**\*\*\*\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\*\*\***

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**Pasquarella for Congress  
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**Candidate for the 24th District, Helena Pasquarella, demands that the Ojai City Council pass a Gaza ceasefire resolution and the International Court of Justice should have called an end to the genocide in Gaza.**

Ojai, CA– Helena Pasquarella was one of some 20 members of the Ojai Ceasefire Now group who spoke at the Jan. 23rd Ojai City Council meeting to ask the council of five to put the ceasefire resolution issue back on the agenda. In her public comment, Pasquarella explained that the local issues of the unhoused, lack of health care, and drug addiction could be solved with a small portion of the $886 billion a year spent on the military budget for death and destruction abroad.

As the meeting was about to adjourn, the Ceasefiire Now group gathered at the podium behind Nuri Ronaghy, founding member of the Ojai-based U.S. Department of Peace, as she read the names of hundreds of children who had been killed in the past 100 days of the war on Gaza. Ronaghy spoke tenderly through her tears as she said each name with the child’s age. After 20 minutes, only two council members of the five remained and she asked “How do you feel? You have family, you have children. How do we feel?”

Pasquarella believes that if local city councils across the country supported such issues, it would give strength to the those calling for an end to the genocide in Gaza and US military aid to Israel which is perpetuating the war. “The U.S. government should not increase military aid to Israel another $14.3 billion in funding while there are so many domestic problems not being addressed. We need to make the connections that war is costing us, not only financially, but also spiritually. It is estimated that more than 30,000 veterans have committed suicide since 9/11,” she added.

With the war escalating in the Middle East, the genocide in Gaza must be the world’s number one priority. We cannot stand by and watch the extinction of the Palestinian people because of Israel’s greed and thirst for revenge for the crimes committed by Hamas on Oct. 7th.

“The World Court’s preliminary ruling for South Africa’s genocide case against Israel was not strong enough in light of the 26,000 innocent Palestinians that have died, 63,000 who have been wounded and the estimated 2 million who have been displaced in the past three months in the war,” condemned Pasquarella. The court said that Palestinians are a protected group under the Genocide Convention and that Israel must stop killing or harming them and has given Israel a month in order to comply with their request. “This is unacceptable. This is genocide,” she added, “How many more innocent women and children have to die before we say there is a ‘official’ genocide!”

In his Jan. 22 Arroyo Grande Towne Hall meeting, Salud Carbajal stated that the case brought by South Africa does not fit the definition of genocide, and that “we must not dilute the term genocide with what is happening in Gaza.” Carbajal’s refusal to acknowledge the genocide or call for a ceasefire demonstrate his loyalty with the Israeli PAC’s and military industrial complex who fund his campaign, not with his constituents, 75% of whom are said to want a ceasefire in Gaza, Pasquarella noted.

Pasquarella believes that It is time for citizens to know the truth about the monetary costs of war on our society and the continued effects of trauma that our country will have to shoulder as our soldiers return from yet another international conflict that will have been fought to “preserve” the military industrial complex’s profit margins and corporate greed for cheap labor and access to natural resources. Pasquarella will be discussing her candidacy and her views on the war on Gaza at the Student/Community Coalition for Ceasefire in Gaza on Monday, January 29th, at 6:30 at UCSB in the El Centro Room by the Library.

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