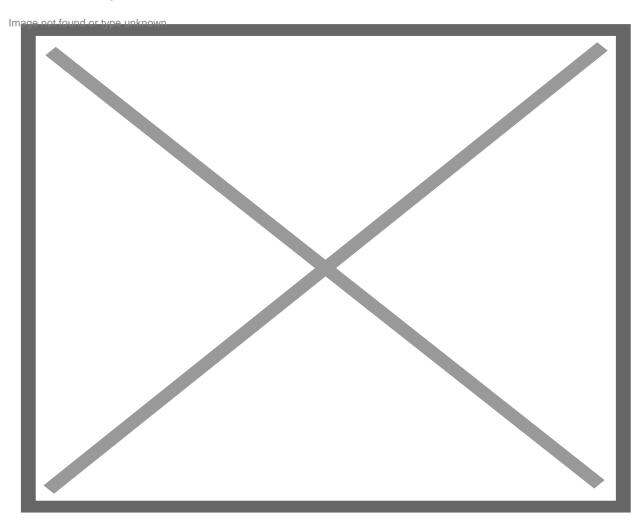# Muslim Community Marches in Christiansted Town in Solidarity Against Israel-Palestine War; Call for Action Beseeched

Human Interest / **Published On May 27, 2021 07:13 AM /**

Kia Griffith May 27, 2021

Crowd marches down King Street Christiansted with placards calling for freedom and peace. By KIA GRIFFITH for THE CONSORTIUM By. KIA GRIFFITH FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Last updated at 6:06 a.m. Friday, May 28, 2021.

ST. CROIX — "Free, free Palestine! From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" was chanted from a crowd of over 100 people on Wednesday morning starting at 11:00 a.m. from the Ancilmo Marshall Command Station at the Richmond stoplight, down King Street, to the Christiansted waterfront area beside the Danish Customs House.

According to the New York Times, it has been seven years since the last major conflict with Hamas, the militant group of the Gaza strip.

So, what sparked one now?

On the first eve of Ramadan — the Muslim holy month beginning April 13, 2021 — Muslims went, as is the custom, to Jerusalem to pray. Meanwhile, Israel President Reuven Rivlin was delivering a speech at the Western Wall in honor of the country's Memorial Day. Jewish soldiers feared his speech would be drowned out by the prayers on loudspeakers at the nearby Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, so they invaded their space, assaulted the people inside and cut the loudspeakers. The action ignited a war.

"The Jews take over other family's homes, random airstrike in Gaza city targeting civilian people, and killed 67 plus children and hundreds of others were injured," relayed Islam Qattoum, owner of West Yam Yam in Frederiksted town. "The Jewish blame the victims of Gaza while they strike and take over their enemies' homes. If someone in Gaza leaves their home for the day and returns, it's likely they may find a Jew inhabiting their home and they cannot do anything about it," he said.

Crowd marches down King Street Christiansted with placards shouting "Free Palestine" (Kia Griffith, VI Consortium)

Mr. Qattoum made this contrast, "Israel has one of the strongest armies in the world and Gaza is comparable to an island life." According to a 2018 Forbes report, Israel has the third strongest military in the Middle East with a 2017 budget of $18.5 billion.

Call for Action

"We stand here for the Palestinian people, the last people on the face of this earth that are still under colonial occupation," said Mr. Hussein.

The Muslim community on St. Croix came together with other residents and local organizations in solidarity against the violence. Young children, men and women alike carried flags and placards with phrases that read "To stand with Palestine is to stand with humanity," and "Break the silence, end the siege." One placard had a cartooned image of a man poking a stick at the United Nations logo, asking that it do something about the situation.

As posted in a press release on the United Nations (U.N.) website, Palestinian-American diplomat and minister for foreign affairs, Riyad Mansour, said at a meeting in 2018 that "neither respect, nor peace, can be achieved through speeches alone; words and commitments must be matched by practical actions to implement the law." In recent times, he has publicly condemned the actions of Israel on a holy night—referencing the first offense on the start of Ramadan—and has said a ceasefire is not enough to solve anything, as shared in a recent general assembly of the U.N. last week.

Assistant director of the Women's Coalition of St. Croix, Carolyn Forno, said, "There's a saying that says, 'While others are oppressed, no one is free.' We are proud and honored to stand with our brothers and sisters here in St. Croix and Palestinians around the world to resist oppression in whichever form it takes." The Coalition is a nonprofit organization that fights oppression and promotes freedom and equity, she said.

After the march, the crowd gathered and observed the U.S. and Palestinian national anthems, called for political action to be taken to end the war, and shared messages of peace. All in attendance at the demonstration on St. Croix hope that international law will soon be respected, and peace restored.

In a statement following the publication of this story, Ahmad Hussein, organizing member of "Cruzans for Justice in Palestine" which organize the March, said "the organizing of this event was independent of the Muslim community.

According to the statement, "This event was in no way organized to protest against Jews. We want to make that 100 percent clear. It is organized to bring a voice to those suffering in silence. We the organizing committee wants to make it clear that not all Jews are responsible for the Israeli occupation. Those responsible for the occupation are Israeli Zionist colonial settlers. We stand against oppression, apartheid, racism, and colonialism. We support our Jewish brothers and sisters, and appreciate their support of the Palestinian plight. Our main voice is to help the people of Palestine live free of occupation, free of segregation, free of oppression, free of injustice no matter where they are in Palestine."

"Palestinians have been suffering a system of apartheid, ethnic cleansing, segregation, and colonialism for the past 73 years. The Israeli occupation has over the years has built 440 illegal settlements in the West Bank. Housing over half a million illegal Israeli settlers who are armed.

These settlers have been taking land away from the indigenous people who have lived there for centuries. These settlements have been deemed illegal by UN resolution 2334."