

UTCC VOICE

The newsletter of the United Taxidriers Community Council

AFL-CIO Casts Historic Vote for TWA to Unionize Taxi Drivers Nationwide

Congratulations, taxi drivers!

On August 3rd, the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO voted unanimously to welcome the Taxi Workers Alliance into the house of labor with a national Organizing Committee charter to unionize taxi drivers throughout the United States. This is the first time a new union has been given membership by the AFL-CIO in over fifty years. It will mean greater power, influence and resources for the fight for justice, rights, respect and dignity for tens of thousands of taxi drivers. The official charter will be authorized by President Trumka in September during a signing ceremony.



COME TO THE

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL DAY

SEPT 4, 2011
(see back page for more)

Taxi Workers Seek AFL-CIO Membership

Saying "a worker is a worker," Bhairavi Desai, executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA), and several taxi drivers from New York City today told the AFL-CIO Executive Council they want to be a part of the national labor federation.

They said drivers work 60 to 70 hours a week in one of the most grueling and dangerous jobs around—at minimum wage. They have no job security. Employers routinely misclassify them as "independent contractors" and deny the drivers protections given to traditional employees, including the freedom to form a union. They risk their health and safety daily, from sitting in a stationary position for hours to the real possibility of being assaulted, robbed or even murdered by a passenger or street thugs. And they're completely uninsured, unprotected.

NYTWA is now a powerful dues-based membership organization for taxi workers that is widely recognized as the representative of drivers in the New York City taxi industry and as an increasingly powerful voice for taxi workers in Philadelphia. They led the fight for legislation that raises the penalties for assaulting a taxi driver in New York and are working hard to gain health care benefits for drivers.

In a statement today, the council said:

The success of the Taxi Workers Alliance will provide an inspiring example of how workers can overcome legal and organizational barriers to create powerful unions and of how the AFL-CIO stands committed, no matter the obstacles, to helping all workers find a path to winning justice on the job.

The council delegated to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka the authority to issue a charter to the Alliance as the Taxi Workers Alliance organizing committee sometime in the future. Once it is chartered, the Taxi Workers organizing committee will serve as a national umbrella organization for organizing new unions of taxi workers, beginning with the NYTWA and the Philadelphia Taxi Workers Alliance.

The Taxi Workers Alliance also will build on the NYTWA's success by launching organizing drives in other cities where taxi workers are ready to organize but taxi worker unions do not currently exist.

Get involved in the struggle against unjust fees & taxes! Join the fight for rights, respect & human dignity!

CALL UTCC: 773-342-8822

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Formed in 1998, the



AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, COMMUNITY ALLY

Stop Violence Against Taxi Drivers

Cabs Are Not the A.T.M. for Robbers

By Fayez Khozindar

On one Sunday evening I missed a telephone call from one driver who left me the following message on my phone:

"Hello Mr. Fayez Khozindar, My name is M..... Ali, and my phone number is 773-000-0000. I am a cab driver and I was working on Friday night and it was about 2:30 in the morning when four men hailed my taxi. So I stopped to pick them up at Sheffield and Addison, and it took them longer than usual to decide which one of them will sit in the front seat. They ask me to go to Waveland Street and on my way to Racine, they started to attack me without any reason whatsoever. One of them held my neck, and the rest of them kept punching me all over my body. Somehow, I stopped and got out to the street where they continue to attack me until people stopped them and held one of the attackers until the police came to the scene and arrested him. I was moved to Illinois Masonic Hospital for treatment. I was released few hours ago, when I met Mr. Pankaj Kappor who was kind enough to give me your phone number so I can share and express my agony with you, and if you like you may call P.K. This will be fine with me too, and thank you very much for listening to me."

End of message.

Now what was going in this driver's mind when he decided to call me? The only explanation is that he was looking for someone or something reliable and trustworthy to trust and to turn to. That driver was looking for a refuge and comfort, and he found it in the only organization in the city with a strong track record of helping and caring for the taxi drivers which is the UTCC and its Chairman to call.

