

Palestinian Solidarity Landscape in Madison, Wisconsin: An Analytical Report

Executive Summary

The landscape of Palestinian solidarity in Madison, Wisconsin, is characterized by a robust and highly interconnected network of organizations. This report identifies key groups actively supporting Palestinians, with a particular focus on the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP) and the Madison FCNL Advocacy Team, as well as other prominent local entities. The analysis reveals a strategic, multi-faceted approach to advocacy, encompassing direct action, political lobbying, public education, and humanitarian aid. The WCJP serves as a central coordinating body, uniting over 50 diverse organizations and amplifying collective efforts for a ceasefire and human rights. The Madison FCNL Advocacy Team contributes through structured, faith-based legislative engagement. Other groups, such as the Madison-Rafah Sister City Project and Students for Justice in Palestine UW-Madison, employ distinct but complementary tactics, ranging from grassroots humanitarian initiatives to high-visibility campus protests. This comprehensive ecosystem demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how to influence public opinion, institutional policy, and national foreign policy through coordinated and varied avenues of engagement.

Introduction: Landscape of Palestinian Solidarity in Madison, Wisconsin

Madison, Wisconsin, hosts a dynamic and interconnected network of organizations dedicated to advocating for and supporting Palestinians. This environment reflects a profound commitment to the cause, manifested through a wide array of activities that extend beyond mere protest. The movement in Madison is multi-faceted,

encompassing direct action, political advocacy, public education, and humanitarian aid. This diversity in approach allows for a broad appeal and a resilient capacity to address various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A significant observation within this landscape is the prominent role of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP). This organization functions as a central coordinating body, effectively unifying many local efforts and providing a cohesive platform for collective action. The interconnectedness among these groups, whether through formal coalition membership or collaborative event planning, suggests a deliberate and effective strategy of resource pooling and message amplification. This strategic depth and collaborative spirit allow the movement to respond adaptably to challenges and opportunities, fostering a comprehensive approach to influencing public discourse, institutional policies, and national foreign policy.

The Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP)

Mission, Structure, and Collective Power

The Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP) stands as a formidable collective force, uniting over 50 organizations in a shared mission to advocate for Palestinian rights.¹ This extensive coalition signifies a substantial base of support and considerable potential for mobilization across Wisconsin. The primary and most urgent demand articulated by the WCJP is for Wisconsin political leaders to take immediate action toward implementing a ceasefire in Gaza.¹ This clear policy objective provides a focused direction for their collective efforts.

The strategic approach of the WCJP is centered on mobilizing widespread support across every corner of the state. The aim is to influence public opinion and ultimately shift policy decisions, demonstrating a dual focus on grassroots engagement and political leverage.¹ The overarching goal of the coalition is to shape a future where justice, human rights, and lasting peace prevail for the People of Palestine.¹ This broad vision serves as a moral and ethical framework for their specific demands and actions. The WCJP's commitment is unwavering, with an explicit intent to persist until the

humanitarian crisis in Gaza ends and the atrocities, which they assert are perpetuated by the Israeli state and fueled by financial support from the United States Government, are halted.² This position underscores their resolve and their critique of U.S. foreign policy.

Activities undertaken by the WCJP are diverse, encompassing actions such as taking to the streets for protests, engaging with courthouses, and utilizing various community spaces. The coalition frames its efforts as a "moral reckoning" and a continuation of the broader movement for justice, voting rights, and dignity for all.³ This framing connects their specific cause to universal human rights principles, allowing their message to resonate with a wider segment of the public beyond specific political affiliations and thereby increasing its potential for influence. The WCJP's function as a critical coordinating body provides a unified platform for diverse groups to collectively advocate for a ceasefire and broader Palestinian rights. Its large, ideologically varied membership base signifies broad community engagement and the potential for significant mobilization, indicating a strategic effort to consolidate influence and amplify collective action. This coalition model allows for the pooling of resources, expertise, and activist bases from various groups, enabling more impactful and sustained campaigns.

Key Member Organizations in Madison/Wisconsin

The WCJP's membership includes a substantial number of Madison-based organizations, which is indicative of the localized strength and diverse nature of the solidarity movement within the city.¹ The sheer volume and variety of organizations explicitly named as WCJP members is a critical indicator of a deliberate organizational strategy. This coalition model allows for the pooling of resources, expertise, and activist bases from various groups, enabling more impactful and sustained campaigns.

