

Coalition of “Grassroots Diplomats” Take the Lead on International Solidarity with South Africa in the Absence of Diplomacy and Accountability from U.S. Officials

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Peace activists across the country have embarked on a campaign to mobilize global support for South Africa's charge of genocide against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The campaign, spearheaded by CODEPINK, World Beyond War, and RootsAction, aims to rally nations to submit a “Declaration of Intervention” supporting South Africa's case at the ICJ.

The focus is on holding Israel accountable for alleged genocide in Gaza and putting an end to the tragic suffering of an imprisoned population. Delegations from major cities engaged with U.N. missions, embassies, and consulates worldwide, urging countries to invoke the Genocide Convention at the United Nations' judicial arm.

The campaign started two weeks ago with an open call for people to join in a petition and letter-writing campaign urging countries to invoke the genocide convention and charge Israel with genocide in the International Court of Justice. Since then, over 30,000 people

signed the petition, accompanied by an impressive 118,290 letters sent to various countries urging support of the cause.

The nationwide delegations of “grassroots diplomats” took on this campaign because officially appointed U.S. diplomats continue to insist on supporting Israel’s ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, rejecting the sentiments of a majority of people in the U.S. and around the world who want a ceasefire and an end to the slaughter.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby calls South Africa’s 84-page suit accusing Israel of genocide “meritless, counterproductive, and completely without any basis in fact whatsoever.” Notably, the United States supported Ukraine invoking the Genocide Convention last year in the International Court of Justice with far less evidence.

In the first week of January, delegations of grassroots diplomats embarked on a petition and letter delivery campaign across the United States, urging missions, consulates, and embassies to support South Africa’s legal action against Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the U.N. Convention on Genocide. While the visits and deliveries varied from city to city, the overall reception by staff and representatives in each U.N. Mission, Embassy, and Consulate was encouraging and supportive, with some delegations able to meet directly with country representatives.

The NYC delegation visited around 30 U.N. missions, engaging in significant diplomatic efforts. They had a positive meeting with Colombia’s U.N. Ambassador, Arlene Tickner, exploring the potential for a Declaration of Intervention to support South Africa’s legal action. Another meeting took place with the Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the U.N. At the Bolivia Mission, the delegation received a warm reception, providing a letter and petition. A productive meeting occurred with the Bangladesh U.N. Consul, who expressed interest in connecting with legal experts. The NYC team met African Union diplomats who offered support and suggested additional efforts for South Africa. A meeting at the South Africa Mission involved discussions with the counselor and Deputy Permanent Representative. The delegation expressed their gratitude and support to the South African government. The South African representative acknowledged and appreciated the delegation’s work in their peace work.

The D.C. team engaged in diplomatic efforts, meeting with the Deputy Minister at the Colombian Embassy to encourage the Colombian government’s continued stance against Israeli actions and to join South Africa’s case. They visited and submitted their petition to the Ghanaian, Chilean, and Ethiopian Embassies, urging support for South Africa’s case against Israel. The team also had discussions with the Bolivian Embassy. Currently, they are arranging a meeting with the Turkish ambassador to further their diplomatic initiatives.

Three delegations from Miami divided their efforts to visit ten consulates, including those of Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, France, Honduras, Ireland, Spain, and Turkey. The delegations had the opportunity to meet with consular generals from Bolivia, Honduras, and Turkey, all notably welcoming and receptive. In addition, the Miami team reached out to the Turkish ambassador in Washington, D.C., further extending their diplomatic efforts. The Türkiye Consulate in Miami emphasized the visit on their social media platform, underscoring the significance of the engagement.



Miami team at Turkish consulate (Source: [CODEPINK](#))

The Tampa team focused on a single visit to the Greek Consulate, accompanied by a representative from CAIR Florida, based in Tampa. CAIR is a nationwide federation of legally independent chapters dedicated to safeguarding the civil liberties of Americans. The Greek Consulate warmly received the delegation, expressing appreciation for a gift of olive oil. Furthermore, they assured the team they would forward the petition and letter to the Embassy of Greece in Washington, D.C., indicating a positive reception and willingness to address the delegation's concerns.

Orlando engaged with five consulates representing Mexico, Italy, Brazil, Haiti, and Colombia. The meeting at the Haitian Consulate was mainly positive, with a productive discussion with an Assistant Consul urging support for South Africa's case against Israel. Similarly, the delegation met with the Vice Consular of Colombia, delivered a petition, and urged their support for South Africa's case against Israel, indicating a proactive approach in advancing their diplomatic efforts.

In Houston, the delegation reported successful engagements during their visits. They met with the Consulate of Belize staff and spoke with Consulate General Francisco Leal of Chile. The Honduran consulate staff extended kindness during their visit. The delegations also visited the Pakistan consulate as part of their diplomatic efforts.

The San Francisco delegation visited three consulates – Chile, Brazil, and Colombia. They engaged with the staff at the Chilean and Brazilian consulates, delivering the petition and letter at the Colombian Consulate, situated in the same building as the Israeli Consulate. Security at the building instructed the delegation to wait outside for a representative. However, the doors were subsequently locked, preventing entry. In response, the delegation affixed the petition and letter to the building's door to convey their message.

The delegation in Los Angeles visited nine foreign consulates in the city, including Belize,

Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Turkey, Chile, Colombia, and Kuwait. The delegation expressed gratitude to the staff at the South African Consulate for South Africa's filing in the ICJ that charges Israel with genocide. As a goodwill gesture, the activists brought flowers, a simple yet well-received token of peace and unity. They also had an encouraging meeting with Bolivian Consulate Gabriella Silva, who supported the delegation's effort.



Belize Consulate LA (Source: [CODEPINK](#))

Delegations from Detroit, Chicago, Boston, and San Antonio also made visits to their local Consulates. Prior to deliveries, Turkey, Malaysia, and Slovakia publicly came out in support of South Africa's filing. Since then, Jordan announced that they will file a "Declaration of Intervention" supporting South Africa's case.

This grassroots diplomatic effort represents a unified plea for justice, demanding global solidarity against Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. The tireless advocacy seeks to bridge nations in support of South Africa's pursuit of justice in the International Court of Justice.

Deliveries will continue into the first of next week with the hopes of engaging with as many missions, consulates, and embassies as possible before the start of the ICJ hearing on Jan. 11.

The oral argument of South Africa will take place on Thursday 11th January 2024 and Israel's oral argument on Friday 12th January 2024. The hearings will be streamed live and on demand on the [ICJ's Website](#) and on the [UN Web TV](#).

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