

Stop Israeli & Iranian Militarism

written by Frieda Afary | August 8, 2024



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The people of the Middle East region and the world are holding their breath and expecting a full-scale regional shooting war as Iran promises to take revenge against Israel for its assassination of Hezbollah and Hamas leaders last week.

As an Iranian American socialist feminist who has been part of the movement against Israel's genocidal invasion of Gaza, I want to emphasize that it is not enough to denounce Israeli militarism and demand that the U.S. government stop military aid to Israel. We also need to take a principled stand against the Iranian government's instrumentalization of the Palestinian struggle which has been used to justify Iran's regional imperialist ambitions and internal repression.

Recognizing Iran's military and ideological support for Hamas and Hezbollah does not mean that we deny the agency of the Palestinian people and the importance of their struggle for self-determination. Rather, it means that we recognize that as several surveys before and after October 7 have shown, a majority of Palestinians in Gaza oppose Hamas and its reactionary misogynist terrorist views/actions.

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What are some immediate ways in which social justice activists in the U.S. can help change the direction of events?

1. Weaken the extreme right in the U.S. by opposing Trump and Vance's candidacy. Trump and Vance's rule will massively strengthen the extreme right Israeli government of Netanyahu and will take away the basic civil rights that we have in the U.S. to protest injustice in the U.S. or around the world. Vote for Harris and Walz, who are currently the only viable presidential/vice-presidential team that can defeat Trump within the context of U.S. liberal capitalism, and have also shown more empathy toward the Palestinian struggle.
2. Weaken the Netanyahu government by supporting Palestinians and Israeli Jews who believe in peaceful coexistence of two peoples in one binational secular state or two independent secular

states in confederation.

3. Weaken the Iranian government by opposing its main military backer, the authoritarian Putin regime in Russia.
4. Support the Ukrainian struggle for self-determination against Russia's genocidal war in Ukraine.
5. Speak out in defense of Iranian feminists, human rights and labor activists in prison inside Iran, as they face long-term prison sentences and execution. Iran has the highest rate of executions in the world after China.
6. Issue slogans that clearly take a stand both against Israel's genocidal war in Gaza, and Hamas and Hezbollah's reactionary misogynist and terrorist views and actions. This is not both sidesism. This is the recognition that Hamas/Hezbollah with ideological/military support from Iran, oppose genuine liberation for Palestinians and will only make matters worse for Palestinians and the whole region.