The extensive list of Madison-based member organizations within WCJP highlights the deep roots and broad ideological spectrum of Palestinian solidarity efforts in the city. This diverse membership facilitates a cross-pollination of ideas and tactics, creating a more resilient and adaptable movement capable of appealing to various demographics and employing a wide range of advocacy methods. The presence of groups ranging from student organizations to faith-based communities and socialist groups means the movement can draw on different strengths—the grassroots

organizing power of students, the moral authority of faith groups, the political analysis of socialist organizations, and the community connections of local advocacy groups. This broad base enhances the movement's legitimacy, reach, and capacity for sustained action, making it more robust and less susceptible to single points of failure.

The following table lists prominent Madison-specific member organizations of the WCJP:

Table 1: Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP) Member Organizations in Madison/Wisconsin

Organization Name	Primary Focus (General)	Type of Group
Jewish Voice for Peace Madison	Anti-Zionist Jewish advocacy, human rights	Faith-based (Jewish), Anti-war
Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America	Democratic socialism, anti-imperialism, social justice	Political, Socialist
Madison for a World Beyond War	Anti-war, peacebuilding, demilitarization	Anti-war
Madison IWW (Industrial Workers of the World)	Workers' rights, anti-capitalism, international solidarity	Labor, Anarcho-Syndicalist
Madison Rafah Sister City Project	Humanitarian aid, cultural exchange, public awareness	Community, Humanitarian
Students for Justice in Palestine UW Madison	Student activism, education, institutional divestment	Student
United States Palestinian Community Network	Palestinian community organizing, advocacy, cultural preservation	Community, Palestinian Diaspora
Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement	Social justice, anti-repression, economic justice	Activist, Social Justice
Wisconsin Christians for Justice in Palestine	Christian advocacy for Palestinian rights	Faith-based (Christian)
Party for Socialism and Liberation	Revolutionary socialism, anti-imperialism	Political, Socialist

The Madison FCNL Advocacy Team

FCNL's National Framework and Quaker Principles

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) operates as a Quaker-led national lobbying network, comprising approximately 2,000 individuals organized into 137 Advocacy Teams across all 50 states.⁴ This structure highlights a decentralized yet coordinated approach to political advocacy, allowing local efforts to contribute to a broader national strategy. FCNL's overarching mission is deeply rooted in Quaker principles, striving for a world free of war, a society characterized by equity and justice for all, a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled, and an earth restored.⁵ This broad moral framework informs their specific policy positions and provides a distinct ethical dimension to their lobbying efforts.

The advocacy undertaken by FCNL is explicitly guided by Quaker faith and an emphasis on nonviolent engagement.⁵ This commitment to non-violence provides a unique moral authority and a long-term dedication to peace and justice that transcends immediate political cycles. FCNL staff provide consistent support and training to their advocacy teams, ensuring that local efforts are well-informed and strategically aligned with national objectives.⁴ This indicates a professional and sustained approach to influencing policy. The national network structure, with local teams like Madison's, allows for coordinated, sustained lobbying efforts. This demonstrates how local engagement contributes directly to a broader national strategy aimed at influencing U.S. foreign policy through established political channels, a method that contrasts with more spontaneous or localized protest movements.

Madison Team's Advocacy for Palestine

While a specific "Madison FCNL Advocacy Team" is not explicitly detailed in a

dedicated document snippet, FCNL's network covers all 50 states⁵, and "FCNL" is mentioned in the context of Madison-based discussions on peace.⁷ This strongly indicates that Madison-based Quakers or advocates actively engage with FCNL's national efforts, channeling local concerns into a national lobbying framework.

FCNL mobilizes advocates to urge lawmakers to support a permanent ceasefire, prioritize humanitarian aid in Gaza, and secure the release of all hostages.⁵ These demands are central and recurring across the broader Palestinian solidarity movement. Their primary advocacy methods include "Drop-By Visits" to the offices of senators and representatives, emphasizing face-to-face lobbying as a powerful tactic.⁸ This highlights a direct, personal approach to influencing policymakers, fostering relationships that can be crucial for long-term policy shifts.

FCNL encourages local Quaker meetings to pass "minutes" (formal statements) on the crisis in Israel-Palestine and assists them in sharing these with Members of Congress.⁸ This demonstrates a unique way of mobilizing faith communities for political action, leveraging the moral authority of religious groups. FCNL's Middle East & Iran policy explicitly advocates for full, unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza and calls for addressing the root causes of the conflict.⁵ This indicates a comprehensive approach that extends beyond immediate crisis response to tackle systemic issues. They also urge Congress to avoid military strikes against Iran and actively lobby for the passage of the Iran War Powers Resolution, implicitly linking regional stability and U.S. foreign policy decisions to the Israel-Palestine issue.⁵ This demonstrates an understanding of the broader geopolitical context and how U.S. actions in the wider Middle East impact the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Furthermore, FCNL's "Quaker Changemaker" events have included discussions such as "Learning Under Occupation at Ramallah Friends School".⁶ This indicates a direct engagement with the realities on the ground in Palestine from a Quaker perspective, integrating experiential learning and moral reflection into their advocacy. The Madison FCNL Advocacy Team, or local Quaker engagement with FCNL's national initiatives, contributes to Palestinian solidarity primarily through structured, legislative advocacy. Their distinctive focus on direct lobbying, engaging faith communities, and framing issues within a broader peace and justice framework provides a unique, policy-oriented approach that complements more public-facing protest actions, creating a multi-layered pressure strategy. This consistent emphasis on urging lawmakers and specific tactics like "Drop-By Visits" clearly delineates FCNL's focus on traditional political lobbying and engagement with elected officials, highlighting a different, yet equally important, avenue for influencing policy.

