

THE MIDDLE EAST GROUP (AK ArbeitsKreis Nahost)

WHO WE ARE

The Middle East Group evolved from the Jewish Group, Berlin, founded in 1982 to protest against the Israeli war in Lebanon. The Jewish Group became a forum for Jews who disagreed with the uncritical attitude of the German Jewish Communities towards Israeli government policies. As the emphasis within the Group gradually shifted from Middle Eastern problems to questions arising predominantly in Germany, it was decided to form a parallel group: The Middle East Group – made up of members of the Jewish Group, together with Palestinians and non-Jewish Germans.

The Israeli peace activist and President of the International League of Human Rights Berlin, Alisa Fuss (1919-1997) was the driving force behind the founding of both these organizations and the continuation of their work. As an Israeli she fought for many years to defend the rights of Palestinians against discrimination and crimes which were committed and are still being committed against them until the present time.

In honoured memory of Alisa Fuss her [reports](#) (1988-1997) and symposia are published on our Website,

Today the Middle East Group (AK Nahost Berlin) is a solidarity group where people of different origin, nationality and religion – Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs from other Middle Eastern countries and Germans – come together regularly, once or twice a month for public lectures and / or to the Activists' Working-Group. Our basic commitment is to the Palestinians, whose livelihood has for decades been systematically destroyed by the Israeli Occupation, with its methods of repression and discrimination.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding we define our position as follows:

Israel's right to exist cannot be questioned

The establishment of a viable Palestinian state is indispensable

We are convinced that a secure existence for the State of Israel depends on the secure existence of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state. We support Israeli and Palestinian Peace movements and groups which for years have been engaged in seeking an end to the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the nullification of the annexation of East Jerusalem.

The mobilisation of world opinion, in addition to political and economic pressure coming from outside the Middle East is essential in order to effectuate these demands.

Activities of The Middle East Group (AK Nahost Berlin)

In recent years the ME Group has broadened the scope of its activities. We have invited more speakers coming from the Middle East directly, and especially since the beginning of the Second Intifada in September 2000, we have intensified our efforts to inform the German public about the critical situation in Palestine-Israel, in the hope of being able to influence German policies on the Middle East. In addition to

holding vigils and sending letters of protest to politicians, the ME Group has participated in diverse campaigns, demonstrations and appeals both throughout Germany and abroad. From 2004 onwards we have focussed our efforts on actions against the [Apartheid Wall](#). We are at present considering the question of sponsorship to help unite individual Palestinian families, divided as a result of the provisions of Israeli legislation (Nationality and Entry into Israel [Temporary Order] Law, July 2003).

2002-2004 the ME Group organized Solidarity concerts, the proceeds of which have gone to [Ta'ayush](#) and to the cooperating Organizations of the Physicians for Human Rights and the Union of Palestine Medical Relief Committees.

Since 2003 we have supported the promotion and sale of Palestinian olive oil and herbs in Germany

You are warmly invited to come to our monthly educational discussions and lectures on current Middle Eastern political, social, economic and cultural development. Our guest speakers are representatives of human rights' and peace organizations, mainly from Palestine and Israel.

Our Political Position

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pressure coming from outside the Middle East is essential in order to effectuate these demands.

We condemn the Israeli attacks on the Palestinian civilian population

The arbitrary expulsions, imprisonment and killing of human beings, the imposed collective punishment, the wanton destruction of houses and homes, land and olive trees, expropriation and confiscation of territory, the imposed state of curfew and closures – all these amount to State terror, and are in no way justifiable or pardonable.

We condemn the Palestinian attacks on the Israeli civilian population

Suicide attacks are the result of humiliation, deprivation of human and civil rights, despair and total lack of perspective. We consider them to be a reaction against years of repression, a life of confinement, reduced to a spatial minimum, in conditions unfit for human beings. We reject the suicide attacks on humanitarian grounds.

On the political level they are counterproductive. We condemn the criminalization of the Palestinian people. Armed Resistance is sanctioned by International Law. According to the United Nations Resolution 37/43 (December 1982), the struggle of

peoples for their independence, territorial integrity, national unity and freedom from colonial or foreign domination and occupation, is considered to be legitimate by all means at their disposal

We support the establishment of a sovereign, democratic Palestinian state and demand:

An immediate end to the military actions of the Israeli Armed Forces in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

The final withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the Palestinian Territories occupied in 1967;

The complete evacuation of Israeli settlements on these Territories, including the so-called "legal" as well as the "illegal";

The recognition of a sovereign Palestinian State on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital;

The recognition in principle of the Right of Return for the Palestinian refugees as an inalienable human right;

The release of political prisoners;

The condemnation of torture on both sides.