



# palestine NEWS

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### palestine NEWS

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- Campaigning against the oppression and dispossession suffered by the Palestinian people
- Supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle to achieve these rights including the Right of Return in line with UN resolution 194
- Promoting Palestinian civil society in the interests of democratic rights and social justice
- Opposing Israel's occupation and its aggression against neighbouring states
- Opposing antisemitism and racism, including the apartheid and Zionist nature of the Israeli state

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# Two elections, same result

By Hugh Lanning

**X**enophobia is the intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries. In both Israel and the UK it was used against citizens of the country to frighten people into voting for the status quo. In both countries the polls got it wrong and the largest party in the incumbent government was returned to power.

In Israel, the Likud Party, led by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, emerged as the winner even though the Zionist Union, headed by Isaac Herzog, had led the pre-election polls. Apparently facing defeat, Netanyahu made a promise that if he remained in power, there would be no Palestinian state.

Now it looks like the prospect of progress for Palestine is even further away. Our hopes for a change of government in both countries that would provide opportunities to apply pressure have been dashed. Yet maybe we are better off without more talk and no action – what we'll see is what we'll get.

This was the view of Israeli commentator, Gideon Levy, who wrote in *Ha'aretz*: "They won't talk haughtily and they won't spout hollow slogans. Not about peace and not about human rights; not about two states and not about negotiations; not about international law, justice or equality. The truth will be thrust in the faces of Israelis and the world."

In the UK, thanks to the great work done during the election by PSC members, we have the best database we have ever had of MPs views – not just whether or not they are broadly supportive but – as importantly – what action they are prepared to take.

On 23 June PSC is organising, along with partner organisations, our first lobby of this Parliament. This will be our chance to "nail 'em" – to remind our elected representatives of what they said and ask them what action they are prepared to support.

The feedback shows there is support in virtually every party – with a small, but growing number of Tories publicly supporting Palestine. This provides the potential for cross-party action.

Which is why, this year, PSC in conjunction with the *New Statesman* will be debating Britain's future Foreign Policy at all the major party conferences.

The hostility of the governments here and in Israel make the importance of our campaigning action even greater. Lobbying within parliament will have minimal impact unless there is pressure and support outside. A recent World Bank report on Gaza shows that the situation there is getting ever worse. The economy is on the "verge of collapse" as it struggles with the highest rate of unemployment in the world, it says. Meanwhile we know that the new Israeli Government will be building more settlements and annexing yet more

Palestinian land in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

But our voice is growing ever more powerful. An article in the *Jerusalem Post* in May worriedly analysed the huge impact supporters of Palestine – and the PSC in particular – are having on social media. We now have to back up this victory in the war of words with action and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign is the way to do that.

Our current high profile focus of BDS is Hewlett Packard. You might think of HP as the "friendly" supplier of computer printers and ink, but the company is also one of the top 25 defence contractors with the US Pentagon and is deeply involved in the occupation and the suffering of Palestinians.

The major checkpoints that Israel uses to restrict Palestinians' freedom of movement and thus destroy their economic viability, employ HP scanners in what is known as the BASEL system. HP is also contracted to provide the Israeli navy's IT infrastructure. The Israeli navy is used to enforce the illegal blockade of Gaza from the sea, to prevent Palestinian fishermen from carrying out their trade and to bombard Gaza during major assaults.

In our campaigning work we face a new challenge dealing with the new Extremism Bill on top of the implementation of the government's "Prevent" strategy which could undermine our right to dissent – especially over Palestine. The new, draconian, Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill (CTS) places a legal duty on publicly-funded organisations including schools, universities, nurseries and NHS trusts, actively to work to implement the Prevent strategy. It obliges them to tackle not only potentially violent extremism but also non-violent, so called "extremist" groups who may be perfectly legal.

The fear is that supporters of Israel's occupation of the OPTs will now try to use this law to shut down debate on the Palestinians' right to justice and freedom. But we must not back down. We must continue to campaign loudly and proudly to make Palestine a key political issue inside and outside parliament.

**Viva Palestina!**



# How we made Palestine the issue

By Sara Apps

For the 2015 General Election the Palestine Solidarity Campaign decided to launch its biggest ever lobbying effort. Using “people power” and modern technology we kept costs to a minimum by enabling supporters to use an online “e-tool” to send emails to candidates and pass on their replies to the PSC office.

The response from supporters was magnificent – tens of thousands of emails were sent to candidates, covering almost every constituency in England, Scotland and Wales, making the campaign one of the biggest pressure groups in the run up to the election.

As well as giving voters the opportunity to find out their candidates’ views on the issue of justice for the Palestinians, it forced candidates to think seriously about it, possibly for the first time. And it made them realise how much a lot of people care about this vital issue of foreign policy. Some candidates reported that they had received more questions on Palestine than any other subject.

As the results poured in thick and fast, it took a huge effort to process them and we owe enormous thanks to all the students and young activists who volunteered their time to read through and input the replies so that voters could make use of the information in further lobbying at public hustings and private meetings with local candidates.



## The statements and questions on the e-tool were:

- I urge the UK Government to uphold the principles of equality, human rights and international law in all its dealings with Israel.
- I consider the construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to be illegal and unjustifiable.
- Do you agree that one of the first acts of the next UK Government should be the recognition of Palestine?
- Do you agree that the blockade on Gaza should be lifted immediately?
- Do you agree that we should stop trade with Israel’s settlements on Palestinian land, and stop settlement goods being sold in Britain?
- Do you agree that the EU Israel Association Agreement should be suspended until Israel meets its human rights obligations?
- Do you agree that arms trade with Israel should be suspended until Israel complies with International law?

## Numbers of emails

A massive 36,298 emails were sent to a total of 3441 candidates, and 1042 candidates responded – roughly one third.

## Responses from candidates

The 1042 candidates who responded were from across the party divide: 190 Conservatives, 279 Labour, 28 SNP, 206 Lib Dems, 11 Plaid Cymru, 246 Green Party, 47 UKIP. We did not seek responses from the 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland.

Some candidates answered the questions directly; others gave more descriptive replies which we then judged against the questions. The result was a database tracking the views on Palestine of over 1,000 candidates – an impressive result!

## How people used it

Our idea was that people could use the email as a way to put pressure on candidates with regard to their policies, but our analysis suggests that people generally used it more as a tool to uncover their views.

For instance, Labour MP Andy Slaughter, who is a well known supporter of Palestinian rights, only received four emails while his rivals in his constituency of Hammersmith were sent far more: 34 to Conservative Charlie Dewhurst, 33 to Green Party’s David Akan, 20 to Lib-Dem Millicent Scott, and 17 to UKIP’s Richard Wood.

The results suggested that people did not want to badger candidates whose views were already clear. So in some constituencies where candidates’ views were not known, the number of emails was often higher.