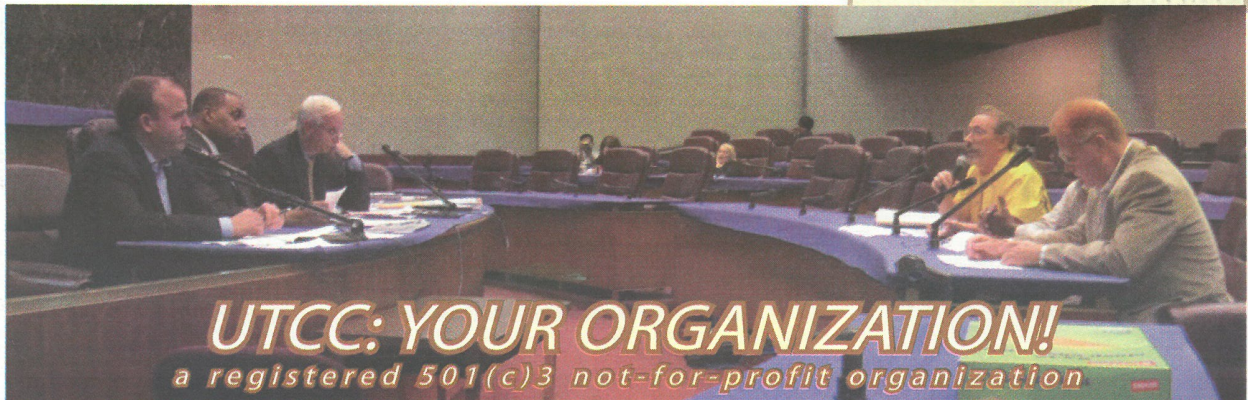
We must keep standing together to prevent violence against cabdrivers. And everyone should know that the cabs are not the A.T.M. for robbers, whenever they run out of money in the bars they hail a cab and attack and rob the driver.

And the drivers should know that AN ATTACK ON ONE, IS AN ATTACK ON ALL!!!

UTCC Support for Assaulted Driver



On August 11, 2011 many UTCC members attended the first court day to express their support for driver Masood Ali, who was assaulted by four thugs in the early morning hours of Saturday, June 26. The Steering Committee members of UTCC have met with the city of Chicago representative and with the States Attorney who are handling this case to upgrade the charges against the four attackers to a felony, punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment. The UTCC group explain that there is a precedent in this matter when we were able to upgrade the charges in the case of Stanley Shen. The case is postponed to **September 22, 2011 @ 9 AM. We urge the drivers to come to court that day to express their solidarity with Masood Ali.**



UTCC: YOUR ORGANIZATION!
a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization

UTCC VOICE

UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

OUR VISION

TO ORGANIZE AND UNIFY ALL LICENSED CHAUFFEURS IN THE CHICAGO AREA, SO WE CAN COLLECTIVELY OVERCOME OPPRESSION AND ACHIEVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

WRITERS

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DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION
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UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
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**WE WELCOME YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS,
FEEDBACK, AND LETTERS!**

UTCC

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UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

June 29, 2011

Mayor Rahm Emanuel
City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Chicago, IL 60602

To the Honorable Mayor Rahm Emanuel

On Monday, they put me on hold for over one hour hoping that I will be able to ask your honor a question about the plight of some ten thousand taxi drivers in the city of Chicago, so I am writing to you these words instead.

I am writing to you on behalf of the United Taxidrivers Community Council (UTCC), a cabdriver-led organization working for economic and social justice for our cabdriver community in the great city of Chicago. The UTCC is an advocacy organization formed in January 2008, and its leadership believe that thru constructive cooperation and peaceful dialogue we will continue to maintain a good relation with all the departments in the city of Chicago.

According to the study conducted by Dr. Bruno of the UIC driver's work more than 14 hours a day and earn far less than the minimum wage in the city which is the birth place of the 8-hour a day shift. We do not believe that the "ambassadors" of a world-class city like Chicago should be working under such dangerous and unjust conditions.

The city of Chicago taxi drivers going thru a difficult financial situation where the gas prices and leases and cost of living are skyrocketing, meanwhile we requested a fair fare increase many times during the last five years to no avail.

Therefore, your honor, we are hoping that your new administration will offer us a seat at the table so that we may present our issues and together come up with the solution that are good for the city, taxi drivers, customers and business. You may call me at my cell phone to set up a meeting or if you have any question at 312-343-5831.

Finally, your honor, we believe that the Taxi drivers move the city and they deserve better.

