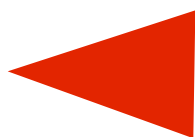


Solidarity with the Palestinian Freedom Riders

A Toolkit for Local Actions

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Background on the Freedom Rides

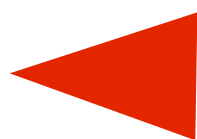
On November 15th, Palestinian activists will attempt to board segregated Israeli settler public transport headed to occupied East Jerusalem in an act of civil disobedience inspired by the [Freedom Riders of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement](#).

Fifty years after the U.S. Freedom Riders staged mixed-race bus rides through the roads of the segregated American South, Palestinian Freedom Riders will be asserting their right for liberty and dignity by disrupting the military regime of the Occupation through peaceful civil disobedience. Organizers say that this ride to demand liberty, equality, and access to Jerusalem is the first of many to come.

The Freedom Riders will be riding Egged and Veolia buses. Veolia runs many transportation services in local US communities, and is the target of many BDS campaigns. This provides a great opportunity for local Boycott or Dump Veolia campaigns to have a creative action that ties directly to Palestinian-led direct action.

Palestinian Freedom Riders are asking US activists to step up alongside them, taking to the streets (or buses!) to show our solidarity with these courageous and historic protests.

This toolkit outlines some easy ways to organize solidarity actions in your local community. If you have any questions or would like some support planning, please be in touch! Email: stefanie@jvp.org



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Goals and Messaging

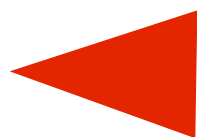
There are many ways to pull off an action in support of the Palestinian Freedom Riders, no matter how many people you have in your group or how much planning time you have. What will make our solidarity work cohesive is having goals and messages in common across all of our actions.

Top 3 Goals:

- 1) Demonstrate grassroots US support for the Palestinian Freedom Riders.
- 2) Educate the public about the Freedom Riders and the connection between familiar civil rights movements of the past and the current struggle for justice in Israel/Palestine.
- 3) Provide support for arrested Freedom Riders and build pressure for their release.

Key Messages:

- Buses in Palestine/Israel are just like buses in the US South in the 60s – separate and unequal.
- All the Freedom Riders did was to take a bus from one place in the Occupied Territory to another, using public transportation. While Israelis are allowed to come and go as they wish in the Occupied Territory - even to settle in it in contradiction to international law- Palestinians' movement in it is severely restricted.
- The PA has spent the past twenty years negotiating with Israel, and achieved virtually nothing. Settlements have more than doubled, the Wall was built and it is now harder than ever to move around from one place to another. What needed now isn't talking to the Occupation, but disrupting it using civil resistance.
- The Palestinian struggle for freedom must be understood as part of the continuum of people fighting against unjust oppression, just as African-Americans struggled against segregation and inequality and as South Africans battled Apartheid. All the Freedom Riders are asking for is the realization of their rights.



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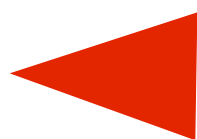
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Menu of Action Possibilities

The most important aspect of your demonstration on November 15th is that you show up, and spread the word about the Freedom Riders in a way that is powerful in your context. The Day of Action can take shape in your local community based on what works for the capacity and interests of your group. Here are four suggested possibilities for the format of your event/demo:

- 1) **Cantastoria at local bus stops.** A [cantastoria](#) is a form of protest using narrative songs and accompanying graphics to tell a story--in this case about the Freedom Riders and the unjust conditions in Israel/Palestine. On the next page you'll find links to a song and posters you can use. All you need to do is print the posters out, rehearse the song once or twice, and perform it in a busy public place on November 15th.
- 2) **Solidarity Rides on local buses or trains.** In this action, activists from your group would board local buses or trains (all the better if they are Veolia buses or trains!) and hold signs or distribute literature about the Freedom Rides.
- 3) **Public theater.** The familiarity US audiences have with the Freedom Rides make it a great opportunity for creative public theater that passersby will understand. At a local bus stop or train station your group could dress up like officials and announce on a bullhorn that buses on a certain route are only open to those wearing red. As the crowd reacts, you could pass out literature or even break into the cantastoria song!
- 4) **Teach-ins.** If you don't feel ready to pull off a direct action protest, you can also use the Freedom Rides as the focus of an educational event such as a teach-in. Show the [Freedom Riders](#) documentary recently created by PBS to mark the 50th anniversary of the US Civil Rights Movement Freedom Rides. Lead a discussion about the connections between the conditions of the Jim Crow South and Israel/Palestine, as well as the role of nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience had and can have in changing those unjust conditions.



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Cantastoria Details

If you opt for the “cantastoria” protest, you can use this song and posters!

- To hear an audio recording of the song: <http://theonlydemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/FreedomRide.mp3>
- To access the posters go here: *link coming soon!*

Freedom Rides Song

To the tune of “Can the Circle Be Unbroken”

A
I was standing by my window
D A
I saw that bus for Jerusalem
A
And I wanted so bad to go
E A
But they said you can't get on.

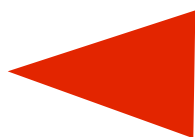
(chorus)

**Can the occupation be broken
Freedom Ride, yeah, Freedom Ride
There's a better future waiting
In a free, free Palestine**

Well I told that bus driver
I won't stand for apartheid
Because separate is never equal
I'm gonna ride, I'm gonna ride.

I've seen walls and I've seen checkpoints
I've seen segregated highways
But I've never seen al-Quds
Even though I live ten miles away.

And if you lock me in your prison
For demanding equality
You won't stop people from riding
Toward a day when we're all free.



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Documentation Tips

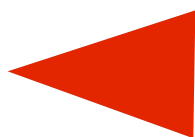
It is really essential that you document your event. As impressive as any one of our events might be, we will maximize our power by demonstrating the collective nature of our actions. We can only do that by splicing together footage from all the events! Here are some quick pointers:

- ▶ Do not assume that someone will take it upon himself or herself to take pictures or to film. **Assign specific people for these roles ahead of time.**
- ▶ Before the event, **make sure that your equipment is in order.** Prepare your camera ahead of time. Recheck the batteries.
- ▶ When taking pictures, **visualize the messages you'd like to convey.** Show the faces of the activists as well as passersby. Take a picture showing a crowd if you've got one.
- ▶ When filming, do not neglect the audio. **Sound is king.** People may watch a film that is a bit out of focus if they can hear the dialog. On the other hand, a wonderfully focused movie with hard-to-hear dialog is not worth nearly as much.
- ▶ When filming, **let the action in front of the camera be the star.** If you move too much or too fast, or if you zoom in and out too much or too fast, you are simply distracting the viewer and detracting from the action.
- ▶ We need to **show our faces and tell our stories.** Interview the activists and other people present. Ask them why they're there and why is this issue important to them. See examples of this here: Jewish Voice for Peace: TIAA-CREF Divest from Israeli Occupation (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOy8GWa60jY>)

▶ Send us your pictures and movies!

▶ **Send pictures to stefanie@jvp.org as soon as you've got them!**

▶ **Share your movie files with us.** You can upload ready-for-public view files to Youtube and send us the link. Or you can use yousendit.com for other files (addressing the file in yousendit to stefanie@jvp.org)



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Outreach Ideas

Turn-out for events is critical. Send emails, set up a facebook page for the event, ask other groups to distribute among their networks.

Download a sample flier for your local action here:

Here's a sample email you can adapt and send out:

Freedom's Riding! Join Us!

When: November 15, 12:30 PM

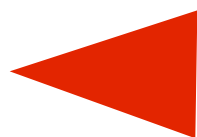
Where: Address

On the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides that helped de-segregate the Jim Crow South, activists in Palestine are planning to board segregated buses that serve only Jewish settlers in the Occupied West Bank. From Mississippi to Ramallah, join us in saying "Separate will never be equal!"