For instance, in Hampstead and Kilburn, 50 were sent to Labour’s Tulip Siddiq, 52 to Conservative Simon Marcus, 52 to Lib-Dem Maajid Nawaz, 22 to Green Party’s Rebecca Johnson.

Candidates in some constituencies received more than 50 emails: **East Ham**, Hornsey and Wood Green, **Bethnal Green and Bow**, Brighton Pavilion, **Holborn and St Pancras**, Poplar and Limehouse, **Birmingham Hall Green**, Bristol West, **Kensington**, Blackburn, **Glasgow Central**, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, **Ealing Central and Acton**, Brent Central, **Leyton and Wanstead**, Leicester South, **Bristol South**, Birmingham Hodge Hill, **Brentford and Isleworth**, Oxford East, **Hove**.

## Responses from elected candidates

297 of the candidates who responded to our emails got elected: 143 Conservatives, 117 Labour, 27 SNP, 6 Lib Dems, 2 Plaid Cymru, 1 Green Party, 1 SDLP.

## Elected Conservative MPs’ responses

The majority of Conservative MPs agreed that the construction of Israel’s settlements on occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank is illegal and unjustifiable: 62% (89).



**MPs and peers in the previous Parliament supporting recognising Palestine**

A further 7% mainly agreed with that statement. No-one openly disagreed.  
 Nearly half – 49% – supported some form of lifting of the blockade of Gaza.

**Elected Labour MPs’ responses**

As with the Conservatives, there were strong views against settlements: 71% said they considered settlement construction illegal and unjustifiable.  
 There was strong support for the lifting of the blockade of Gaza: 77% supported lifting it in some way and 25% supported an unqualified lifting of it.  
 On sanctions, 28% supported an end to trade with Israel’s settlements, and 30 MPs – a further 26% – supported looking into measures to increase pressure on settlement trade. Only 5 respondents opposed taking any measure against trade with settlements.

**Elected SNP MPs’ responses**

81% said the UK government should uphold principles of equality, human rights and international law.  
 25 out of the 27 opposed settlements as illegal and unjustifiable (the remaining two didn’t answer the question directly).  
 85% supported UK recognition of the Palestinian state.  
 25 out of the 27 supported lifting the blockade of Gaza.  
 And, notably, the SNP supports ending the arms trade with Israel.

**Liberal Democratic Party responses**

The majority supported the recognition of Palestine only “when the time is right.”  
 They supported reviewing the EU-Israel Association Agreement and were opposed to an arms trade with states that are on the FCO watch-list, which Israel is.

**Plaid Cymru and Green Party responses**

The Green Party candidates generally answered positively, and Caroline Lucas, the Green Party’s sole MP, answered all our questions affirmatively.  
 The two Plaid Cymru MPs both agreed with the questions on settlements and the arms trade but did not answer most of the questions directly.

**What does it mean for lobbying?**

We now have a Conservative government with a very small majority. PSC has always made clear that we are a non-party affiliated campaign, and we will be working with all the major parties to ensure that the strength of public support for justice for Palestine cannot be ignored. We also have more new MPs than were anticipated, which means that local PSC groups and national PSC will be working hard to make sure they are properly informed about the situation.

We need to build support for the lifting of the blockade of Gaza and we need to make the case for sanctions as Israel’s intransigence continues. We also have a new opportunity, given the huge influx of SNP MPs, who overwhelmingly have a positive policy on Palestinian human rights, to continue to change the mood in Parliament, a process that was given a significant boost by the pressure that supporters for Palestine exerted on their MPs during Israel’s attack on Gaza last summer, which resulted in the strong vote for recognition for Palestine in the parliamentary debate last October.

**“We have an opportunity... to continue to change the mood in Parliament”**

There is a clear cross-party consensus in Parliament against Israel’s illegal settlements, so we will be building on that and explaining to MPs that strongly worded condemnations of Israel’s crimes aren’t enough – action is needed.

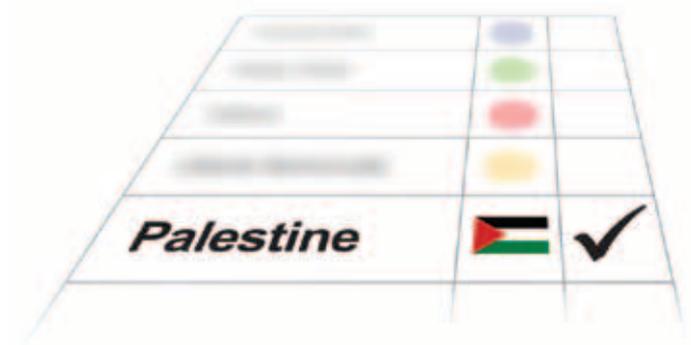
**Get active!**

Work didn’t stop in the PSC office when the election result was declared – we immediately got busy preparing for the Lobby of Parliament for Palestine and creating a new e-tool for further actions.  
 We are urging branches to contact their new MPs as soon as possible to congratulate them on their election, make links for future discussions and make an appointment for the day of the Lobby.

In addition we are asking supporters to consider sending letters and press releases to their local papers and other media about the newly elected MPs and their position on Palestine.

- To browse candidates’ responses, see [palestinecampaign.org/candidatespalestine](http://palestinecampaign.org/candidatespalestine).
- To talk to us about results: [sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org)  
020 7700 6192.

**Let’s face the challenges for building peace and justice for Palestinians together!**



# Making our voice heard!

Supporters all over the country made a terrific effort during the election campaign. At hustings, public meetings, street stalls and personal encounters, they made sure hundreds of candidates fully understood – many for the first time – that justice for the Palestinians is a crucial foreign policy issue which will not go away.

Here is just a taster of the many lively and imaginative events which members organised:

In the constituency of **Richmond Park and North Kingston** in Surrey, where Tory Zac Goldsmith was re-elected on 7 May, a hustings meeting chaired by PSC Executive Committee member, Ben Jamal, who is chair of the local PSC branch, filled the hall.

The candidates who took part, from the Labour, Lib Dem, Green and Conservative parties, revealed that their email accounts had been bombarded with constituents' messages about the Middle East.



In nearby **Twickenham** where former business secretary Vince Cable lost his seat, the Green Party candidate, Tanya Williams, said at a hustings that she would fight for effective sanctions on Israel and added: "It needs to be pointed out that they are a racist state and an apartheid state."

The vice president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Alex Brummer, condemned her remarks but the Green Party issued a statement saying: "The Green Party fully endorses the comments made this week by Tanya Williams... Her remarks fully reflect Green policy on the conflict between Palestine and Israel as stated in our manifesto."

As revealed in our election analysis (p4-5), Green Party candidates were the most supportive of Palestine. Sheffield

member Heather Hunt is pictured here with Jillian Creasey, the Green candidate for **Sheffield Central**, who, she says, "has condemned Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the bombardment, destruction and blockade of Gaza and called for action to ensure Israel complies with international law."



