

The following letter was published in Vancouver's Westender, in the April 24-30 issue, written by Hanna Kawas

*Reply to "Taking issue with ISM activists", letters published in the Westender (April 17-23 issue)*

The Letters published in the Westender (April 17-23 issue), under the title "Taking issue with ISM activists", are an attempt to divert attention away from the real issues at stake, one of which is Israeli warcrimes against the Palestinians (see Amnesty International report at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org), searchword: Israel). It is truly pathetic to see the extent to which the pro-Israeli apologists are willing to go to cover up the facts. Instead of dealing with answers to the Palestinian civilian suffering under Israeli occupation, they try to ridicule the genuine human feelings and the courageous stand of the Vancouverites who volunteered with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). They even deny that the occupied territories are indeed occupied. Israel's closest ally, the U.S., considers the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem as "Occupied Territories." The irrefutable basis for this is the hundreds of United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and the Forth Geneva Convention.

(Letter author) Mr. Steve Lipari quotes UN Security Council Resolution 242 as a proof that the Palestinian territories are not occupied lands. He states that the resolution calls for Israel to withdraw "from territories" and not from "all the territories", conveniently forgetting to mention that the preamble of the same resolution de-legitimized any territorial conquest by "Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war".

If any territory is "disputed" it is in fact the Israeli territories, for the following reasons:

1. Israel, since its creation in 1948, never defined its borders. Israel still does not have a constitution precisely so as not to define its borders, and thereby allow for more conquest of Arab and Palestinian lands;
2. In 1947 the UN Partition Plan which created Israel gave it 56 per cent of the area of historic Palestine. At that time, Jews-be they Palestinian natives or settlers-only owned six per cent of the total area of historic Palestine;
3. In 1948 Israel expanded its territories by military conquest and controlled 78 percent of the total area of historic Palestine;
4. The Jewish National Fund and its affiliates (which does not sell nor lease to non-Jews) controls 93 per cent of the land in Israel and most of this land was confiscated from the indigenous native Palestinians without their consent. So which territories are the "disputed territories"?

Hanna Kawas, chair Canada Palestine Association,