

For Immediate Release

<p>Event: Friday rally builds support for anti-war mobilization marking 5 years of Iraq war and occupation, calls for cease-fire in Gaza!</p> <p>Date: Friday, March 7, 2008</p> <p>Time: 5:00 PM</p> <p>Place: Pioneer Courthouse Square, SW Broadway &amp; SW Yamhill, downtown Portland</p>	<p>Contacts: Portland Peaceful Response Coalition (503) 344-5078 pprc@riseup.net www.pprc-news.org</p>
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Friday rally builds support for anti-war mobilization marking five years of Iraq war and occupation, calls for cease-fire in Gaza!

The regular *Portland Peaceful Response Coalition* 5:00PM Friday rally and march at Pioneer Courthouse Square continues to drum up support for next week's anti-war mobilization set for Saturday, March 15th, at the South Park Blocks. This week's rally turns the spotlight on the increase in violence in the Palestine-Israel conflict. "As expected, as grimly predictable as it was, we see that the murderous attacks on Gaza which killed upwards of 130 Palestinians, over half of them civilians, have led to only further murderous attacks, this time on a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem, killing at least eight civilian Israelis, some as young as fifteen years old," said William Seaman, a volunteer with PPRC ("At Least 7 Dead in Attack on Jerusalem School", New York Times online, March 6, 2008, AP). "What is it about a cease-fire, which has the support of a majority of Israelis and has been on offer from Hamas, that is so unacceptable to the Israeli government and its Bush administration patrons?" Echoing the calls of Jewish organizations such as *Brit Tzedek v'Shalom* and *Jewish Voice for Peace*, PPRC is calling on the US Congress to pressure the Israeli government and the Bush Administration to agree to a ceasefire with Hamas.

"Each of those helicopter gunships, each jet fighter and all the missiles and bombs that are fired or dropped in Gaza and end up killing and injuring dozens of Palestinian children and other innocent civilians, each is purchased by US taxpayers," said Seaman. "We have to take responsibility for our country's role in prolonging and worsening this deadly conflict, we have to pressure the Israeli government to end its occupation of Palestinian land, to remove the illegal settlements in the West Bank, end the siege on Gaza, and recognize the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people."

This week, *Vanity Fair* published a powerful exposé detailing the Bush Administration's role in "touching off a bloody civil war in Gaza and leaving Hamas stronger than ever"(The Gaza Bombshell, David Rose, *Vanity Fair*, April 2008).

LINK: [www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804](http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804)

"The facts revealed in this *Vanity Fair* article have been known and discussed within the Palestinian community for many months now, and it is gratifying to finally see this coming to the attention of a much wider audience here in the US," said Seaman. "Sadly, this latest scandal is all-too-typical of the US policy, under both Republicans and Democrats, when it comes to this conflict; the consequences are more deaths and more injuries, mostly among the innocent Palestinians, but as we saw in Jerusalem and along the border with Gaza, also among Israeli civilians."

"PPRC unequivocally condemns all attacks on civilian noncombatants, and that condemnation applies equally to the Israeli government for attacks which reflect utter disregard for the innocent Palestinian civilians killed or injured and to the Palestinian militants who fire rockets into civilian Israeli communities or plan and launch attacks on civilian targets like yesterday's massacre in Jerusalem," said Seaman. "And we have to hold ourselves responsible also for our government's role in perpetuating and escalating this tragic conflict, providing military and financial and diplomatic support for an illegal occupation that has to end."

The March 15th mobilization, marking five years of the US war and occupation in Iraq, will include an "Action Tent" that provides a glimpse into some of the history of the Palestine-Israel conflict. The Action Tent, titled "Palestine: 40 Years of Occupation and 60 Years of Dispossession", will include historic photographs from 1948, revealing the Palestinian experience, Al Nakba (Arabic for "the catastrophe"), when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven into exile from their homes. PPRC will be co-hosting a *Constitutional Rights* action tent focused on the struggle to defend the Bill of Rights against the Bush administration's 'war on terror' policies of torture, detention without due process, extraordinary rendition, warrantless wiretaps and the range of abuses embodied in the PATRIOT Act. *Amnesty International* will also be represented in this action tent. Action tents will be open from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday, March 15th, at the South Park Blocks. The rally is scheduled for 2:00 PM, and the peace march is expected to start at 2:30 PM.

For more information or to volunteer, please call the PPRC voicemail line at 503-344-5078.

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