**Durham** PSC distributed leaflets to over 200 people who attended a hustings in Durham Town Hall – one of the best attended meetings of the local campaign. They experienced widespread support with only two people expressing any opposition.

Dr. Roberta Blackman-Woods, who was re-elected for Labour, wrote to members expressing her concerns for Palestine and saying that the international



community needs to step up pressure for progress.

**Lancaster** PSC held a successful event in support of the people of Gaza: "Remember the Dead, Remember the Living." They had written out the names of the more than 2,100 people killed last summer in Israel's bombardment on rolls of white fabric which they displayed at the Friends Meeting House. The names were all read aloud which took nearly five hours.

The Tory candidate, Eric Ollerenshaw (who narrowly lost to a Labour candidate who supports Palestinian rights), spent some time contemplating the names. He said: "So moving to hear the names being read and no-one should be forgotten... and nor should we forget our duty to the living and those yet to be born: we owe them a future in peace."

## Ray – an inspiration

Cardiff branch is mourning the loss of one of its most colourful and tireless campaigners for Palestine with the death of Ray

Davies who was active right to the end.

As well as being a PSC stalwart, Ray was a leading member of the CND and for many years represented his home village of Bedwas as a Labour member of Caerphilly council. He was also involved in the Cardiff Reds Choir – Cor Cochion Caerdydd – with whom he was often to be seen singing at Cardiff Central Market, wearing his trademark red beret.



In March Ray spoke at the launch of the "Fair Play for Palestine – Don't Play with Israeli Apartheid" campaign, calling on Wales not to play Israel at football. Betty Hunter, Honorary President of the PSC, said: "With

his knowledge, warmth and humour, Ray demonstrated the links between the campaign against apartheid South Africa and the current campaign against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, supporting the call for a boycott when the Israeli football team comes to Cardiff on 6

September.

"Ray will be sadly missed but his dedicated life of solidarity work is an inspiration to all of us who met him."

# No more “business as usual”

**By Sarah Colborne**

In recent weeks stories have been flooding in which show that Israel is spectacularly failing in its attempt to stem the pro-Palestine, pro-human rights, pro-justice tide. More than that, these stories expose the desperate lengths to which the country and its supporters are resorting in an attempt to justify the unjustifiable.

Take, for example, the spectacle of the gathering of American supporters of Israel organised by billionaire casino magnate Sheldon Adelson at his Las Vegas hotel, which reportedly raised as much as \$50 million to fund a fight against the rapidly expanding BDS campaign on US campuses.

An important signifier of how threatened Israel's politicians feel by BDS is the increasingly wild and extreme language they deploy. The leader of Israel's Labour party and head of the opposition coalition Zionist Union, Isaac Herzog, said in March that “the boycott of Israel is a new kind of terrorism,” a view echoed by another Knesset member, Anat Berko, who has formed a lobby in the Knesset to combat BDS.



**Anat Berko**

Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu is clearly rattled as was shown by his appointment of Gilad Erdan as minister of public security, strategic affairs and information, with a specific brief to combat BDS and to fight other strategies such as taking Israel to the International Criminal Court or suspending its national football team from FIFA. And when the National Union of Students, representing seven million students in Britain, voted to reaffirm their BDS policy, Netanyahu announced via Twitter the bizarre statement: “A national student group in Britain that voted to boycott Israel – refused to boycott ISIS. This is BDS.”

This was a complete falsification of the NUS position. In 2014, NUS executive clearly and decisively condemned ISIS as “a reactionary terrorist organisation”. For a prime minister to resort to smears like this against a student organisation in a different country appears to any rational observer to be an extreme over-reaction.

While all this vividly demonstrates just how unnerved those responsible for Israel's war crimes are becoming, they are still able to rally powerful political forces to back them up, such as the US government, which also provides significant economic support.

Our power, however, is just as mighty as it lies in the rightness of the cause by any standards of justice and humanity, and in our numbers – just as it did in the battle against apartheid South Africa, whose white supremacist leaders also enjoyed formidable backers like Margaret Thatcher, who only jumped ship once the South African apartheid regime was internationally isolated.

We know the boycott is biting, and the task facing us in the new political landscape is to increase its impact by doing it more, talking about it more, and recruiting more and more people to BDS until it becomes the norm.

Everything is in place to encourage a big surge in BDS. PSC's email updates provide reports on growing pressure on companies profiting from Israel's occupation and the increasing numbers of artists and public figures refusing to perform in Israel.

Divestment is developing, with a toolkit being launched by Unison, one of the UK's largest trade unions, at its conference in June. The toolkit is a handy guide for activists on how to find out what your pension fund invests in and how to work to stop companies profiting from Israel's war crimes from being included in the pensions portfolio.

**“Pressure for sanctions is increasingly on the agenda, thanks to the incredible campaigning by PSC members and supporters with MPs”**

And pressure for sanctions is increasing, thanks to the incredible campaigning by PSC members and supporters with MPs. The result of this pressure was seen in the opposition from candidates standing in the general election to Israel's illegal settlements and the siege on Gaza. Our task now is to persuade them to take concrete action – statements of concern, no matter how sharply-worded, are having no impact with the Israeli government.

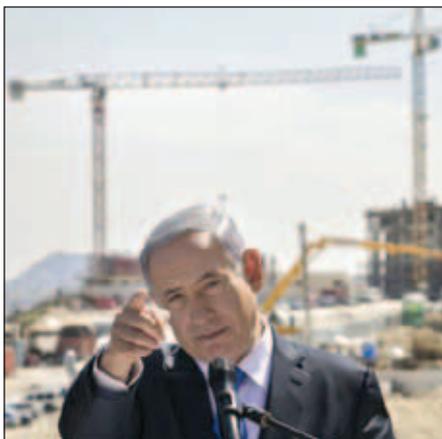
PSC's key sanctions demands are ending the arms trade with Israel (for more on this, see p10), ending all trade with Israel's illegal settlements and suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

Support for justice for Palestinians and demands for Israel to be held accountable for its actions are being echoed right

*(cont. overleaf)*



# Colonisation likely to soar



**Netanyahu speaking at the settlement of Har Homa**

Following the formation of Israel's coalition government between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's Likud party and the pro-settlement Jewish Home party, the pace of construction in Israel's illegal settlement colonies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is likely to soar.

The number of Israelis now living in Jewish-only colonies on land that the international community says should form an independent Palestinian state is around 547,000 – similar to the

population of Luxembourg. Around 350,000 live in the West Bank and 200,000 in East Jerusalem (source, B'TSelem).