Other Prominent Groups Actively Supporting Palestinians in Madison

Madison-Rafah Sister City Project (MRSCP)

The Madison-Rafah Sister City Project (MRSCP), founded in 2003, is dedicated to fostering person-to-person relationships with Rafah, Palestine, and increasing public awareness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with the ultimate aim of influencing U.S. public policy to benefit both peoples.⁹ Despite being denied "official" sister city status by the City of Madison in 2004, the group has continued its operations as an unofficial sister city project, demonstrating its resilience and sustained commitment.⁹ This long-standing presence, predating recent escalations, underscores a deep, consistent dedication to the cause.

MRSCP's work is multi-faceted, encompassing five main areas: providing solidarity and humanitarian assistance to citizens in Rafah and elsewhere in Gaza and the West Bank; increasing understanding of Palestinian daily life, society, culture, and history; selling Palestinian crafts to support local communities; engaging in public advocacy to hold Israel and the U.S. accountable for human rights violations; and upholding rights to protest and engage in Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) activities.⁹ This comprehensive approach signifies a holistic understanding of solidarity that extends beyond political protest to include direct, tangible support and cultural exchange.

Specific humanitarian aid projects undertaken by MRSCP include contributing to rebuilding water wells, providing materials to health programs, establishing playgrounds, implementing clean drinking water systems in schools, furnishing libraries, facilitating medical care for injured children, and providing "Back-to-School Backpacks".⁹ They also support projects like the "Madison-Masafer Yatta Olive Grove" and aid for sheep and property destroyed by settlers in the West Bank.¹⁰ These concrete initiatives differentiate MRSCP from groups primarily focused on policy or demonstration, appealing to a broader segment of the community interested in direct impact and cultural understanding.

MRSCP actively participates in emergency demonstrations and campaigns, is affiliated with the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights and the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, and collaborates with numerous other local and national groups.⁹ They regularly sponsor and co-sponsor speakers and films, and participate in Madison's Fair Trade Holiday Festival and Overture International Festival to sell Palestinian crafts and olive oil products, integrating cultural and economic support into their mission.⁹ The organization maintains an extensive calendar of events, which includes ongoing vigils, "Big Ride for Palestine" events, "Shoe Vigils for Gaza," summer silent auctions for Gaza aid, and various online talks and workshops.¹¹ This consistent and varied engagement further highlights their sustained presence and diverse methods of engagement.

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) UW-Madison

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) UW-Madison is a diverse group of students and community members organized on democratic principles to promote justice, human rights, and liberation for the Palestinian people, with a goal of full decolonization of Palestine.¹² A core aspect of their mission involves educating students and community members about the historical and ongoing abuses and injustices occurring in Palestine.¹²

SJP UW-Madison was a primary organizer of the highly visible pro-Palestine encampment at UW-Madison's Library Mall in April-May 2024, collaborating with the Young Democratic Socialists of America.¹³ This direct action represents a vanguard approach to institutional pressure within the Madison solidarity movement, particularly targeting university complicity. During the encampment, SJP UW-Madison articulated specific demands including full divestment from all UW-Madison companies tied to Israel, disclosure of the UW Foundation's investment portfolio, cuts to Israeli fellowships and study abroad programs, a public call from the university for an "immediate and permanent ceasefire" in Gaza, removal of police from campus, and a halt to university land grabs and expansion.¹³ These specific and well-researched demands indicate a strategic approach to targeting financial and administrative leverage points within the university system.

The encampment itself served as a hub for community-building and educational activities, featuring initiatives such as the People's Kitchen, the Refaat Alareer Memorial Library, various teach-ins, screen-printing workshops, Liberation Shabbat

services, and dabke dancing.¹³ This demonstrates a commitment to fostering community and providing educational resources alongside direct protest. Students involved in the encampment faced disciplinary proceedings by the university, highlighting the risks inherent in direct action, with support from organizations like Palestine Legal.¹⁵ This underscores the high stakes and the courage required for such activism, while also revealing the inherent tension between student free speech and university administrative control.

