

The Shministim Letter 2008

We, high-school graduate teens, declare that we shall work against the Israeli occupation and oppression policy in the occupied territories and the territories of Israel. Therefore we will refuse to take part of these actions, which are being done under our name as part of the IDF.

Our refusal comes first and foremost as a protest on the separation, control, oppression and killing policy held by the state of Israel in the occupied territories, as we understand that this oppression, killing and routing of hatred will never lead us to peace, and they are all contradictory to the basic values a society that pretends to be democratic should have.

All the members of this group believe in developing the value of social work. We are not refusing to serve the society we live in, but are protesting against the occupation and the ways of actions which the militaristic system holds as it is today- crushing civil rights, discriminating on a racial base and acting opposing international laws.

We oppose the actions taken in the name of the "defense" of the Israeli society (Checkpoints, targeted killing, apartheid roads-available for Jews only, curfews etc.) that serve the occupation and exploitation policy, annex more conquered territories to the State of Israel and tramples the rights of the Palestinian population in an aggressive manner. These actions serve as a band-aid covering a bleeding wound, and as a limited and temporary solution that will accelerate and aggravate the conflict further.

We expostulate the plundering and the theft of territories and source of income to the Palestinians in exchange to the expansion of the settlements, reasoning to defend Israeli territories. In addition, we oppose any transformation of Palestinian cities and villages to ghettos without minimal living conditions or income sources enclosed by the separation wall.

We also protest the humiliating and disrespectful behavior of the military forces towards Palestinians in the West Bank; violence towards demonstrators, public humiliations, arrests, destruction of property regardless to any safety or defense needs, all of which violate global human rights and international law.

The wall and blockades surround the Palestinian Territories and serve as a halter around the Palestinian's neck. The soldiers who commit crimes under the patronage and protection of their commanders reflect the image of the Israeli society; a destructive and surprising society that is incapable of accepting its neighboring nation as a partner and not as an enemy.

In order to hold an effective dialogue between the two societies, we, the well-established and stronger society, have the responsibility of establishing and strengthening the other. Only with a more socially and financially established partner could we work towards peace rather than one-sided retaliation acts. Rather than supporting those citizens who have hope for peace, the military cast sanctions and pushes more and more people towards acts of extreme violence and escalation.

We hereby challenge every citizen who wonders if the military's policy in the occupied territories is conducive to the progression of the peace process, to discover by himself/ herself the truth and to lift the veil which distorts the reality of the situation; to verify statistical data; to look for the humane side in him/her and in the society which stands in front of him/her, to disprove the myths that were routed within us regarding the necessity of the IDF's in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, and to stand up against every action which he finds irrational and illegal.

In a place where there are humans, there is someone to talk to. Therefore, we ask to create a dialogue that goes beyond the power struggle, the retaliation and one-sided attrition actions; to disprove the "No Partner" myth, which is leading to a lose-lose situation of an ongoing frustration, and to move to more humane methods.

We cannot hurt in the name of defense or imprison in the name of freedom; therefore we cannot be moral and serve the occupation.

Signed
Members of the Shministim Letter 2008.

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