Sincerely,

Fayeze Khozindar, Chairman

UTCC Seeks Aviation Department Help to Protect Drivers at O'Hare Airport



Letter to Department of Aviation Commissioner Rosemarie S. Andolino:

"Today we are writing to you seeking your help in getting some kind of protective canopy for a small area in the 'D' lot (the triangle marked A in the attached picture) to protect drivers from the rain and sun, knowing that the drivers wait in that lot for two hours before they get dispatched to the terminals."

UTCC

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UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR OHARE DRIVERS

WHAT CABDRIVERS SHOULD DO WHEN THE O'HARE
STARTER TELLS YOU TO GO AROUND OTHER TAXIS AT
THE TERMINAL:

1. LOOK FOR ONCOMING TRAFFIC
2. USE YOUR SIGNAL
3. SEE IF YOUR CAR WILL FIT BY THE CURB SO YOU
DON'T BLOCK TRAFFIC IN LEFT LANE!

LET'S WORK TOGETHER AND
SHOW RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER!

COMMON SENSE CORNER

When a passenger getw in to your cab and tells you his or her destination and both of you agree on which route you would take and is good for both of you, some of the passengers may ask you about your day and how is it going with you so far? Some of them simply ask how are you? And your response would be....

In my case I may turn to him in surprise and appreciation for the question telling him: "I am fine sir, thank you for asking," and I may add, "some people actually don't care...well sir, welcome to humanity sir .." and we start laughing.

This what takes place in my cab when the passenger cares and feels for his driver. We ought to do the same and even better, so, sometimes I go farther by saying: "you know sir, I think by caring and asking about other people's life and conditions that will give you the good feeling and the energy and the courage to continue living in harmony with others and I am sure that will make you feel better about yourself."

The last one I have had this dialogue with added the following: he said, "That's for sure .. you feel good and feel belonging to the bigger family of nations which is the human race family ... which is real good feeling, because we are all in the same boat working hard for a living ... so we have to support each other and care about each other."

I love to have those kind of passengers in my cab the whole day just to enjoy their good attitude and understanding and respect, however, they have to go to their business and their destinations. So we drive them safely and say good byes hoping to hunt another good fare which will make me feel good inside out.

Fayez Khozindar

THE CITY OF CHICAGO

GREEN TAXI PROGRAM



The Green Taxi Program provides an incentive to the taxi industry to reduce carbon emissions. Alternative fuel and hybrid taxis provide numerous benefits including **lower fuel costs for drivers and improved air quality**. The City of Chicago is committed to supporting these efforts and providing financial and operational incentives to offset the higher initial cost of these vehicles.



What is This Program?

The City of Chicago, received a \$1 million Clean Cities grant through the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)**. The money is being used to reimburse taxi owners up to a set amount of the cost of certain hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.

Hybrids can be reimbursed for **\$2,000**, the maximum allowed by the federal government under this program. **Compressed Natural Gas** or **propane powered vehicles** can be reimbursed for up to **100% of the conversion cost**, which is typically between **\$9,000 and \$14,000**.

- Vehicles must be purchased by December 31, 2011.
- Vehicles already purchased this year will qualify.
- Vehicles must be on the approved vehicle list.
- Electric vehicles are not qualified under this program.

To find out more about the program or to download application forms visit the BACP Public Vehicle page at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp. The Green Taxi Program forms are also available at the Ogden Public Vehicle Facility located at 2850 W. Ogden. For more information contact the BACP at 312-733-4455 or 312-933-1062.

Serving the Injured Cab Community
for 16 years!

Rex U. Huner
Huner Law Offices, LLC
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Raise Your Voice



Driver Ali ALharasha, a 15 years vitrine, testify that the best way for the drivers to make more money is to have a fare increase which we did not have for more than five years. Also, the city of Chicago must stop the Limos from staging the down town hotels and steel our fares

over charging the drivers who work hard for their money especially now where we have less passengers and about 10% of them don't pay their fares.

Driver Arshad think that our job is very hard job and the economy is very bad and the gas is very high and the best way to do it is to put \$10.00 on a side and forget about it that will give you \$300.00 a month. To increase your income you should work harder and for longer hours.