SJP UW-Madison also collaborated with Socialist Alternative Madison, the Wisconsin for Palestine Coalition, and Madison Jewish Voice for Peace on a significant walkout demanding UW divestment from BlackRock, a major asset manager perceived to be profiting from the conflict.¹⁶ Their willingness to engage in high-visibility, disruptive tactics like encampments, despite potential disciplinary consequences, highlights the urgency and commitment of student activists in driving demands for divestment and policy change within academic institutions.

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Madison

Jewish Voice for Peace Madison is explicitly identified as a member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine¹, indicating its integration into the broader local solidarity network. Nationally, JVP is recognized as the "world's largest Jewish organization standing in solidarity with Palestine," actively organizing a grassroots, multiracial, cross-class, and intergenerational movement of U.S. Jews.¹⁸ This highlights its significant standing and diverse appeal within the Jewish community. JVP aims to provide a "political home for Jews on the left" who seek a justice-centered Jewish community and meaningful, strategic action in this critical moment.¹⁸

JVP Madison has actively co-sponsored local events, including vigils for Gaza at the Farmer's Market¹¹ and collaborated with Socialist Alternative Madison and SJP UW-Madison on a walkout demanding UW divestment from BlackRock.¹⁶ This demonstrates their active participation in joint actions and their commitment to collective efforts. Nationally, JVP takes a strong stance against Israeli actions, explicitly using terms like "genocide" and asserting that "Israel is using starvation as a tool of genocide".²⁰ This direct and unequivocal language is crucial for shaping public discourse.

JVP also advocates against military intervention, exemplified by their "No war with

Iran" stance²⁰, and engages in legal and public discourse to assert that "Anti-Zionism is not Antisemitism".²⁰ This is a critical effort to counter common criticisms and narratives that conflate criticism of Israeli policy with antisemitism. JVP utilizes action alerts to pressure institutions and media, focusing on defending free speech, promoting academic freedom, and countering anti-Palestinian narratives and repression.²¹

JVP Madison plays a crucial and distinctive role in the solidarity movement by challenging the perception of monolithic Jewish support for Israel. By providing a powerful internal critique of Israeli policies from a Jewish perspective, their involvement strengthens the movement's moral authority and broadens its appeal. This demonstrates that diverse Jewish voices stand in solidarity with Palestinians, highlighting a significant internal ideological divide within the broader Jewish community on Israel-Palestine. Their presence adds a layer of complexity and authenticity to the movement, making it more difficult to dismiss as simply "anti-Jewish."

Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)

Madison Area DSA is a recognized member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine¹, indicating its integration into the broader solidarity network. They were a key planning committee member for the "Madison Queer Liberation March," which explicitly included a "No Pride in Genocide" contingent and expressed strong solidarity with "Palestinian siblings".²² This highlights their intersectional approach to social justice, linking various liberation struggles.

The march explicitly rejected "pinkwashing" (attempts to use accusations of homophobia to justify genocide) and included calls for "NO to transphobia, NO to ICE, NO to genocide, and NO to war with Iran".²² This demonstrates a comprehensive anti-oppression stance, positioning the Palestinian cause within a broader framework of global liberation struggles. Nationally, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has undergone a significant shift towards anti-Zionism and actively supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Its membership notably increased due to its pro-Palestinian stance during the Gaza war.²⁴

Madison Area DSA's participation in the Queer Liberation March underscores its commitment to intersectional solidarity, recognizing the interconnectedness of various

forms of oppression. By explicitly linking queer liberation with Palestinian solidarity and rejecting "pinkwashing," the group broadens the appeal of the Palestinian cause to a wider range of social justice advocates. This strategy strengthens the movement by integrating it into broader progressive agendas, fostering a more inclusive and expansive base of support. The national DSA's growth in membership due to its pro-Palestinian stance further illustrates the increasing alignment of socialist and progressive movements with Palestinian liberation efforts.

Madison for a World Beyond War

Madison for a World Beyond War is listed as a member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine¹, signifying its role within the broader Madison solidarity network. This group operates as a local chapter of the global World BEYOND War network.²⁵ Their activities in Madison demonstrate a clear focus on anti-war advocacy that extends to the Palestinian context.

