RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE ADDRESSING THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN PALESTINE AND OPPOSING DOMESTIC HATE CRIMES AND BIAS AGAINST PALESTINIAN, ARAB, MUSLIM, AND JEWISH AMERICANS

WHEREAS, JACL has a long history of supporting civil rights, civil liberties, and human rights for all people, consistent with the JACL Constitution which provides that we “strive to secure and uphold civil and human rights for all people” and “the development of understanding between all social and ethnic groups,” and our Strategic Plan which states that our “mission is to secure and safeguard the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and all communities who are affected by injustice and bigotry”; 

WHEREAS, Japanese Americans and Asian Americans have suffered from discrimination, hate crimes, and bias incidents related to disagreements with actions or policies of foreign countries such as Japan and China, and the same is happening today with the treatment of Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish Americans due to the humanitarian crisis in Palestine;

WHEREAS, Japanese Americans know the importance of protecting human rights, civil rights, and civil liberties, since these were stripped away from them during WWII when America imprisoned them in concentration camps. The destruction of Japanese American communities; taking of homes, businesses, and farms; denial of education, health care, and cultural rights; confinement; and other such acts are infringements upon basic human rights in addition to civil rights and liberties. The racial discrimination that perpetuated this violation of human rights cannot be denied;

WHEREAS, an immediate and sustained ceasefire, unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and the release of all civilian hostages held in Gaza and Israel will dramatically reduce further deaths, destruction, and suffering, allow the time to negotiate a lasting peaceful resolution that provides for Palestinian self-determination and reaffirms the recognition of Israel, and will reduce the inflammatory impact of the conflict on the incidence of hate crime and bias directed at Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish Americans;

WHEREAS, although the long history of injustice, suffering, and violence characteristic of Israeli-Palestinian relations is important for members to study to provide context for the current armed conflict, it is too lengthy and complex to be comprehensively summarized within the confines of a resolution;
WHEREAS, in 1948, the Palestinian people became stateless due to the Nakba ("catastrophe") and have been living under Israeli governmental occupation since then;

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2023, Hamas and other fighters entered Israel, killed some 900 Israeli civilians and about 300 soldiers and police, and captured about 250 civilians and soldiers, about half of whom were foreign nationals or dual citizens, with over 100 having been subsequently released from Gaza;

WHEREAS, as of April 2024, the Israeli government holds an estimated 9,500 Palestinian political prisoners, including children, and Hamas holds captive an estimated 130 hostages taken on October 7, 2023;

WHEREAS, from October 7 through May 2024, Israeli military forces have killed over 35,000 and wounded over 75,000 Gazans, most of whom are civilians, orphaned over 17,000 children, displaced some 85% of the people, destroyed over 70% of the housing, and destroyed the hospital system; have severely restricted the flow and distribution of humanitarian aid, including aid provided or funded by the U.S., to Gaza such as water, food, medicine, fuel, and other essentials, resulting in famine, illness, and death; and are thereby inflicting collective punishment on the civilian population in Gaza;

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a provisional order to Israel stating that "at least some of the rights asserted by South Africa under the Genocide Convention are plausible", and on May 20, 2024, the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court requested arrest warrants for two Israeli and three Hamas leaders for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity since October 7; and on May 24, 2024, the ICJ ordered Israel to "[i]mmediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part" and to immediately reopen the Rafah Crossing "for unhindered provision at scale of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance";

WHEREAS, the continuation of the war threatens to further involve neighboring countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, and Syria in armed conflict;

WHEREAS, federal laws and policy require or allow the U.S. to condition or suspend military assistance to Israel including the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, 22 U.S.C. §2378-1, which prohibits arms transfers and security assistance to a country that "restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance";

WHEREAS, the United States government is in a position to influence Israeli policy, given that it provides, and since October 7 has continued to provide, billions in annual military assistance as well as diplomatic support, including at the United Nations, and is also in a position to indirectly influence Hamas policy;

WHEREAS, the war is impacting the civil rights of Americans, with increased hate crimes directed at Palestinian Americans including the October murder of a six-year-old and stabbing of
his mother outside of Chicago, the November shooting of three Palestinian American college
students in Vermont, and a Muslim Arab Stanford student intentionally struck by a driver in
November as well as other dramatic increases in assault, vandalism, and harassment directed at
Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish Americans;

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2024, the JACL National Board adopted a resolution proposed by the
Midwest District Council calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, and chapters, including Florin–
Sacramento Valley, Portland, Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Berkeley, and Chicago, have
issued calls for a ceasefire; and

WHEREAS, criticism of Israeli government policy and humanitarian concern for civilians in
Palestine are not evidence of antisemitism.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the National Council of the Japanese
American Citizens League that we urge President Joe Biden and Congress to pressure Israel to
implement a ceasefire, allow the sustained and free flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and agree
to negotiate a lasting peace agreement; to suspend military aid, other assistance, and diplomatic
support to Israel until it does so; to provide, fund, and support increased humanitarian aid to
Gaza; to help secure the immediate release of all hostages held by either side; and to
pressure the Israeli government, Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, and others to implement a
ceasefire and negotiate a lasting peace agreement;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that National JACL release a public statement that denounces
and calls for an end to the U.S. government’s funding of Israel’s military which violates
international humanitarian laws or the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, 22 U.S.C. §2378-1;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director shall promptly deliver a copy of
this resolution to President Joe Biden, Vice-President Kamala Harris, Secretary of State Antony
Blinken, and the leaders of the U.S. House and Senate;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all chapters and members are encouraged to contact the
President and their members of Congress and to engage in other actions to encourage them to
take immediate action as requested;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that National JACL, its chapters, and members are encouraged to take
positions and actions to condemn and oppose hate crimes and bias incidents targeting
Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish Americans, and should support efforts by other
organizations consistent with this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that National JACL will release a public statement
announcing the adoption of this resolution.
Please check one:

- [x] Fiscal Impact Statement attached
- [ ] No Fiscal Impact (meaning that the resolution does not call for any action that will be carried out by JACL staff, or incur any costs to JACL)