Driver Ashraf AbdAllah said that a fare increase is out of the question because of the economic situation in the country and the best way to increase our income is to fight and stop the suburban taxis and limos and the airport express from steeling our fares in the city and in the airports.



Driver Ganesh Thaba want the city of Chicago to monitor the construction projects in the city so that will not cause a lot of traffic because in our job time is important and if we spend over one hour to get to down town from O'Hare airport we lose a lot of money.



Alamin Mohamed said that drivers should respect his job respect each other and respect the costumers and the city's rules and regulations so we may remove the bad stereotyping by keeping our cars and our city clean.

Finally, **Ms. Lily Susa** told me that drivers must work more hours (16 HRS) to make more money, or may be get a Hybrid car that way will save gas money, or stay down town , or get a fare increase on the meter.



Driver Mohamad Kaita said that there is two ways to increase our income : 1st- By matching the fare in other major cities such as N.Y. , L.A. and Philly. i.e. The flag pull must be \$3.00 and the waiting time must increase. 2nd.The city of Chicago must exert more pressure on the cab owners to reduce the lease and stop





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Helping Hand USA is a 501 (c) (3) global humanitarian relief and development organization

**Transfer List
from 7/6/11 to 8/4/11**

PV Number	Closing date	Sale Price
17	7/26/2011	\$165,000
47	7/26/2011	\$165,000
78	7/27/2011	\$165,000
94	7/27/2011	\$165,000
116	7/27/2011	\$165,000
612	7/27/2011	\$250,000
967	7/25/2011	\$165,000
1325	7/13/2011	\$240,000
1814	7/6/2011	\$250,000
2007	8/1/2011	\$64,000
2213	7/27/2011	\$228,000
2234	7/27/2011	\$250,000
2852	7/29/2011	\$245,000
3016	7/27/2011	\$240,000
3494	7/7/2011	\$250,000
3598	7/25/2011	\$240,000
3659	7/13/2011	\$240,000
3841	7/28/2011	\$255,000
4786	7/28/2011	\$210,000
4957	8/1/2011	\$64,000
5081	8/4/2011	\$240,000
5368	7/6/2011	\$245,000
5845	8/4/2011	\$75,000
5912	7/8/2011	\$245,000
6295	8/3/2011	\$260,000
6321	7/13/2011	\$240,000



**City of Chicago
Department of Business Affairs and
Consumer Protection**

TAXICAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

August 1, 2011

Notice No. 11-033

Public Chauffeur Licensing Process Updates

1. In order to streamline public chauffeur licensing for new and renewal applicants, BACP has posted the following public chauffeur licensing forms which are available to download and complete in advance at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp:

- Public Chauffeur Application for New Applicants
- Public Chauffeur Application Checklist for New Applicants
- Public Chauffeur License Application for Renewals
- City Debt And Child Support Affidavit
- Physical Examination Certification Form
- Public Chauffeur Affiliation Compliance Form

2. BACP requires ALL public chauffeur licensees applying to renew their public chauffeur licenses to:

- Bring their current Illinois Driver's License card
- Bring their current Public Chauffeur License card
- Submit an Illinois Secretary of State Motor Vehicle Record - Court Purposes (dated less than 30 days from renewal application)
- Submit a completed Public Chauffeur License Application for Renewals
- Submit a completed City Debt And Child Support Affidavit
- Submit a completed Physical Examination Certification Form
- Submit to a Controlled Substance Drug Test.
- Submit a completed Public Chauffeur Affiliation Compliance Form if they are unable to obtain a "One Call A Day Affiliation Letter"
- Submit proof of completion of Continuing Education Requirement Course, this course is required once every 24 months
- If applicable, submit proof of a City of Chicago Department of Revenue Parking Debt Payment Plan Agreement. The Department of Revenue's website is www.cityofchicago.org/revenue for information on City debt payment options.

For questions, comments, or to join the BACP mailing list to receive taxicab industry notices and other department news, send an email to BACPPV@cityofchicago.org. Rules and Regulations governing City of Chicago licensed public vehicles and public chauffeurs are available at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp.

Public Vehicle Operations Division • 2350 W. Ogden, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60608
BACPPV@cityofchicago.org • 312-746-4300
www.cityofchicago.org/bacp



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UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

UTCC Membership Card: An ID card with your picture that certifies that you are a bona fide member

One Year Traffic Bond Card: Keep your license and keep working if you get a speeding ticket. Hand over your bond card as an alternative to giving up your license

UTCC T-Shirt: colorful cotton t-shirt with the UTCC logo so you can proudly display your membership!