The Israeli settlement enterprise was launched immediately after the Six Day War in 1967 when Israel began its military occupation of the Palestinian Territories. On 27 September, 1967, the first settlement of Kfar Etzion was based on pre-1947 kibbutzim whose inhabitants had been massacred during the 1948 war which established the State of Israel. It now forms part of the huge Gush Etzion bloc of 22 settlements, south of Jerusalem, home to around 80,000 colonisers.

## Trebled since Oslo

By 1993, when the Oslo Accords were set up to lead to the dismantling of the settlements and the establishment of a Palestinian state, there were 264,400 settlers – 111,600 in the West Bank and 152,800 in East Jerusalem. Since then, the number of settlers has swelled by 342%.

According to B'TSelem, there are currently 247 settlements – 232 in the West Bank and 15 in East Jerusalem. These include 98 defined as settlement outposts which are illegal even under

Israeli law but usually enjoy the facilities and protection of the Israeli state.

The largest individual settlement is Modi'in Illit, founded in 1996 and built on the land of five Palestinian villages north west of Jerusalem, with a current population of 60,046. The largest settlement in East Jerusalem is Ramot Alom, with a population of 42,430.

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, the annual growth rate for the settler population (excluding East Jerusalem) in 2013 was more than two and a half times higher than that of the overall population in Israel: 4.4% and 1.9% percent, respectively.

Furthermore, approximately 25% of this increase was the result of relocation by Israelis and of the arrival of new immigrants to Israel who chose to go to live in a colony. A generous government system of discounts, grants and loans gives new immigrants a major incentive to do this.

## Palestinian displacement

Since 1967 the Israeli authorities have demolished over 27,000 Palestinian structures in the OPTs, according to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN). The number of Internally Displaced People among the

*(cont. from p7)*

across Europe. On 11 May, a hard-hitting letter signed by the high-profile European Eminent Persons Group – formed of distinguished European former political leaders and diplomats including ex prime ministers, foreign ministers and ambassadors – called for “urgent action by the EU to construct a coherent and effective policy on the question of Palestine.”

The letter said that “the current financial and political assistance given by Europe and America to the Palestinian Authority achieves little more than the preservation of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and imprisonment of Gaza.” And in a particularly biting comment, it warned the EU that “hiding behind American leadership on the politics of the dispute is unedifying and unproductive.”

These eminent former leaders went on to say that “Europe has yet to find an effective way of holding Israel to account for the way it maintains the occupation. It is time now to demonstrate to both parties how seriously European public opinion takes contraventions of international law, the perpetration of atrocities and the denial of established rights.”

The letter comes at a time when frustration is mounting at the international community's failure to respond to Israel's increasing settlement building and violations of international law and increasing fears of a renewed murderous onslaught on the prison camp of Gaza.

The final demand made by the European Eminent Persons Group was that the EU needs to institute “tougher measures to

contain settlement expansion and steps to operationalise the EU's policy of non-recognition of Israeli sovereignty beyond the 1967 borders across the full range of EU-Israeli relations.”

This demand might be long-winded, but it is a crucial step for the EU to take as it goes to the heart of EU policy around settlement relations. The UK, the EU, the USA, the UN cannot continue “business as usual” with a regime that clearly has absolutely no intention of obeying international law.

They cannot rely on hand-wringing and strongly worded statements while in reality continuing “business as usual” with an Israeli regime that continues to expand its settlement colonies which rob Palestinian communities of their land and their future.

As summer approaches we are vividly reminded of those horrific images coming from Gaza just one year ago. And the memories are even more painful as we reflect on how many thousands of Palestinians are still homeless amongst the devastation as Israel tightens the siege even further.

But we must also remember and take heart from the hundreds of thousands of people who took to the streets, right around the country, calling for an end to injustice, racism, siege and occupation, and for the beginning of peace, freedom and human rights for Palestinians.

In our thousands we besieged our MPs, demanding urgent action. And this is how we must go forward, with renewed energy and louder voices, to make our demands for a decent and free life for Palestinians impossible to ignore. Our numbers are swelling and our message is clear – join us, help us end injustice, and be on the right side of history.

Palestinian population is at least 263,000 according to the Norwegian NGO, The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

One example of the devastating impact of the illegal settlement colonies is the Jordan Valley. It covers almost 30% of the West Bank territory, stretching over 2,400 sq km, and is the most fertile land in the OPTs.

Before the occupation began it was home to 320,000 Palestinians. Following the relentless Israeli campaign of ethnic cleansing and Jewish-only settlement in 28 colonies, only around 56,000 Palestinians live permanently in the Valley today – about 70% of them concentrated in the city of Jericho – though others go there on a seasonal basis.

In December 2013, the Knesset Committee for Legislation passed “The Bill to Apply Israeli Law to the Jordan Valley” which seeks officially to annexe the territory in the same way that Israel has illegally annexed the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

### East Jerusalem squeezed

In East Jerusalem, Israel has confiscated 35% of the land to build colonies, according to UNOCHA. Several hundred Palestinian residents are at risk of forced displacement due to the settlement programme, particularly in the Old City, Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah.

The four million Palestinians of the OPTs who do not have East Jerusalem residency permits are unable to go to their capital city without special Israeli-issued permits which are difficult to obtain.

### European hypocrisy

European hypocrisy in the matter of Israel’s settlements was revealed by the 2012 “Trading Away Peace” report produced by 22 international NGOs. While the Council of the European Union has committed itself to ensure that all agreements between the EU and Israel must state they do not apply to the OPTs, the EU imports around 15 times more from Israel’s colonies than from the Palestinian economy.

And despite every international voice – including that of the United States – pleading with Israel to stop building settlements and calling them the biggest obstacle to peace, the relentless construction of colonies continues.

Just hours after Netanyahu finalised his right wing coalition in May, the Jerusalem District Planning Committee approved the construction of 900 homes in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ramat Shlomo.



**Israeli Civil Administration inspector in Susya which is threatened with demolition. Photo: Nasser Nawaj'a, B'Tselem**

## Settler hero – convicted killer

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin gave the eulogy at the funeral of hero of the settler movement and convicted killer, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, in May, calling him one of Israel’s “most treasured sons.” And PM Binyamin Netanyahu praised the killer as “an outstanding example of a generation that sought to realise the Zionist dream, in deed and in spirit, after the Six Day War.”

In April, 1968, Rabbi Levinger led a group of Israelis posing as Swiss tourists who took over a hotel in Hebron’s old city. Although the Israeli army issued eviction notices, Levinger’s group never left.

Today, the colonisers in Hebron’s old city number around 700 and the severe restrictions the Israeli authorities have imposed on the Palestinian residents in consequence have totally destroyed the commercial life of the city. A further 7000 settlers live in Kiryat Arba on the outskirts of the city and make repeated attempts to take over more Palestinian land.