The group actively organizes and participates in "Vigils for Palestine & Beyond," held regularly at key locations in Madison.¹¹ They have also engaged in specific actions such as a "Vigil for Gaza at Dane County Farmers' Market"¹⁹ and calls for an end to Israeli attacks and US weapons shipments.¹⁹ These activities highlight their commitment to public demonstration and direct appeals for policy change. Furthermore, Madison for a World Beyond War has actively questioned the stance of political leaders, as evidenced by their inquiry into Senator Tammy Baldwin's position on blocking Israeli military aid.¹⁹ This indicates a focus on holding elected officials accountable for their role in the conflict.

The group's involvement in the "Global March to Gaza"¹¹ and their "Anti-War Film Series"¹⁹ further illustrate their multi-pronged approach, which includes both direct action and public education. Madison for a World Beyond War contributes to the Palestinian solidarity movement by framing the conflict within a broader anti-war and peacebuilding agenda. Their focus on ending militarism and advocating for peaceful resolutions aligns with the core demands of the movement, while also appealing to individuals concerned with global peace beyond the immediate conflict. Their efforts to pressure elected officials and raise public awareness through vigils and educational events play a vital role in shifting public opinion and policy.

Madison IWW (Industrial Workers of the World)

The Madison IWW is identified as a member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine ¹, underscoring its involvement in the broader local solidarity efforts. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), as a revolutionary, democratically run union, has a long-standing history of solidarity across various social and economic divides, including a consistent stance against wars since its founding in 1905.²⁶ This historical context provides a strong foundation for their current engagement with the Palestinian cause.

The IWW's position is rooted in the belief that wars are caused by capitalist governments and anti-working class leaders for the benefit of ruling elites, leading workers to fight against their own interests.²⁶ In this spirit, members of the IWW have formed the "IWW Friends of Palestinian Workers Group" to foster solidarity between IWW members and Palestinian workers.²⁶ This group aims to educate members and others about conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign called for by Palestinian labor unions and civil society organizations, and build broad-based solidarity with Palestinian workers.²⁶

The IWW explicitly affirms its support for the BDS campaign and calls for its implementation through various actions, including developing educational materials for organizer workshops, creating IWW-specific materials for distribution, sponsoring education days at branches, and compiling resources.²⁶ Furthermore, the IWW states it will not recognize Histadrut (The General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel) as a legitimate representative of Israeli workers unless it calls for the dismantlement of the Apartheid Wall.²⁶ This demonstrates a strong, principled stance on labor solidarity linked to political demands.

Madison IWW also participated in the "Madison 'No Kings' Day: Palestine Solidarity Contingent," joining other local anti-war organizations to demand an end to the "US backed genocide in Gaza" during anti-Trump administration demonstrations.²⁷ This highlights their engagement in direct protest and their commitment to integrating the Palestinian cause into broader anti-imperialist and anti-fascist movements. The Madison IWW contributes to the Palestinian solidarity movement by bringing a labor and anti-capitalist perspective, emphasizing the interconnectedness of workers' rights, human rights, and anti-war struggles. Their focus on BDS and direct solidarity with Palestinian workers adds a unique dimension to the movement, leveraging

economic pressure and international labor solidarity to advance the cause.

US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) Madison Chapter

The U.S. Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) is a Palestinian and Arab community-based organization founded in 2006 to revitalize grassroots organizing in Palestinian and Arab communities in the U.S., as part of the broader Palestinian nation in exile and the homeland.²⁸ USPCN has members in dozens of states, with chapters in various cities, including Madison.²⁹ This indicates a direct, community-rooted presence in Madison, providing a platform for local Palestinian and Arab voices.

USPCN's guiding principles are clear: self-determination and freedom for the Palestinian people "From the River to the Sea," with Jerusalem as their capital; the right of all Palestinian refugees and their descendants to return to their original homes and lands; and the right of resistance against Zionist occupation and colonization.²⁹ These principles articulate a maximalist vision for Palestinian liberation.

The organization engages in a number of campaigns and projects, including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) initiatives, defending Palestinians and allies against repression, organizing protests and direct actions against Zionist institutions, advocating for political prisoners, and holding arts, culture, and educational events.²⁹ USPCN unequivocally supports Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and other student activists, recognizing the critical role of youth in the movement.²⁸ They have actively participated in national weeks of action, calling for local actions for Palestine in cities across the country.²⁸

USPCN's activities often involve disrupting events to raise awareness about the situation in Gaza, as seen in their disruption of the Independent Spirit Awards to stop the "Gaza Genocide".²⁸ They also issue strong statements, such as charging the Biden administration with genocide²⁸ and calling for an end to U.S.-sponsored Israeli genocide.²⁸ The USPCN Madison chapter contributes to the Palestinian solidarity movement by providing a direct voice for the Palestinian and Arab community, advocating for their self-determination and right of return. Their emphasis on grassroots organizing, direct action, and cultural preservation ensures that the movement is deeply connected to the lived experiences and aspirations of the Palestinian diaspora, reinforcing the authenticity and urgency of their demands.