30 Compliment Cards: so you can be recognized for your positive attitude and effort. Hand one out to a customer if you think they should call 311 and let the City know you're working hard!

Ticket Tracking: Protect yourself from hidden tickets. UTCC will keep a log of all tickets under your name to mysterious tickets don't appear when you renew your chauffeur's license

UTCC Legal Services Plan: Stop wasting time and money at 400 W. Superior and have our lawyer handle up to 3 Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection tickets for a co-pay of \$20, up to 3 times. Note: trail fees extra, when applicable.

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Less gas means more cash, look into hybrid vehicles.

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Hybrid Cars

contribute to the environment by driving a hybrid car

Event	Location	Start Date	End Date	Amount
The Chicago Market: Living and Giving	Merchandise Mart (MMPI)	7/28/2011	8/3/2011	25,000
2011 BDPA Technology Conference	Hilton Chicago	8/3/2011	8/7/2011	700
STYLEMAX™	Merchandise Mart (MMPI)	8/6/2011	8/9/2011	5,000
Chicago Collective™	Merchandise Mart (MMPI)	8/7/2011	8/9/2011	2,000
WestEd, Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)	Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center Chicago North Shore	8/7/2011	8/13/2011	170
ISIS Annual Meeting	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place	8/10/2011	8/13/2011	675
American College of Physicians ACP Summer Session 2011	Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers	8/12/2011	8/13/2011	1,000
American Sociological Association 106th ASA Annual Meeting	Hilton Chicago, Palmer House Hilton	8/13/2011	8/16/2011	5,300
World's Fair of Money®	Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Hyatt Regency O'Hare	8/16/2011	8/20/2011	4,500
Independent Garden Center Show	Navy Pier	8/16/2011	8/18/2011	5,000
Business: The Bottom Line. 2011 SMPS National Conference	Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers	8/24/2011	8/26/2011	1,000
The 2011 Connect Marketplace	Navy Pier	8/26/2011	8/27/2011	1,000
Gay Softball World Series	Palmer House Hilton	8/26/2011	9/5/2011	4,000
199th Annual Meeting Supreme Council NMJ	Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers	8/28/2011	8/30/2011	1,900

The Future of Gaza

By Fayez Khozindar

I departed the Gaza Strip when I was 19 years old seeking a college education in Europe and then in the United States, where I have my family now, but always Gaza is in my mind, especially when you know that I left my younger brother behind and now he is a married man, lives in the family home where I grew up and is the father of ten children.

I have visited the Gaza Strip many times to see my family over there, including my uncles who live in Khan younis refugee camps built by the UNRWA in 1949 after the creation of the state of Israel. Everything is still the same except its getting older and the children have become too many and hard to control. I like that area because it's my first stop on my way to the beaches where you can see the endless golden sand dunes along the Mediterranean coast.

Last time when I reached the huge palm trees which the Israelis did not destroy, I noticed a huge chunk of those dunes were missing or just gone. A local farmer told me that weeks and months before the withdrawal he used to hear

the rumble of big trucks moving those dunes at night and carrying them off to industrial complexes in Israel. Our sand is clean and pure, unmatched anywhere else in the world.

The Gaza Strip is located along the southern part of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean sea. It is rectangular in shape, 45 Kilometers from north to south, and 6 to 12 Kilometers wide from east to west, with a total area of 365 square Kilometers. It borders the Mediterranean to the west, Israel to the north and East and Egypt to the South. The Gaza Strip area is generally even, and is 20-40 meters above sea level.

In the middle of 2005, when I visited last time, the population of the Gaza Strip reached 1.4 million, with 49% of them under the age of fifteen. The UN survey of living conditions says that 91% of families will need housing within the next few years.