In 1985 Levinger went on a three-month armed vigilante patrol of a Palestinian refugee camp near Bethlehem. The UN recorded that he “provoked the inhabitants of the camp by firing at them and invading their homes” and “reportedly ran along the camp alleys, together with a guard, and both men fired into the air in an indiscriminate manner.” He also broke into a Palestinian house in Hebron and assaulted a six-year-old child.

In 1988 Levinger was convicted of causing the shooting death of Kayed Sallah, 42. The rabbi said he fired in self-defence because Palestinians had stoned his car but witnesses said he rampaged through Hebron’s market, overturning stalls and shooting wildly, well after the stoning. Unarmed Sallah was killed standing in front of the shoe store he owned.

Levinger plea-bargained the charge down from manslaughter, was released after just 92 days in jail and showed no remorse. He continued to be arrested for acts of violence and provocation into the late 1990s.



**President Reuven Rivlin standing over Levinger’s body**

# Arming Apartheid

A major new report, *Arming Apartheid*, turns the spotlight on the UK's arms trade with Israel in recent years, including last summer's 51 day bombardment by Israel of the blockaded Gaza Strip. Produced by Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Campaign Against the Arms Trade and War on Want, it has been written and researched by David Wearing with additional research by Zeina Ammar. The report calls for an end to the UK's two-way arms trade with Israel and an end to all military and business links that support Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian Territories. It calls on supporters of Palestine to join the campaign against this shameful trade in discrimination and death. Here **Harald Molgaard** summarises its main points.

**T**he main message of *Arming Apartheid* is that the arms trade with Israel breaches the UK's own guidelines for the export of military material and also makes the UK complicit in Israel's violations of international humanitarian law. This is even more true for the import into the UK of Israeli military technology as this rewards Israel for its use of the Palestinians to combat test its weapons.

## British arms exports to Israel

*Arming Apartheid* gives details of the UK's exports of military and dual use licenses to Israel and of its arms contracts with Israel since 2010. It shows that the value of the exports fluctuate round a settled range, but rose to £35 million during January to September of 2014 – the period which included the most recent attack on Gaza, "Operation Protective Edge."

**“The value of the exports rose to £35 million during the most recent attack on Gaza”**

Businesses wishing to export military material must apply to the Export Control Organisation, which is part of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, for a license. Whether or not this is granted should be judged against a set of eight criteria known as the Consolidated EU and National Arms export Licensing Criteria.

Michael Fallon, then Minister of State in the Department, stated in a 2013 parliamentary answer that three of these criteria were of particular relevance to exports to Israel:



**Destruction caused by Israeli bombs on Gaza**

- Where there was a clear risk of the equipment being used for internal repression
- Where the export would “provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts”
- Where there is a “clear risk that the intended recipient would use the proposed export aggressively against another country, or to assert by force a territorial claim”

Fallon omitted to mention Criterion 6 which stipulates that the government must take into account the buyer country's “respect for international law.”

The government has claimed that its licensing regime is amongst the most stringent in the world. But it is clear that application of these criteria would and should lead to a *de facto* ban on arms exports to Israel.

**“Application of these criteria would and should lead to a *de facto* ban on arms exports to Israel”**

Another issue which has come up in the past is Israel's broken promises on the end use of materials. It became clear in 2002 that Israel's earlier guarantees that armoured personnel carriers supplied to them by the UK would not be used in the OPT had been broken. As a result, the then government confirmed in 2006 that Israel's assurances on end use were not being taken into account.

The report cites two recent examples of licensing which further disprove the claim of stringency insofar as it applies to Israel. In 2009, after initially denying that UK-supplied military materials had been used in Operation Cast Lead, then Foreign Secretary David Miliband admitted four months later that Israeli combat aircraft, helicopters, naval vessels and armoured carriers had indeed “almost certainly” contained and used components manufactured and sold by the UK.

Some of these components were sold to the USA to be incorporated into helicopters and fighter planes which were then sold to Israel. However, UK-produced components for naval vessels and armoured personnel carriers had been supplied directly to Israel.

A few months later the UK government did revoke five export licenses for spare parts of guns on the naval vessel Saar 4.5. But these were just five out of 35 licenses relating to the Saar gunboat. These license revocations and David Miliband's admission were the result of intense civil society pressure but they came too late to have an effect on the assault on Gaza.

The final example, occurring during Israel's bombardment of Gaza last summer, is the issue of 12 licenses the government identified for components where "there could be a risk the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law." The government decided only to suspend these licenses if there was resumption of "significant hostilities." But when hostilities resumed they were not deemed serious enough to warrant the suspension of the licenses.

This issue has been the subject of a legal challenge from CAAT – see their website for further details. Clearly, waiting till after hostilities have begun before considering suspending export licences makes the control of arms exports pointless.

As the report points out, the UK's ongoing supply of military and dual use equipment to Israel not only violates the criteria under which military exports are supposed to be controlled but also grants moral and political impunity to Israel's grave breaches of international humanitarian law.

## British arms imports and collaboration with Israeli military

Britain makes extensive use of Israeli military technology, principally its expertise in drone warfare. For example, the Israeli firm Elbit systems provided \$110 million worth of drone technology for use in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has been followed by the award of a £1bn government contract to Thales (UK) for the Watchkeeper WK 450 drone which was developed by the company in a joint venture with Elbit systems.

The Watchkeeper is based on the Hermes 450 drone which is in regular use over the OPT and in the assaults on Gaza. It was also revealed in 2012 that Israeli military personnel had come to the UK for educational courses in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012.

Israel exports 75% of its military material and, chillingly, uses the fact that it is combat proven as a selling point. It is now one



*Palestinian boy spots a drone in the sky*

of the major arms exporters in the world, selling to over 100 countries arms which rose in value to \$7.1bn in the years 2008–2011.

The report reveals just how much Israel's arms industry benefits from its military occupation and repression of the Palestinians.



*Watchkeeper WK450 drone*

## EU support for the Israeli arms industry

Another issue this report briefly looks at is EU support for the Israeli arms industry which benefited enormously from the EU's Framework research programme.

Israeli firms were involved in 46 projects and participating companies included Elbit and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). These two companies have been involved in projects with a total value of 240 million euros, several of which are ongoing. IAI is also receiving 11.8 million euros under a different EU project (OPARUS) for the development of drones.

## Israel's violations of international law

The final sections of the report look at how Israel uses its arms and its security systems to uphold a system of apartheid in the Occupied Territories. It reviews all the different ways in which Israel operates a system of racial discrimination and describes how Palestinians are daily subjected to violence and human rights abuses. Israel's "Operation Protective Edge" bombardment of Gaza involved further serious breaches of international law and many examples are reviewed in this report.

This is the context of UK arms exports. Rather than looking at licenses on a case by case basis, the UK should end all exports of arms to Israel and put a stop to what is in effect UK support for Israel's multiple breaches of international humanitarian law.