WI Bail Out the People Movement

The Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement (WIBOPM) is a key planning committee member for the "Madison Queer Liberation March," which explicitly included a "No Pride in Genocide" contingent and expressed solidarity with "Palestinian siblings".²² This highlights their commitment to an intersectional approach to social justice, recognizing the interconnectedness of various liberation struggles.

The march, co-organized by WIBOPM, explicitly rejected "pinkwashing" and included calls against transphobia, ICE, genocide, and war with Iran.²² This demonstrates a comprehensive anti-oppression stance, positioning the Palestinian cause within a broader framework of global liberation struggles. WIBOPM's involvement in the Queer Liberation March indicates its commitment to integrating the Palestinian cause into wider social justice movements, particularly those focused on anti-repression and economic justice. By linking the struggle for Palestinian liberation with the fight against homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of systemic oppression, WIBOPM helps to broaden the movement's appeal and base of support, fostering a more inclusive and powerful coalition. Their participation underscores the understanding that various forms of oppression are interconnected and require a unified, fighting working-class movement.

Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) Madison

The Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) Madison is identified as a member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine¹, indicating its integration into the broader local solidarity network. PSL is a political organization with a strong anti-imperialist stance, and its activities in Wisconsin reflect this commitment.

The PSL has organized anti-war demonstrations, including protests against U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear sites in Milwaukee, condemning them as "war crimes" and violations of international law.³⁰ These protests criticized the escalating aggression by the U.S. and Israel, viewing it as retaliation for Iran's support for Palestine and a provocation for a wider war in the Middle East.³⁰ This demonstrates PSL's focus on the broader geopolitical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, framing it within a

critique of U.S. imperialism.

PSL Madison was also a key planning committee member for the "Madison Queer Liberation March," which included a "No Pride in Genocide" contingent and expressed solidarity with "Palestinian siblings".²² This highlights their intersectional approach to social justice, linking various liberation struggles. The march explicitly rejected "pinkwashing" and included calls against transphobia, ICE, genocide, and war with Iran.²² The Party for Socialism and Liberation Madison contributes to the Palestinian solidarity movement by providing a clear, revolutionary socialist and anti-imperialist analysis of the conflict. Their focus on systemic issues, such as U.S. foreign policy and capitalism's role in perpetuating war, offers a distinct ideological framework for understanding and addressing the Palestinian struggle, advocating for fundamental societal change as a prerequisite for liberation.

Socialist Alternative Madison

Socialist Alternative Madison is a key planning committee member for the "Madison Queer Liberation March," which explicitly included a "No Pride in Genocide" contingent and expressed strong solidarity with "Palestinian siblings".²² This highlights their commitment to an intersectional approach to social justice. Rosemary W., an organizer with Socialist Alternative Madison, emphasized that "Pride has always been a protest against oppression and exploitation. An injury to one is an injury to all".²² This statement encapsulates their philosophy of interconnected struggles.

The march explicitly rejected "pinkwashing" and included calls for "NO to transphobia, NO to ICE, NO to genocide, and NO to war with Iran".²² This demonstrates a comprehensive anti-oppression stance. Socialist Alternative Madison has been actively involved in protests and walkouts demanding divestment from military assault on Gaza. They built for a significant walkout on December 11, 2023, demanding UW divest from BlackRock, a massive asset manager profiting from Israel's war.¹⁶ This action was built on a petition initiated by the Recertification Caucus within the Teaching Assistants Association (TAA) and involved a coalition including UW-Madison Students for Justice in Palestine, the Wisconsin for Palestine Coalition, and Madison Jewish Voice for Peace.¹⁷

Socialist Alternative's analysis explicitly links the conflict to the capitalist system, arguing that an international movement of working people is necessary to struggle

against all imperialism and end capitalism.³² They call on unions to fight for an end to US military aid to Israel and redirect those billions to social programs.³² Sadie Witt, a Madison Socialist Alternative member, asserted that "the biggest threat to the Israeli and US ruling classes is a mass, unified, multiethnic and multiracial struggle in the form of demonstrations, pickets, protests, and strikes".¹⁷ Socialist Alternative Madison contributes to the Palestinian solidarity movement by providing a militant, class-based analysis, advocating for mass action, protests, and labor strikes as essential tools to end the conflict. Their focus on the systemic roots of oppression and their emphasis on working-class solidarity aim to build a powerful, unified movement capable of challenging both local institutions and national foreign policy.

