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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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08.04.2024

## ***Active Duty Airman on White House Hunger Strike***

An active-duty Air Force airman is on a hunger strike in front of the White House, in solidarity with the children of Gaza, who are being deliberately starved to death.

Larry Hebert, a Senior Airman with six years in the Air Force, began his hunger strike at the White House on Easter Sunday. He says he will be present at the White House from 10 am to 3 pm, April 1-6, and will then move to the House of Representatives, beginning Monday, April 8, when Congress is back in session.

Airman Hebert, who recently joined the organization *Veterans For Peace*, says he was inspired by the self-immolation of active-duty Airman Aaron Bushnell.

*“When Aaron Bushnell took his own life at the Israeli Embassy for the people of Gaza, that had a profound impact on me. I felt and resonated exactly with how he was feeling, and so that was really powerful and influential,”* Hebert said. *“But what really infuriated me was the response afterward. Leadership within the military and within our government were just silent. There was utter silence surrounding Aaron Bushnell and what he did.”*

*“I knew I had to raise my voice in opposition to the U.S. government supplying Israel the bombs and rockets to commit genocide in Gaza,”* said Hebert. *“Active-duty members are afraid to speak out, and I hope my example and that of others, like Aaron, can change that.”*

In mid-March, Hebert, from rural New Hampshire, took an authorized leave from his assignment at Naval Station Rota, Spain. Since then he has participated in demonstrations demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and visited several Congressional offices to press for an end to US weapons shipments to Israel, which violate several U.S. laws (see below).

Hebert is standing outside the White House this week with a sign that reads “Active duty airman refuses to eat while Gaza starves.” He is not wearing a military uniform, which might be considered a violation of military regulations.



*“I am on Day 4 of my hunger strike in solidarity with the civilians that are being deliberately starved in Gaza,”* said Aaron Hebert on Wednesday.

Hebert told *Task and Purpose* that he currently works as an avionics technician assigned to Naval Station Rota, Spain. The NAVSTA base provides cargo, fuel and logistics support to military units in the region and supports U.S. and NATO ships with three active piers.

Hebert plans to continue the hunger strike — limiting himself to water and a juice supplement — for as long as he physically can. He told Military.com,

*“I don’t have a stop or an end for it right now. I’m going to go until my body cannot go any longer or we get the cease-fire and the end of unconditional aid to Israel.”*

**Senior Airman Larry Hebert joins many hundreds of current and retired military and civilian government officials urging U.S. leaders to stop fueling Israel’s war that has killed over 32,000 Palestinians, nearly half of whom are children. Starvation and disease are**

rapidly becoming as deadly as the war itself throughout Gaza, where Israel has bombed hospitals, mosques and residential neighborhoods to rubble.

*“We applaud and wholeheartedly support the courageous action of this young Airman,”* said Mike Ferner, national director of Veterans For Peace. *“We hope he will inspire other military personnel and veterans to take similar actions.”*

Veterans For Peace supports military personnel who act in good conscience and refuse to participate in genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, whether directly or in support roles. For example, orders to load or transport US weapons to Israel are illegal, under both US and international law. *See details below.*

Veterans For Peace recommends that military personnel who want more information about their legal rights, or who wish to be discharged from the military, contact the GI Rights Hotline.

**Airman Hebert’s protest is gaining national and international notice.** On Tuesday alone, he was interviewed by Democracy Now, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, *Voice of America*, *Al Jazeera*, WMUR-New Hampshire, and the Katie Halpern show on YouTube.

*“Larry Hebert’s bold action is having an impact,”* said Mike Ferner of Veterans For Peace. *“We anticipate that other active-duty military and veterans will be following his example.”*

### **List of US Laws Violated by the Biden Administration When Sending Arms to Israel**

In a February 12 letter to the US State Department Inspector-General, Veterans For Peace detailed the U.S. laws currently being violated by US officials every time weapons shipments to Israel are authorized, to include:

- The Foreign Assistance Act, which forbids the provision of assistance to a government which “engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”
- Arms Export Control Act, which says countries that receive US military aid can only use weapons for legitimate self-defense and internal security. Israel’s genocidal campaign in Gaza goes way beyond self-defense and internal security.
- The U.S. War Crimes Act, which forbids grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, including willful killing, torture or inhumane treatment, willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and unlawful deportation or transfer. All of these crimes are perpetrated daily by the Israeli Occupying Forces.

- The Leahy Law, which prohibits the U.S. Government from using funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights.
- The Genocide Convention Implementation Act, which was enacted to implement U.S. obligations under the Genocide Convention, provides for criminal penalties for individuals who commit or incite others to commit genocide.

*Gerry Condon is a Vietnam-era veteran and war resister who serves on the Board of Directors for Veterans For Peace. He can be reached at [gerrycondon@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:gerrycondon@veteransforpeace.org), and he will be happy to forward messages of support to Airman Larry Hebert.*

APRIL 5, 2024