



[Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's Legacy as a Human Rights and Social Justice Advocate](#)

Earlier this week on Sunday, Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter passed away at the age of 100. To most, the 39th president is remembered for far more than his four years in the White House, having created a remarkable post-presidential legacy as a tireless champion of human rights, democracy, peace, and social justice. For decades following his time in the White House, Carter sought to advocate for human rights and draw attention to an array of societal injustices. Shortly after his unsuccessful attempt to win a second term as president, he founded The Carter Center in 1982 with the aim of advancing human rights, peaceful conflict mediation, and democratic institution-building, culminating in Carter receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his work to “find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.” Through his efforts, The Carter Center became a global authority in election monitoring, and the former president was also recognized for his charitable contributions as well with various philanthropic organizations like Habitat for Humanity. During his time in the White House, one of Former U.S. President Carter’s most notable foreign policy achievements was his brokering of the 1978 Camp David Accords between then-Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and then-Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin – which jointly garnered the two leaders the Nobel Peace Prize that same year.

In his efforts to advocate on behalf of important human rights and social justice-related issues, Former President Carter helped raise awareness regarding Israel’s discriminatory policies towards Palestinians and the harmful role that they play in perpetuating injustice. He published a groundbreaking book titled *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (2006) in which he argued that Israel’s apartheid policies depriving Palestinians of basic human rights have been the main obstacles to a fair and comprehensive resolution to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of the former president’s major stated aims with the book was to shed light – for the American public and the global public at-large – on the egregious oppression and persecution of the Palestinian people in the hopes that it would prompt substantive debate on the issue. Former President Carter lamented the severe restraints which inhibit free and balanced discussion regarding the facts surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and was critical of the harmful role that the pro-Israel lobby played in suppressing voices which are merely trying to speak out in defense of justice and human rights for Palestinians.

Observers have noted that Carter had quite possibly the most extraordinary post-presidency of any former American president. Through his work with The Carter Center beginning in the 1980s, the ex-president not only successfully tackled diplomatic issues, but he also addressed humanitarian challenges including the fight against deadly diseases. In fact, his organization is credited with helping to almost entirely eradicate human cases of the parasitic infection, Guinea worm disease, and is considered one of the foremost entities in the field of disease eradication. All told, the former president led more than one hundred trips to dozens of countries all over the world during the preceding decades in order to observe the organization’s health and humanitarian projects, and to monitor elections, broker peace agreements, and take part in negotiations.

In the aftermath of Former U.S. President Carter’s passing, Incumbent President Biden directed that January 9th be a National Day of Mourning and announced that all federal government offices would be closed on that day as a show of respect for the 39th president. Biden also bestowed a multi-day state funeral for the deceased president

which will begin on Saturday and include a national funeral service on the morning of January 9th. It is expected that Carter's funeral will be attended by all five living U.S. presidents.