a gathering in California on police demilitarization. Photos: Brooke Anderson



ment agencies, including the sheriffs that run jails. Our collective efforts have helped bring unprecedented transparency to police militarization in California.

However, documenting this information in prisons and jails presents special challenges. People in prison face severe restrictions in speaking about their experiences, because of the nature of incarceration as well as a fear of retaliation. Although California's state prison agency publishes data on hundreds of uses of force every month, it has repeatedly

denied public records requests for any incident reports on those uses of force. For incarcerated people, there are also significant barriers to filing lawsuits like those that have been filed by protesters and others who have faced police violence in the outside world.

## SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS MOVING FORWARD

What can be done about this situation? To start, California must rethink its budget priorities. State and county governments should fund preventative and crisis care as well as access to supportive housing for people with mental illness or substance use disorders and reduce funding for militarized weaponry for state prisons and county jails.

We need systemic change to reduce the number of people imprisoned because of a mental illness or substance use disorder. We must counter narratives of fear and punishment that fuel mass incarceration. Instead, we need policies focused on repairing harm and addressing illness, racism, and economic equality in our society.

Finally, California must do all that it can to stop the use of force in its prisons and jails. The state auditor should perform an audit on the extent, causes, and consequences of using violence

against incarcerated people. The state and county governments should explicitly ban the use of Stingballs and other militarized weapons in jails and prisons. We also need attention from journalists, policymakers, and oversight agencies.

The path forward requires collective action. Only through sustained effort can we end the problem of militarized policing in prisons, jails, and our communities.

To learn more about our efforts, visit [afsc.org/ab481](https://afsc.org/ab481). ■



# 6 PRINCIPLES of immigration

Our vision for more *welcoming, dignified, and just immigration*



Human rights workshop for youth in El Salvador. PHOTO: AFSC/LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Everyone deserves a chance to build a good life, regardless of where they were born or when or how they migrated.

But right now, our immigration system more often creates hardship and harm than offering opportunities for people to migrate safely.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Here are six pillars of welcoming, just, and dignified approaches to immigration—and some examples of how AFSC is working with communities to uphold these principles.

## 1

### Welcome people with dignity

People who migrate should be welcomed. Their basic human needs should be met.

And their human and civil rights should be respected. That includes keeping families together.



AFSC's humanitarian response at the U.S.-Mexico border. Photo: Pedro Rios/AFSC

#### SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Since September 2023, the U.S. Border Patrol has kept migrants in open-air detention sites along the U.S.-Mexico border without any basic services. Thousands of people, including children, have arrived at these sites, often with only the clothes they're wearing. After hundreds, even thousands of miles, they are thirsty, hungry, and sometimes need urgent medical attention. Still, many wait hours or days before they have the chance to seek asylum in the U.S.

Nearly every day, AFSC staff, partners, and volunteers help at a detention site between two border walls in San Diego, California. Through the barriers, we provide water, food, and clothing, and tend to people's wounds. We also answer questions and give information about what to expect in custody.

Over the past year, we have documented the many abuses we have witnessed. We are using this information to demand that Border Patrol agents stop holding people in open-air sites and provide basic services.

"Ultimately, we are pushing for a future where no one is forced to endure such mistreatment and indignity as they seek a better life," says Pedro Rios, director of AFSC's U.S.-Mexico Border Program.

## 2

### Offer paths to citizenship

Opportunities to pursue citizenship should be equally available to all immigrants, regardless of where they were born or when they came.

People who desire to return to their home countries should be able to do so safely, whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

# 3

## Protect the right to seek asylum

People who need asylum or other forms of protection should have access to just, orderly, accessible, and humane processes.

### NEW JERSEY

Through AFSC's work representing people seeking asylum, we ensure that everyone has access to this fundamental human right. We advocate for policies that remove barriers for people who want to claim asylum as they flee war, persecution, or other crises.

In New Jersey, AFSC lawyers represent people every day as they navigate complex administrative hurdles and backlogs in the immigration courts. We provide free legal representation to hundreds of asylum seekers every year, which can make all the difference for immigrants and their families. That includes people like Pierre\*, who faced political persecution and torture in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). After arriving in the U.S., he was jailed in an immigration detention center in New Jersey.

AFSC took on Pierre's case and helped him apply for asylum. After nearly six months in detention, he was granted asylum and finally freed. Now he can bring his wife and children from the DRC to live with him in safety.

"As we provide immigrants with legal services, we're also advocating for more just, humane immigration policies and increased resources for immigration courts and legal representation," says Alexandra Gonçalves Peña, AFSC's legal services director in New Jersey.

\*A pseudonym is used to protect our client's identity.



March for immigrant rights in Denver. Photo: AFSC/Colorado

# 4

## Ensure everyone can meet basic needs, regardless of status

Everyone should have access to a living wage, health care, education, and decent housing. Employment opportunities should be open to all. And everyone's labor rights should be protected.

# 5

## Value immigrant leadership

Immigrants are leading efforts to build resilient communities for everyone. Their efforts should be recognized and supported.

### COLORADO

Those most affected by the U.S. immigration system understand its problems deeply. They also know how best to solve them. Since 2012, AFSC has helped immigrants in Colorado develop their leadership skills through the Not1More Deportation Table. Every member of the group has either faced deportation themselves or helped a loved one through the process.

Not1More members support each other throughout their immigration case. They receive training from AFSC staff in nonviolent direct action, meeting facilitation, cultural work, and more. Together, they build skills to take on leadership roles and advocate for policies that respect the rights and dignity of all immigrants.

The impact of their collective work has been significant. "When people speak for themselves, it resonates strongly with policymakers and the public," says Jennifer Piper, co-director of AFSC's Colorado Immigrant Rights Program. Recently, Not1More members successfully advocated for policies making driver's licenses more accessible for immigrants, creating new worker protections in agriculture, and including more people in health care and unemployment benefits. Group members have also joined community advisory committees, nonprofit boards, and government oversight bodies.

"We're providing space and tools for immigrants to develop their leadership," Jennifer says. "That helps individuals transform their vision of themselves—and their community's vision of the role they can play in working toward shared liberation."

# 6

## Help people live safely wherever they are

No one should be forced to migrate because they can't meet basic needs or because of violence, inequitable economic policies, climate degradation, or other forms of injustice. Migration should be a choice for all of us.

### GUATEMALA

The highlands of western Guatemala have long been home to Ixil Mayan communities. Agriculture has always been their source of livelihood. But in recent decades, foreign development projects have threatened their lands and traditional way of life. These projects have depleted natural resources, degraded the environment, and displaced communities.

Since 2019, AFSC has supported Ixil community members in organizing to peacefully defend their land, rights, and ancestral practices. Working with our local partner Chemol Txumb'al, we provide popular education workshops to Ixil youth. These workshops examine capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy—and ways for community members to advocate for themselves.

We also support community projects that preserve traditional farming practices and generate additional income for families. Community members are growing medicinal plants and learning how to process them to make them available to the public. Youth are also cultivating native bees that produce honey with healing properties. At a time when many people in Guatemala are forced to migrate to survive, these community members are resisting displacement and reclaiming their heritage. In the process, they are building more just, sustainable communities where everyone can thrive. ■



Photo: Luis Ochoa

### TAKE ACTION

Urge Congress to act now for welcoming, dignified immigration.

[AFSC.ORG/6PRINCIPLES](https://www.afsc.org/6principles)





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