

# Solidarity with Palestine

Over 166 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israeli snipers, air strikes and missile attacks since 30 March, when unarmed protests began, demanding the Right of Return for refugees and an end to the illegal siege on Gaza. Victims included journalists wearing press markings, medics tending the wounded, and children, some shot in the head from behind. A shoot-to-kill spree on 14 May slaughtered 61, including 8 children.

No hostile media coverage, policy decisions or Codes of Conduct can erase these facts, and to deny the reality or censor Palestinian voices or blame them for the deaths is itself a racist act.

Instead, we should recognise that Israel is an apartheid state, facing Palestinian resistance (a right in international law) in the Occupied Territories (West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and Gaza); inside Israel; and with refugees in the Middle East and worldwide.

To sustain repression, Israel relies on international support – military, economic, financial, diplomatic – principally from the US but also from Britain, where the story began. Withdrawing that support can be our contribution to ending Israeli apartheid.



*Palestinian medic Razan al-Najjar at an emergency medical tent during Gaza protests near the boundary with Israel in April. Al-Najjar was fatally shot by an Israeli sniper while helping injured protesters near Khan Younis on 1 June 2018.*

## Apartheid Israel

### **Nation State law**

Inside Israel, excluding the Occupied Territories, one in five citizens is an indigenous, non-Jewish Palestinian. On 19 July, Israel passed the “nation state” law, declaring that “Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it”.

The law stripped Arabic of its designation as an official language alongside Hebrew, declared Jerusalem “whole and united” as the capital of Israel and stated “the development of Jewish settlement” is a “national value”.

“The state has declared that it does not want us here. It has passed a law of Jewish supremacy and told us that we will always be second-class citizens,” said Ayman Odeh, leader of the Arab Joint List in the Knesset

(Parliament). The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Central Council and the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee (representing Palestinians in Israel) designated 19 July as the “Day of Resistance against Israeli Apartheid”.

### **Return**

When Israel was created in 1948, 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled for their lives. UN General Assembly Resolution 194 states “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return...” Israel was admitted to the UN having stated they would comply with 194. ▶

### **Palestinian civil society: reject biased IHRA definition**

*Before the Labour NEC voted to accept the IHRA definition and all 11 examples of anti-Semitism, Palestinian unions and organisations spelled out their opposition.*

Palestinian civil society urges the UK Labour Party and unions to reject IHRA’s false, anti-Palestinian definition which seeks to conflate anti-Semitism with criticism of

Israel. This definition aims to silence criticism of Israeli policies that clearly violate Palestinian human rights.

This non-legally binding definition attempts to erase Palestinian history, demonise solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality, suppress freedom of expression, and shield Israel’s far-right regime of

occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid from effective measures of accountability in accordance to international law.

We concur with British Palestinian personalities who have asserted that:

“[A]ny use by public bodies of the IHRA examples on anti-Semitism that either inhibits discussion relating ▶

It was never implemented. Instead, amidst mass lobbying against repatriation, Israel set up a Transfer Committee to prevent a refugee return. Palestinian villages were levelled and "Absentees' property" managed by the Israeli government.

By contrast, Israel's Law of Return, adopted on 5 July 1950, embodies the Zionist project to colonize Palestine, regardless of the Palestinians. It states "every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh* [immigrant]."

### **Torture**

Amnesty International's report for

to our dispossession by ethnic cleansing, when Israel was established, or attempts to silence public discussions on current or past practices of [Israeli] settler colonialism, apartheid, racism and discrimination, and the ongoing violent military occupation, directly contravenes core rights. First, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, who remain protected by international laws and conventions; and second, the rights of all those British citizens who stand by our side, in the solidarity of a common humanity."

The Nobel Peace Prize-nominated Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)

## **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions**

Governments, including the UK, failed to implement the ICJ ruling which required them to bring Israel into line with the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention. Therefore, in 2005 Palestinian civil society issued a comprehensive call to the world.

Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, the Palestinian BDS call urges nonviolent pressure on Israel until it complies with international law by:

- Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
- Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality
- Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian

2017/18 states "Israeli soldiers and police and Israel Security Agency officers subjected Palestinian detainees, including children to torture and other ill-treatment with impunity, particularly during arrest and interrogation. Reported methods included beatings, slapping, painful shackling, sleep deprivation, use of stress positions and threats. No criminal investigations were opened into more than 1,000 complaints filed since 2001."

### **Apartheid Wall**

The Wall and its associated regime in the occupied Palestinian West Bank will

movement is supported by an overwhelming majority of Palestinian civil society. BDS is rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and adheres to the UN definition of racial discrimination. It therefore "does not tolerate any act or discourse which adopts or promotes, among others, anti-Black racism, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, xenophobia, or homophobia".

### **No permission needed**

We need no permission to accurately narrate our history, defend our inherent and inalienable rights, or mobilise principled international solidarity with our struggle to achieve them.

refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194

### **BDS targets**

The BDS movement has targeted settlement goods – produced on stolen Palestinian land; Veolia – for its role in the Jerusalem Light Railway and bus routes linking the settlements; G4S – for its involvement in Israeli prisons; artists accepting invites to perform in Israel; Israeli artists funded by the state to promote Brand Israel...

There has been occasional industrial action as after the murderous Israeli attack on the Turkish ship, the *Mavi Marmara*, attempting to deliver medical supplies to break the siege of Gaza. In response, dockers in Oakland, California refused to handle an Israeli Zim lines ship. This August, Tunisian dockers and campaigners forced Zim to end its trade with Tunisia.

annex some 46% of the area, isolating communities into Bantustans, ghettos and "military zones". In 2004 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the construction of Israel's Apartheid Wall and its regime – of Israeli settlements, land confiscation, separate roads, permit systems and movement restrictions – is illegal under international law. The ICJ ruled that Israel must dismantle the Wall and make reparation for all the damage caused by its construction.

But we expect social-justice oriented political parties, like Labour, and progressive trade unions to effectively contribute to ending British complicity in Israel's system of oppression that denies us our rights, to protect the right to freedom of expression, and to stand on the right side of history. We expect them to help us in the struggle against apartheid and for equal rights of all humans irrespective of identity. Is this too much to expect?

*full text and list of signatories here:*

<https://tinyurl.com/y9egr2mh>

### **Arms trade**

In Britain, the BDS movement is now focusing on the two-way arms trade.

High street banks, including HSBC and Barclays, have £billions invested in arms companies including BAE, Raytheon, Caterpillar and Elbit, which supply the Israeli military. Their weapons are deployed in attacks on Gaza. HSBC claims to have an ethical investment policy.

UK universities engage in research with arms firms exporting to Israel. Disengaging from the arms trade could go alongside developing alternative strategies of industrial development, a project Labour should support.

**The IHRA examples aim to disrupt the growing movement for BDS, supported by many UK unions. Barnet Council cited the IHRA in banning organisations which support BDS. Reject the IHRA.**

# **Boycott Israeli Apartheid**