Faith-Based and Allied Groups (e.g., Wisconsin Christians for Justice in Palestine, Mennonite Action Madison)

The Palestinian solidarity movement in Madison also draws significant strength from various faith-based and allied groups, which provide moral authority and a distinct approach to advocacy.

Wisconsin Christians for Justice in Palestine (WCJP Member): This group is explicitly listed as a member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine.¹ Their inclusion within the WCJP highlights the multi-faith nature of the broader coalition, demonstrating that support for Palestinian justice extends across religious lines. While specific activities for this group are not detailed beyond their membership, their affiliation with WCJP indicates participation in the coalition's collective efforts for a ceasefire and human rights.¹ Their presence underscores the moral and ethical dimensions often invoked in the solidarity movement.

Mennonite Action Madison: This grassroots group, part of a national movement, formed after October 7, 2023, mobilizing Mennonites and other Anabaptist Christians known for their peace churches in solidarity with Palestinians.³³ Their historical commitment to collective action and resisting Christian nationalism, dating back over 500 years, provides a deep ideological foundation for their current activism.³³

Mennonite Action Madison has actively co-sponsored various Palestine solidarity actions in Wisconsin with groups like Madison-Rafah Sister City Project, Jewish Voice For Peace, CODEPINK, and Interfaith Peace Working Group.³³ Their activities include organizing "Weeks of Action" where symbols of aid, such as 1,400 pairs of children's

shoes, were displayed to demand humanitarian relief over bombs for Gaza.³³ They held an interfaith "Longest Night" vigil for a ceasefire in Gaza, grieving for Palestinians and drawing over 75 people despite cold weather.³³ The group also participates in monthly Anti-War Cafes, War Tax Resistance workshops, Madison farmers markets, and the Palestine Solidarity Fair.³³ Their current campaign, "God's Love Knows No Borders," expresses solidarity with Palestinians, college students protesting the ongoing situation, and migrants threatened with deportation by ICE.³³

These faith-based groups contribute a unique moral and ethical dimension to the Palestinian solidarity movement. Their advocacy is often rooted in religious principles of peace, justice, and human dignity, which can resonate with a broader segment of the population and provide a powerful counter-narrative to political or nationalistic justifications for conflict. Their long-standing traditions of peace and social justice activism lend credibility and depth to the movement, fostering a diverse and resilient base of support.

Inter-Organizational Collaboration and Shared Strategies

The Palestinian solidarity movement in Madison, Wisconsin, is characterized by a high degree of inter-organizational collaboration, which significantly amplifies its impact. This interconnectedness is not accidental but a deliberate strategic choice that allows for the pooling of diverse strengths and resources. The Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP) exemplifies this, acting as an umbrella organization that formally unites over 50 groups, including many prominent Madison-based entities.¹ This coalition structure ensures that various groups, despite their distinct identities and primary focuses, can align on common objectives and coordinate efforts.

Common Goals

Across the spectrum of groups supporting Palestinians in Madison, several common goals consistently emerge, forming the bedrock of their collective action:

- **Permanent Ceasefire in Gaza:** This is the most immediate and frequently articulated demand, serving as a unifying call for an end to violence and

humanitarian suffering.¹ Organizations like WCJP and FCNL explicitly prioritize this objective.

- **Humanitarian Aid:** Ensuring full and unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza is a critical shared objective, with groups like FCNL and Madison-Rafah Sister City Project actively working to provide or advocate for aid.⁵
- **Justice and Human Rights for Palestinians:** This overarching goal encompasses demands for self-determination, an end to occupation, and the right of return for refugees.¹ This broad vision provides a moral framework for all specific actions.
- **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS):** Many groups, including Madison IWW, USPCN, and Madison Area DSA, actively support and promote the BDS movement as a non-violent means of exerting economic and political pressure.⁹
- **Ending U.S. Complicity:** A pervasive theme is the critique of U.S. financial and military support for Israel, with calls to block arms sales and redirect funds.² Groups like Socialist Alternative and Madison for a World Beyond War frequently highlight this aspect.
- **Combating Misinformation and "Pinkwashing":** Groups like Jewish Voice for Peace and Madison Area DSA actively work to counter narratives that conflate anti-Zionism with antisemitism or use LGBTQ+ rights to justify Israeli actions.²⁰

The consistent emphasis on these shared goals across diverse organizations demonstrates a unified understanding of the core issues and desired outcomes. This alignment facilitates effective collaboration, as groups can contribute their unique strengths towards mutually agreed-upon objectives.

Diverse Tactics

The Madison solidarity movement employs a wide array of tactics, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding that influencing public opinion, institutional policy, and national foreign policy requires multiple, coordinated avenues of engagement. This tactical diversity allows for amplified messaging, broader community reach, and a more resilient movement capable of responding to different challenges and opportunities.

