

Laura Casey
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LD 1383

To the member of our state government,

Good morning. My name is Laura Casey and while I unable to make the hearing in person (due to limiting disabilities); I wanted my voice heard in regards to LD1383.

For twenty-one years — I was on the “tip of the spear” as an active duty Navy storekeeper and then a Surface Warfare Officer. In 2006, my Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) deployed off the coast of Lebanon, where we conducted HADR (Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief) operations to pick up Lebanese-American citizens and transported them to “safety” in Cyprus.

At that time, I was 100% a proponent for the apartheid State of Israel (Occupied Palestine). The blatant lies we were told about the operation didn’t come to light (for me) until 2024, when I watched a US news program that filmed the evacuation from the shore side.

Fast forward to 10/7/2023 and I still believed that Israel (occupied Palestine) “had a right to defend itself,” which I know sounds familiar to everyone sitting for this bill.

But I also have training in Human Rights. I also held positions that required ROE, COLREGS and International law. Needless to say, it did not take long to see that Israel’s intent was ethnic cleansing/another Nakba (at minimum) and genocide. The sad truth is that it should never have taken me until November 2023 to see the truth that even my years of training verified.

Add in the videos and testimony of Palestinians that I saw with my own eyes (even as you, the State and our federal government have told us we cannot believe). I am not ignorant. I’ve seen war. I’ve seen combat. I’ve had bombs dropped in the vicinity of my ship.

But what I’ve witnessed in Palestine surpasses any language I have that can express it. An elderly man ran over by a tank as he was evacuating. His crushed body, destroyed by a tank. A TANK. A human versus a tank. In what world is that ok? I heard a little girl named Hind who cried for an hour, begging someone to save her as she bled out beside her CHILD cousin and family inside the car. Later reports by Humanitarian organizations like Amnesty showed (with logistical proof) that their car was hit 330+ times, also by a tank. A TANK. A five-year-old child versus A TANK. In what world is that not a human right violation?

I could spend days telling you the stories we’ve all witnessed. I could spend years telling you how it doesn’t make any of us safer (as an Iraq veteran).

When you add basic decent humanity. When you add the struggles of Mainers and Americans here. WHY are we not only (still) supporting a genocide...but why are we subverting the will of the folks who put you in office?

We vote. We pay our taxes. We served (combined) over 40 years in defense of our country.

Yet every single day, I watch local, state and federal elective government personnel tell me “I don’t know anything.” Really? Because my years of training in Urban Warfare, small boat operational tactics, surface warfare, anti-terrorism/force protection, international law and human rights says different.

So I feel that what Mainers are collectively asking (since over 60% think Israel is out of control) isn’t some “pie in the sky” demand.

We want our money. The money WE PAY IN TAXES to stop funding a genocide (by Geneva Convention definitions).

The will of the people will not be subverted and we demand our tax dollars go to community resources inside of our state — where Mainers need it — instead of

terrorizing children, men, women, elderly, disabled, lgbtq HUMANS a world away.

Thank you for your time.

With regard,

Laura Casey

LCDR, USN, retired