Israel's overwhelmingly brutal offensives in Lebanon and Gaza have often led to calls from senior politicians in the UK for a suspension of arms exports. Most recently the resignation of Baroness Warsi from the last government was caused by her dismay at its failure to speak out against Israel's actions. She urged an end to arms sales and Nick Clegg, then Deputy Prime Minister, joined her in that call. A petition sponsored by Amnesty International calling for an end to arms sales got 60,000 signatures.

## Proposals for action

Finally the report urges us to support a campaign for a two way embargo on arms trade with Israel. Actions it suggests include:

- Write to and request meetings with your MP to make your views known
- Hold meetings, book speakers, promote the campaign on stalls, etc. Materials and speakers can be found at [stoparmingisrael.org](http://stoparmingisrael.org)
- Lobby your local arms dealer, details can be found at [caat.org.uk/map/israel](http://caat.org.uk/map/israel)
- Support BDS. See [palestinecampaign.org/bds](http://palestinecampaign.org/bds) or [waronwant.org/BDS](http://waronwant.org/BDS)

# NGOs call for sanctions

**“This must be the last Gaza reconstruction conference. The cycle of building and destroying must end.”**

*UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Cairo, 13 October 2014*

**A** group of leading NGOs is calling for sanctions to be imposed on Israel to force it to comply with international law, lift the blockade of Gaza and allow free movement of Palestinians across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

A briefing paper signed by 46 NGOs including Oxfam, Save the Children, ActionAid, Christian Aid, Care International and others from the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavian countries, was released in April, six months after representatives of 60 countries pledged \$3.5 billion to address the “unprecedented destruction and suffering in Gaza” caused by Israel’s vicious bombardment.

It says that only 26.8% of the money has been released, reconstruction and recovery have barely begun, there has been no accountability for violations of international law, no progress towards a permanent ceasefire and living conditions for the people of Gaza get worse all the time. “Without economic, social and political stability, a return to conflict – and the cycles of damage and donor-funded reconstruction that accompany it – is inevitable.”

**“Israel’s illegal policies need to be challenged with practical measures”**

The paper, “Charting a new course: overcoming the stalemate in Gaza,” by the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), insists that the “necessary paradigm shift cannot be delayed any further. Israel’s illegal policies need to be challenged with practical measures that account for donor and third state responsibilities.”

It says that a “particularly powerful but under-utilised mechanism” governments



can use is to make better relations with Israel in the economic, diplomatic or trade spheres conditional on the country complying with international law.

For instance, EU–Israeli relations are governed by the EU–Israeli Association Agreement. “This specifies that relations between the parties... shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles. In view of the clear breaches of human rights in the OPT... the EU has a clear obligation to respond by conditioning improved economic and other relations with improved compliance with international law.”

The paper has a number of specific recommendations for action by the EU:

- Formalising the informal dialogue on human rights: of all the European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries with Action Plans, only Israel does not have an official subcommittee on human rights... the EU should insist that all ENP partnerships include formal dialogues on human rights. No meetings at a higher diplomatic level should take place until this subcommittee has met and made its recommendations.
- Declare Action Plan expired: the 2012 Association Council determined that the 2005–8 Action Plan could continue to be used as a basis to agree progress, even though it was technically out of date. The EU should... assert that the 2005 Action Plan has expired... A newly elevated human rights subcommittee should discuss what human rights progress is necessary as part of developing a new Action Plan.

**“Israel must open all crossings into and out of Gaza and allow free movement of Palestinians”**

- Review of funding under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI): Israel benefits from funding from programmes that are part of the ENI. Under the ENI 2014–2020 there are provisions for reviewing funding in the event of crises or threats to democracy, the rule of law or human rights and fundamental freedoms... An emergency review may lead to the adoption of revised programming documents.

- The EU could also make stronger use of the Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with International Humanitarian Law. In particular, the EU should complement their denunciations of Israel’s illegal policies by employing the restrictive measures under Article 16(d) of the Guidelines.

- States should not... aid or assist rights violations with respect to companies that contribute to such violations. This should... include adopting clear guidance to national companies, including state-owned companies, pension and investment funds, to ensure that they... do not support companies whose actions support violations of international law.

# Chatting to Gaza

From war to weddings, from studying in the dark to loving *Downton Abbey*, the subjects covered in the regular Skype chats set up by PSC between students in London and Gaza, known as Chat2Gaza, took in the rich variety of life.

A genuine bond has grown up between the students from Westminster University and the young people in Gaza. When the sessions finished in April, Mahmuda Ahmed, head of the University's Palestine Solidarity Society, said they had been "an absolute inspiration for me and have taught me the power of hope, faith and patience... it's fuelled me with newfound motivation each time to continue the fight for the freedom of Palestinians."

In the last session the Gaza students spoke of how much they were looking forward to a summer packed with weddings, many of which had been postponed last summer as Israeli bombs rained down. They especially liked ceremonies that involved people from outside Gaza as it gave them a glimpse of the outside world and they loved TV shows like *Downton Abbey* for a similar reason.

Humour clearly helped them cope with the difficulties of their lives. After sharing their joy in the electricity supply increasing from six to eight hours of the day, they laughed when asked by the London students if they still had to pay the full price. Whatever condition Gaza is in, they said, they still have to pay the government.

In March the session was not so light hearted as news of the results of the Israeli election was just sinking in. Rachel Diamond, PSC's student and activist co-ordinator, said their response was "disbelief and sadness" because they couldn't understand how any human being, let alone a large chunk of the Israeli population, could support what Netanyahu did to them last year. They worried that if Israeli leaders had such an unquestioning citizenry to draw upon, future attacks on Gaza would be imminent.

But another strong message from the discussion was the necessity to humanise Palestinians so they are not just seen as people who are massacred and brutalised. Rachel said: "They told us: 'We don't want to be talked about like we are in Africa 50 years ago.' Instead they want us to see ourselves in them."



"Although we should never forget the suffering inflicted on Palestinians, we should also remember that despite everything they face, they refuse to give in. 'Yes what happened to us is awful and yes it is still hard, but we still go to the beach and smoke shisha and try to enjoy life.'"

- Gaza students joking about the next war: "Could be tomorrow, could be in 15 months. We are war experts now."
- On *Downton Abbey*: "We are trapped here in Gaza so we watch films as our window to the world outside."
- "Voting for Netanyahu means they agree with what he did to us"
- "I love attending weddings... We don't have much in Gaza so weddings give us the opportunity to explore other cultures."
- "We evacuated about six times during the war. I hate to talk about it but I know we are meant to talk."
- "We know we are not alone because you are protesting with us"
- "Either we die slowly through the Israeli siege, or we die from Israeli aircraft dropping bombs. I want to die with dignity."
- "When the ceasefire was announced it was like Eid. Happy to be alive but sad for people who died."