Come on out to our protest on November 15th. Join to show our solidarity with the Freedom Riders of Palestine.

Please distribute this information widely. If you are interested in learning more, or in helping to organize, please contact: Name

Peace, Justice, and Freedom,
Name



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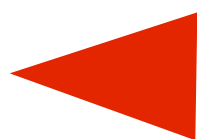
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Media Tips

Your action may be a great opportunity to get some press for your group! Here are some tips for getting the coverage you deserve!

- ▶ **Identify someone to be a press contact at the event itself.** List this person on the press release and refer all press inquires before, after, or at the event to them.
- ▶ A week or two ahead of the event, **be sure to send out a media advisory** to local media contacts (BCC their email addresses). If you can, identify priority reporters. Send them the same advisory, but add header: *Dear [Reporter], thought you might be interested in this story because of your previous coverage of x or other personalized note.* Identify “hook” for story consistent with interest of reporter or publication: Jewish, academic, socially responsible investing, or local connection for example.
- ▶ The day after you send out the emails: **call priority targets to follow up with them.** Make sure they know date/time/location of the event and find out if they are planning to be there or cover it. Make note of messages you leave, then call again next day until you reach someone or hear back. If they are not interested, ask them if there is another reporter who would cover it or another editor who would assign them.
- ▶ Day before event: For the reporters that are planning to come, **assemble press packets**, to include the flyer, the local media advisory (with updates if there have been any), additional campaign literature such as the flyer (also attached here).
- ▶ Day of event: **call reporters** you know are coming to remind them, make sure they know how to find it. At the event, be sure to **identify reporters and give them press packets**, get their contact info.
- ▶ **Right after event send out press release** – similar information as the media advisory, edited to include what happened, some new quotes, and documentation (pictures, video, audio) that you have already gotten of the event.
- ▶ **Send any photos/video/audio that you have to us, so we can put it on the website.** Send to stefanie@jvp.org



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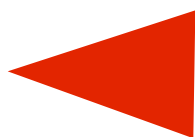
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Additional Resources

In the pages that follow, you'll find two sample posters for your actions as well as an example flyer. Feel free to use or adapt!

If you're planning something, we'd like to know! If you need assistance organizing, we'd like to help! Be in touch!
Email: stefanie@jvp.org

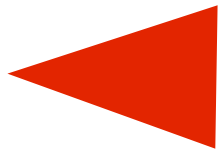


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***I supported the
freedom rides in
Mississippi 1961
because separate is
not equal.***



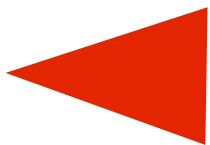
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***I support the freedom
rides in the West
Bank 2011 because
separate is not equal.***

***Whether Birmingham
or Jerusalem:***

SEPARATE is NOT EQUAL



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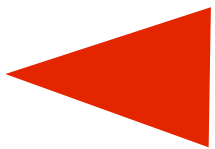


***I support the
Palestinian Freedom
Riders because
separate is not equal.***

MARTIN LUTHER KING WAS RIGHT

*Whether **Birmingham**
or **Jerusalem:***

SEPARATE is NOT EQUAL



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On November 15th, Palestinian activists are attempting to board segregated public transport headed to occupied East Jerusalem in an act of civil disobedience inspired by the Freedom Riders of the US Civil Rights Movement.

Fifty years ago the U.S. Freedom Riders staged mixed-race bus rides through the roads of the segregated American South. Today, Palestinian Freedom Riders will be boarding buses in the Occupied West Bank that only serve Jewish settlers. In so doing, they are asserting their right for liberty and dignity, just as activists like Dr Martin Luther King Jr did.

Organizers say that this ride to demand liberty, equality, and access to Jerusalem is the first of many to come. Join us in support!