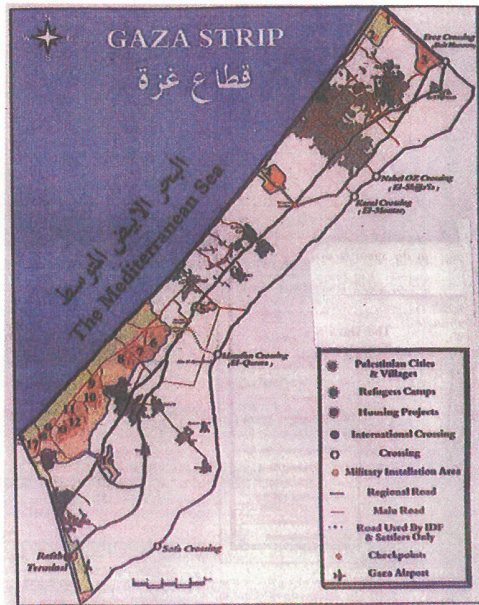
There are five crossing points in the Gaza Strip, four of them to Israel, and one (The Rafah crossing) in the south to Egypt, and all

of them are currently closed.

The Strip is witnessing huge economic problems resulting from the aggressive Israeli policy against the infrastructure. That's why unemployment has reached 49%, and the losses to the agricultural sector during the last ten years are as follows; 1,45 million trees were destroyed, 17,560 dunams of land were bulldozed, 35,265 dunams of irrigation networks were bulldozed, and 453 wells were destroyed.

When Israel decided to fully withdraw from the Gaza Strip in 2005, It was a withdrawal that primarily served the interests of Israel, especially since the Israeli Government has worked for dozens of years on draining the natural resources in Gaza. It has worn out the Strip with toxic material and solid waste. The head of Environment Quality, Dr. Yousef Abu Safiyeh, confirmed that 50,000 tons of toxic waste were buried in what was the Gush Katif settlement. Israel also polluted sea water due to waste generated by its settlements such as the Netzarim settlement, and consumed a large percentage of the Gaza Strip's underground water.

Israel also contributed to mixing fresh water with sea water so that



the Palestinians could not make use of it following the withdrawal. This, in addition to depletion of the underwater reservoir, has led to an increase in the salt level in many areas to levels where it is difficult to use for drinking or watering the crops. Farther, some settlers injected the land they evacuated with toxic material to kill crops and prevent the Palestinians from using those lands in the future.

It can be said that the Israeli's unilateral withdrawal was their way of getting around the Road Map which calls for the two states solution to the Middle East conflict. In return for this withdrawal there have been increased settlements in the West Bank and in Jerusalem. We have seen what happens to international efforts like the flotilla to break the blockade. They are attacked or not allowed to set sail, with little attention from the media. It looks like Gaza will be forgotten, and the prospects for the future look grim.

The Middle East Children's Alliance

Founded in 1988, the Middle East Children's Alliance is a nonprofit organization working for the rights and the well being of children in Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon. MECA sends shipments of aid and supports projects that make life better for the children. We welcome the support of all people who care about children and their future.

MECA
MIDDLE EAST CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
1101 8th Street • Berkeley CA 94710
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www.mecaforpeace.org

the MAIA Project
Bringing clean water to the children of Palestine

Palestine's Water Crisis

Israeli policies systematically deprive Palestinians of one of the most basic things in life: Water. Palestinian water resources are diverted to illegal Israeli settlements and into Israel; materials, fuel, and permits for water infrastructure are denied; and military attacks destroy wells, water tanks, pipes and sewage systems. The health and well being of virtually every Palestinian child and adult—especially in the Gaza Strip—is affected by the shortage of clean, safe water.

About the Maia Project

MECA's Maia Project began when children at Bureij Refugee Camp in Gaza voted for the thing they wanted most at school. The children chose clean drinking water. Since then MECA has installed water purification and desalination units in dozens of Gaza kindergartens, elementary and middle schools. The work is overseen by our partner organization in Gaza and funded by thousands of groups and individuals across the US. Our goal is to bring clean, safe drinking water to all 228 schools in Gaza refugee camps as well as hundreds of kindergartens.

Taxi Drivers!!!

Do nothing

Join UTCC

The UTCC proudly invites
you to the first

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL DAY

Sunday, Sept. 4th, 1:00-8:00PM

Warren Park, Field 1A.
Western Ave. north of Devon
Parking is available

*Bring your friends and your family
to this International Showcase.
There will be traditional foods, clothes, music,
sport competitions, and much much more*

*Reflecting the diversity of the
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*Help us make this event
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Vee Vee African Restaurant




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