[www.chat2gaza.com](http://www.chat2gaza.com)

(cont. from page 12)

The paper urges all parties to take a number of actions: immediately resume negotiations for a long term ceasefire, Israeli government and Palestinian armed groups should abide by international law, the international community should push for greater accountability, Egypt should facilitate humanitarian assistance and donors make good their promises.

To end the blockade it says that Israel must open all crossings into and out of Gaza and allow free movement of Palestinians "in line with their obligations as an occupying power with individual restrictions on movement placed only in exceptional cases of legitimate security concern." The international community, in particular the Quartet, "should propose a time-bound plan" to bring about the end of the blockade and "promptly develop a common response to the government of Israel" if there is no immediate progress.

- Over 160,000 homes affected – 2,400 housing units completely destroyed and 6,600 severely damaged. 17,500 families (100,000 individuals) still homeless. Reconstruction cost \$1.182bn
- Estimated 7,000 Explosive Remnants of War buried in debris. At least 10 people killed and 36 injured due to ERW
- Damage to 20,000 metres of water network pipes, 15,000 metres of sewage networks, 11 water reservoirs and 12 sewage pumping stations
- 14 health facilities destroyed, including one hospital; 50 primary health clinics and 17 hospitals need urgent repairs. 45 ambulances damaged or destroyed. Damage to health sector \$50m
- 8 schools destroyed and 250 damaged. 3 universities destroyed, another 3 severely damaged. Over 559,000 students affected. Damage to education sector over \$27m
- Primary fuel tank of the Gaza Power Plant totally destroyed. Over 20% of people with no electricity. Damage to energy sector estimated at \$56m
- 30% of agricultural lands damaged. Losses over \$550m
- 128 businesses and workshops completely destroyed, 419 damaged. Damage to private businesses over \$186m

# Return is not a fantasy

The once thriving Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk, formerly regarded as a cultural corner of the Syrian capital, Damascus, came under siege from Bashir Al Assad's forces in 2012. Though thousands fled there were an estimated 18,000, including 3,500 children, still trapped there, suffering severe shortages of food, water and medicines, when the camp was overrun by fighters from the Islamic State (ISIS) and an al-Qaeda affiliate, al-Nusra Front, on 1 April.

At the end of April, Syrian government forces shelled the camp, further worsening conditions for the people. Very little aid of any kind has been delivered since. UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, described conditions in the camp as like the "deepest circle of hell."

The people of Yarmouk would not be trapped in this hell if they were allowed to exercise the legal right of every refugee – to return to his or her homeland. Recently, author and activist **Ben White** blogged about how Nakba Day should not only be about remembering catastrophe, it should be about demanding this fundamental human right for Palestinians to whom Israel has denied it for 67 years.

**T**he ethnic cleansing of Palestine unfolded in 1948 through expulsions, massacres, and demolitions. Hundreds of villages were emptied, then levelled; centres of Palestinian urban life and community disappeared; columns of refugees took flight at the barrel of a gun.

In the years since, the army of the State of Israel, formed from the militias who had occupied and "cleansed" village after village, used bullets and landmines to keep out the refugees trying to return home.

This is what we remember on Nakba Day (May 15), a vital act when so many still deny, or justify, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Nor is it just about remembering – it is also about the ongoing Nakba, and resistance to the apartheid horror of Palestine today: the systematic discrimination faced by Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, the Gaza prison camp, the military regime and matrix of control in the West Bank.

But it is also about the refugees' right to return, and not just in the abstract: the actual, physical return of Palestinians excluded from their homeland because they are not Jews. It is not impractical, and it need not be a fantasy. It is, however, fatal to the present system of settler colonial privilege.

There are more than two million Palestinian refugees within historic Palestine: in the Gaza Strip, West Bank,

and Israel's pre-67 lines. There are another three million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Thus the majority of Palestinian refugees live within tens of kilometres of their historic sites of dispossession.

What would a return of Palestinian refugees look like? It is a question increasingly being taken up and answered by Palestinians, as well as Jewish Israelis. This work is a breath of fresh air, a contrast to the stale, apartheid-accommodating proposals generated by years of "peace process" politics.

**“Salman Abu Sitta has refuted claims that there is no room in Israel for the refugees’ return”**

There is, of course, the research and scholarship of Salman Abu Sitta, who has refuted claims that "there is no room in Israel for the refugees' return." In 2013, a major conference took place at Boston University to examine the political, legal, humanitarian, and practical aspects of return, including precedents in East Timor, Bosnia and South Africa.



Palestinian groups like Badil are producing in-depth resources based on the premise, in the words of Ali Abunimah, that "ending the Nakba requires creative and practical thinking and planning for return." This means examining the implications of return on questions of property and residential rights, as well as the meaning of full reparation.

Workshops like Zochrot's 2010 "Counter-mapping: Thinking about the Return," examined questions like: "How many new housing units will be built? What will the shared Israeli-Palestinian space be like? How will industrial and agricultural regions be allocated? What infrastructure will be required for towns and villages? What principles will govern movement throughout the area?"

Meanwhile, Palestinians on the ground, in places like Miska, Iqrit and Kufr Birim, have already embarked "on a process that imagines and realises a return to their lands." These are initiatives that marry practical activism, a kind of present-future return, with plans and sketches that "open the political imagination towards the different forms in which a present return could take place."

So yes, it is imperative to remember the history of ethnic cleansing, and yes, it is essential to connect the Nakba of 1948 to the ongoing Nakba, an unbroken history of expulsion and massacres, exclusion and occupation. But it is as equally important to stress the viability and necessity of return.

It is about replacing parameters defined by settler colonialism and ethno-nationalist separation, with those of restorative justice and decolonisation. The return of the Palestinian refugees carries the twin-promise of the liberation of the imagination, and of the land.

■ See Ben's complete blog at <http://tinyurl.com/p9c6a4c>

# A sporting boycott of Israel?

## Yes – BDS in all walks of life

Protests against racism in Israeli football, Israel's state oppression and harassment of Palestinian footballers and the inclusion of Israel in international competitions and bodies while it continues its illegal and brutal military occupation of the Palestinian Territories have been gaining pace thanks in large part to energetic and inspired action by PSC members. Members of the **Red Card Israeli Racism** campaign were joined by hundreds of other protestors from across Europe at a demonstration outside the recent FIFA Congress. The corruption scandal engulfing FIFA meant the venue was swarming with journalists who were also keen to interview the activists, ensuring widespread coverage. In the UK a vigorous campaign centres on the UEFA championship in which Wales has been drawn to play against Israel in the qualifying round. The match is due to take place in Cardiff on 6 September and already activists have been leafletting football fans at local matches and garnering support. Here **Betty Hunter**, honorary president of PSC, fills in the background to the campaign so far.

