

I am testifying in support of House Joint Resolution 2, a resolution, which calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

For nearly four months I have watched with shock and horror at our community's lack of collective response as Apartheid Israel brings down death and destruction on the people of Gaza, using our taxpayer dollars.

I have watched as American lawmakers – both Democrats and Republicans – respond with unequivocal support of Apartheid Israel as this genocide unfolds. Just yesterday, Nancy Pelosi angrily responded to anti-war protestors and suggested they go back to China. Americans who attend campaign rallies are being profiled at the door based on their appearance.

Genocide and the slaughter of innocent civilians is nothing new. Just two years ago, we witnessed as the Eritrean and Ethiopian government slaughtered hundreds of thousands of innocent people in Tigray. Americans and our community were completely silent. Our community also remains silent as a genocide unfolds in Sudan and Congo.

The difference between those instances and the crimes against humanity by Apartheid Israel of course is the scale and publicity of the slaughter. Everyday we see mutilated bodies of little babies, we see mothers crying with excruciating pain as they hold and kiss their children before they cover them with shrouds. Imagine, you are a mother or a father whose house was bombed by Apartheid Israel, your child has been murdered. You are now displaced to a refugee camp far away from your home. Because Apartheid Israel desecrates graves, you are not sure that if you bury your child the grave will be there when you return. So you carry your baby's corpse to your destination. Imagine you, a father. Your infant baby has been slaughtered by Apartheid Israel. You carry the shroud of its tiny body on a crate of your bicycle to a burial site to bury it alone.

How can anyone with children of their own, who looks at their precious eyes every day, who treasures them more than life itself, witness this unimaginable loss and grief of mothers and fathers and be silent. How can one witness a child get orphaned and not feel incredible sorrow for that child because that child could be anyone's child? After having felt this sorrow, how can anyone stay silent?

Does anyone think that we as a community come out of this state of abject moral failure in one piece? I don't think so.

This resolution HJ0002 is an opportunity to start the healing process. More needs to be done of course. We as a community should stop funding the Israeli settler colonial project and this genocide. We should demand that all hostages – the thousands of Palestinians who are detained illegally and the hundreds of Israeli hostages held by Hamas be released, we should also label Israel an Apartheid state. And when we see the pernicious impacts of Zionism on our civil liberties we should speak out with a collective voice to defend those liberties.

Those elected to public office have a solemn responsibility to stand up against oppression, especially if they proclaim to espouse anti-racist values or commitment to human rights. Not speaking up completely undermines that stance. I urge you to come out in support of the resolution today to ensure that it passes the rules committee.