- **Public Demonstrations and Protests:** Regular vigils, marches, and rallies are a cornerstone of the movement, drawing public attention and expressing collective dissent.³ Groups like WCJP, Madison for a World Beyond War, and the Madison

Area DSA frequently organize or participate in these events. The "Madison Queer Liberation March" and the UW-Madison encampment are prime examples of high-visibility public actions.¹³

- **Legislative Lobbying and Advocacy:** Organizations like the FCNL Advocacy Team focus on direct engagement with elected officials, urging them to support specific policies such as a permanent ceasefire and humanitarian aid.⁵ This involves face-to-face visits and encouraging formal statements from faith communities.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Many groups prioritize public education, offering teach-ins, film screenings, workshops, and providing resources to increase understanding of Palestinian history, culture, and the ongoing conflict.⁶ The Madison-Rafah Sister City Project's "Read Palestine!" initiative and SJP's Refaat Alareer Memorial Library exemplify this.¹⁰
- **Humanitarian Aid and Direct Support:** Groups like the Madison-Rafah Sister City Project engage in tangible aid projects, such as rebuilding infrastructure, providing medical care, and distributing essential supplies in Gaza and the West Bank.⁹ This direct support builds person-to-person relationships and addresses immediate needs.
- **Institutional Pressure (Divestment):** Student groups like SJP UW-Madison, often in collaboration with socialist organizations, actively campaign for universities to divest from companies perceived to be complicit in the conflict.¹³ This tactic aims to leverage institutional financial power for political change.
- **Cultural Exchange and Product Sales:** MRSCP promotes Palestinian culture through events and the sale of crafts and olive oil, supporting Palestinian communities economically and fostering cultural understanding.⁹
- **Legal Advocacy and Defense:** Organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace engage in legal discourse to challenge narratives and defend free speech rights of activists.²⁰ The support for students facing disciplinary action, as seen with SJP UW-Madison, also falls under this category.¹⁵

The strategic deployment of these diverse tactics, often in a coordinated manner, allows the Madison solidarity movement to exert pressure on multiple fronts—from public opinion and grassroots activism to legislative bodies and academic institutions. This multi-layered approach enhances the movement's effectiveness and resilience in pursuing its objectives.

Conclusion

The Palestinian solidarity movement in Madison, Wisconsin, is a dynamic, robust, and strategically interconnected network of organizations. It is characterized by a comprehensive approach that integrates various forms of activism, from direct public demonstrations and grassroots humanitarian efforts to sophisticated political lobbying and institutional pressure. The Wisconsin Coalition for Justice in Palestine (WCJP) serves as a pivotal coordinating body, effectively uniting a diverse array of over 50 member organizations, thereby amplifying collective action and ensuring a broad base of support across the state. This coalition structure demonstrates a deliberate effort to consolidate influence and mobilize resources effectively.

The Madison FCNL Advocacy Team, while operating within a national Quaker-led framework, contributes a distinct dimension through its focus on structured legislative advocacy. Its emphasis on direct lobbying and engaging faith communities complements the more public-facing protest actions of other groups, creating a multi-layered pressure strategy aimed at influencing U.S. foreign policy.

Beyond these two central entities, other prominent groups such as the Madison-Rafah Sister City Project, Students for Justice in Palestine UW-Madison, Jewish Voice for Peace Madison, Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America, Madison for a World Beyond War, Madison IWW, US Palestinian Community Network, WI Bail Out the People Movement, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Socialist Alternative Madison, and various faith-based groups each contribute unique strengths and perspectives. These contributions range from long-standing humanitarian aid and cultural exchange efforts, as seen with MRSCP, to high-visibility direct action and demands for institutional divestment by student groups like SJP UW-Madison. Jewish Voice for Peace Madison plays a crucial role by providing an internal critique from within the Jewish community, strengthening the movement's moral authority and broadening its appeal. Socialist and labor organizations infuse the movement with class-based analyses and calls for systemic change, linking Palestinian liberation to broader anti-imperialist and social justice struggles.

The collective efforts of these groups are united by common goals, including the demand for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, increased humanitarian aid, upholding Palestinian human rights, supporting the BDS movement, and ending U.S. complicity in the conflict. The strategic deployment of diverse tactics—ranging from street protests and campus encampments to legislative lobbying, educational initiatives, and direct humanitarian support—underscores a sophisticated understanding of how to exert pressure on multiple fronts. This interconnectedness and tactical diversity allow the

movement to sustain its efforts, adapt to evolving circumstances, and maximize its impact in advocating for Palestinian justice and peace in Madison and beyond.

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