

MADRE

121 West 27th Street, Room 301
New York, New York 10001
Telephone 212 627-0444
Fax 212 675-3704
e-mail: madre@igc.apc.org

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October 8, 1997

Linda Ben Zvi
15 Hateena Street
Nof Yam 46622
Israel

Joining hands and hearts with women and children for peace, justice and human rights

Dear Friends,

Word of your organization came to us recently, via the New York Times. We are writing to express our support for your courageous call to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

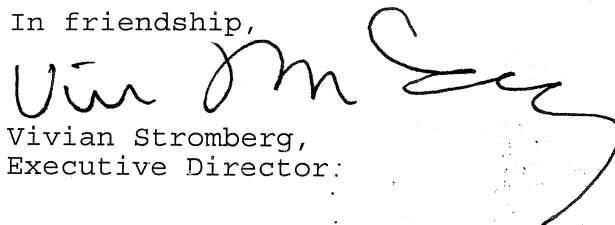
We are a US-based international women's human rights organization working to counteract US policy wherever it seeks to exploit or subjugate women and their families, by military, political or economic means. Like you, we have come to see that repressive policies inevitably embitter the lives of those in whose names they are implemented. And like you, we believe that self-determination is not a relative proposition, but a human right that must not be compromised by the rhetoric of state security and patriotism.

Immediately after the April 1996 bombing of Lebanon, we brought an emergency delegation to Qana to protest US support for occupation, which we see as the underlying cause of violence in the region. I am enclosing a video filmed during the visit that describes our work there.

We understand that as women in a militarized society, your identity as mothers – and as mothers of soldiers, in particular – is manipulated by the state to serve political objectives. But you have rejected the notion that your ultimate contribution lies in the sacrifice of your children's lives. You have subverted this idea, and placed motherhood, instead, in the service of a politics of peace. With this act of defiance you risk slander and even attack. But you also gain a new home. Today you move in the tradition of the women of South Africa's Black Sash, of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, and, of course, of the Women in Black of Tel Aviv and Belgrade.

Your efforts rest on the power of these women and many hundreds of others; just as our own work is strengthened by your courage. We offer our commitment to join you however we can be of use in pursuit of peace in the Middle East and an end to military occupation wherever it occurs.

In friendship,


Vivian Stromberg,
Executive Director

Madre@igc.apc.
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