

As a student majoring in Environmental Studies and Sociology, I first want to highlight how the Israeli assault on Gaza affects us globally, even here in Richmond.

In addition to the immense suffering of Gazans, Israel's bombardment is amplifying the global climate emergency. Planet-warming emissions generated during the first two months of the attack on Gaza were greater than the annual carbon footprint of more than 20 of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations. Over 99% of the 281,000 metric tonnes of CO² estimated to have been generated in the first 60 days can be attributed to Israel's aerial bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza. To give you an idea, these greenhouse gas emissions are roughly equivalent to the emissions of 75 coal-fired power plants operating for a whole year.

I will now share the experiences of a Palestinian in Gaza, the brother of a PhD student studying here in Richmond:

"Our daily life in Gaza has become a battle for survival, marked by acute shortages of resources such as food, water, and medicine. My cousin, who lived in the north, had tanks surround his home. He went 12 days with less than 1 liter of water and a few bites of bread per day to stay alive, until the humanitarian pause when he was able to evacuate south. Limited access to water due to disruptions caused by the bombardments and invasions has led to a weekly 6 hour wait at a desalination plant, with reduced access to once every 8 days. Rafah has transformed into the most densely populated place in the world, full of people living in tents who have been displaced several times. Overflowing sewage plagues the area, increasing health risks and further and worsening already dire living conditions. Living close to Khan Younis exposes us to 24/7 bombardment. The destruction of schools, including my brother's high school, has disrupted education for countless children in Gaza. Hospitals are overwhelmed, and the scarcity of medicine puts individuals with chronic illnesses at heightened risk. The lack of electricity and internet makes basic communication a luxury, and the absence of these services hinders our ability to work and study, and isolates us from the rest of the world. The visible destruction of our surroundings is a

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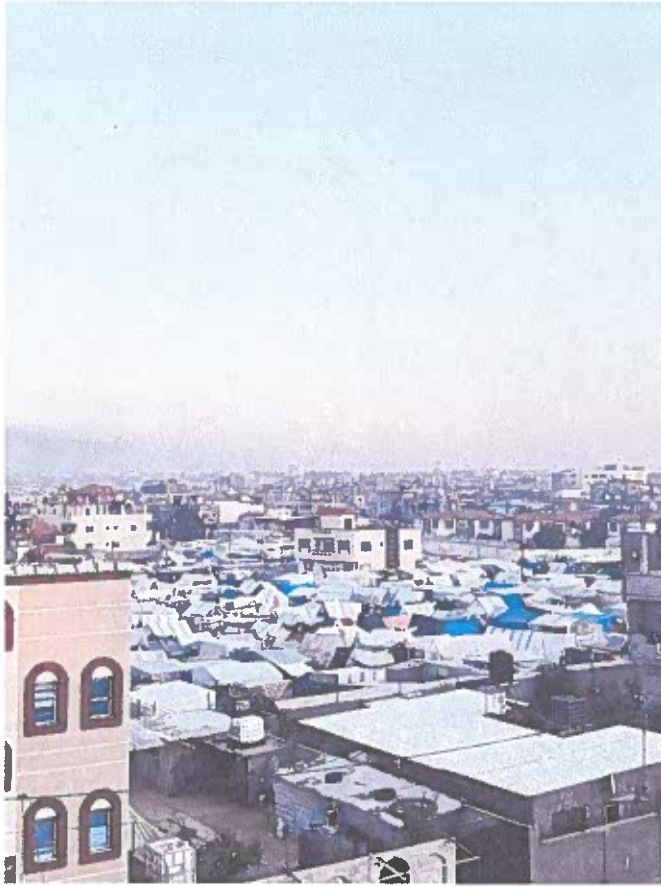
constant reminder of the toll this has taken on our community. Homes, infrastructure, and landmarks that once stood as pillars of normalcy have been reduced to rubble. The continuous exposure to violence and uncertainty has taken a toll on our physical and mental well-being.”

The attached photos depict current living conditions in Gaza; 1.5 million displaced, scattered throughout southern Gaza, living in tents for over 3 months...can you

imagine?

Richmond City council members should think long and hard about supporting the Resolution for Palestine that was presented at the meeting on January 8th and to make it a top priority to both educate themselves, as well as take the time to have meetings with members of the local community and organizations who are concerned about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza—a product of Israel's relentless bombardments and our tax dollars, used to fund and support these heinous acts. Global support for this is only growing. Richmond should lead by example and support the call for a ceasefire and lifting the siege on Gaza instead of waiting for everyone else to do it first. Wouldn't it be better to look back knowing that Richmond stood for peace, justice, and equality for all when so many fell silent?

Thank you for your time.



Tents surrounding their home in Rafah



Satellite photo showing the sea of tents

Bombings of Khan Younis



The huge number of tents in Rafah, near the Egyptian border



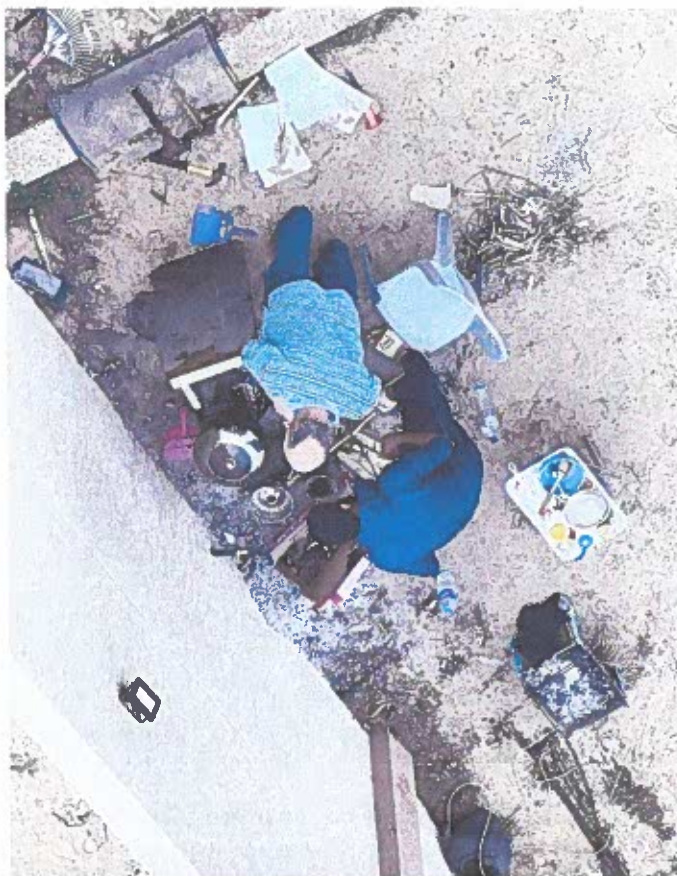


People wait in the street for days until they find a tent and an empty piece of land to make it.



Kids playing next to piles of garbage

Cooking on fire



People waiting hours in queues for bread