Israel's apartheid policies have a terrible impact on every aspect of the lives of Palestinians, including sport. Football is yet another arena in which Israel pursues its relentless campaign to suppress Palestinian identity by routinely preventing Palestinian people from playing the game and competing in tournaments.

In just a few examples of how this policy is pursued:

- Israel has bombed Palestinian stadiums and shot and imprisoned players. It has stopped or hindered improvements to grounds under FIFA's Goal project.
- This year Palestine made it through to the last 16 in the Asian Cup in Australia despite player Sameh Maarabeh not being allowed to travel from the West Bank, player Haitham Deeb not being allowed to leave Israel, two Palestinian FA officials not being allowed to travel from the West Bank and no Gazan players being able to travel.
- At the September 2014 Philippines Peace Cup, Israel prevented six Palestinian players from Gaza from competing, leaving the Palestinian squad with only three reserves.
- In 2014 Israeli armed forces invaded the headquarters of the Palestinian Football Association. FIFA chief Sepp Blatter condemned the raid but the Israeli FA did not.
- Racism is common on the terraces with regular chants of "death to Arabs" and the Israeli FA fails to exercise due control over its clubs.

The recent FIFA Congress revealed the extent to which Israel will go to deny Palestinian rights. The rules of FIFA and UEFA

are clear that there should be freedom of movement for all players and no racism in football. For the first time the Palestinian FA put forward a resolution for the suspension of Israel until it affords Palestine these rights.

Lobbying by Israel before the Congress was intense with the result that the PFA suspension call was replaced with an amendment which established a Monitor Group of International Observers working under the rules of FIFA's Ethic, Legal and Discrimination committee. It is tasked to ensure PFA freedom to develop its football, to identify and respond to racism inside Israeli football, and to answer the question of clubs formed in Israel's illegal settlements playing in the country's leagues.

Crucially, the Palestinians scored a victory in making their case at a time when the corruption investigation focused world attention on the FIFA Congress. The call for an international sporting boycott was highlighted and the demand for suspension of Israel from both FIFA and UEFA will continue.

The UEFA qualifying match between Wales and Israel is a brilliant opportunity to maintain the momentum for a sporting boycott. Israeli PR is already working to promote its image as "good sports" but this match will enable us vividly to highlight that Israel is an apartheid state and must become a pariah state.

In Britain, the Stop the Seventy Tour against South African apartheid in rugby and cricket became a rallying point for anti-apartheid activists in 1970 and we can make the match in Cardiff have a similar significance.

We have the support of UNITE and PCS trade unions and other local political and community groups in Wales and this support is growing. Now we need to make the 6 September demonstration in Cardiff a mobilisation of all supporters of Palestine.

**Kick Israel out of UEFA and FIFA – come to Cardiff on 6 September.**

### Actions you can take:

- Come to Cardiff on Sunday, 6 September, 2pm, City Hall.
- Leaflet your own local football matches when the season starts in August.
- Write to your local clubs, fan clubs and players to tell them about the campaign.
- Write letters to your local press.
- Keep in touch via [cardiffpsc@gmail.com](mailto:cardiffpsc@gmail.com), our Facebook page [facebook.com/cardiffpsc](https://www.facebook.com/cardiffpsc) or follow us on twitter [@cardiffpsc](https://twitter.com/cardiffpsc).
- Get more information from [www.rcir.org](http://www.rcir.org).



# Israeli extremism will boost global boycott

By Omar Barghouti

Israel has elected the most fanatic government in its history. But many Palestinian human rights activists and politicians expect this government, an unpalatable cocktail of right, far-right and fundamentalist Jewish parties, to be the mother of all silver-lined clouds.

This drastic shift to the right cannot, in the short term, bode well for Palestinians languishing under Israel's regime of oppression. The siege of Gaza, the illegal construction of settlements, especially in Jerusalem, the destruction of Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley and the Naqab (Negev) will get worse, exacting an even steeper human price.

But Israel's shedding of democratic pretences and adoption of unmasked colonial policies will also enhance the already impressive growth of the global, nonviolent, Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

A government led by a prime minister who rejects Palestinian statehood and publicly race-baits Palestinian citizens of Israel and whose key partner, the Jewish Home, advocates for creating Palestinian Bantustans, will make it much more difficult to defend Israel in the court of world public opinion.

American singer and actress Lauryn Hill's recent cancellation of a concert near Tel Aviv was only the latest indicator of



the impact of BDS in the mainstream. Several US academic associations have adopted the academic boycott of Israeli institutions, shattering a taboo, while divestment has spread among elected student governments on US campuses.

Jewish support for BDS has also grown significantly. A recent poll reveals that nearly one in six Jewish Americans supports boycotting products from Israel, and 25% support settlement boycotts.

The former Mossad chief, Shabtai Shavit, is convinced that BDS has become a "critical" challenge to Israel, while the former prime minister Ehud Barak admits it is reaching a "tipping point." Barak's 2011 warning that Israel's defiant right-wing leadership would bring about a "tsunami" of sanctions sounds quite prudent and relevant now.

Israel may soon face its South Africa moment.



Lauryn Hill

**Omar Barghouti is one of the founders of the BDS movement and author of *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights***

## Lawsuit against settlement goods

In a fascinating new development in the struggle against the import into Europe of goods produced in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, a lawsuit has been filed against the Belgian government to prevent the entry or selling of such products in Belgium.

Although the case was originally filed in September, 2013, it took 18 months of legal argument before it had its first hearing at the Brussels Court of First Instance in April. It has been taken against the Belgian government, represented by the Ministers of Economy, Finance and Customs.

The lawsuit is being pursued by Ramadan Abu Jazar (pictured), representing the General Union of Palestinian Communities in Europe. He is a Belgian of Palestinian origin, and the Brussels director of the Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD).

The GNRD's aim is to use "brave ideas and new approaches to make real changes." It was established in 2008, has its head



office in Norway and acts in many parts of the world to promote application of the rights recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the hearing the Union's lawyers explained the damage resulting from importing Israeli settlement goods and said Belgian and European consumers have the right to know the sources of these Israeli products. The Belgian government's lawyers argued that commercial agreements are conducted directly between Israeli and Belgian companies and the government had no responsibility in this regard.

Meanwhile diplomats from 16 European countries, including some of Israel's closest allies, signed a letter in April calling for the labelling of goods produced in

Israeli settlements. The letter urged EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, to start the process. Signatories include the UK, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. The EU is Israel's largest trading partner.

## Barclays out of Elbit

**B**arclays is no longer listed as a shareholder in Elbit Systems, the major Israeli military company that manufactures drones used in Israel's attacks on Palestinians and helps Israel build its illegal separation wall.

The news, reported by the Palestinian BDS National Committee in April, follows a high profile campaign launched after Barclays emerged as the named owner of \$2.9 million worth of shares in Elbit. More than 1.7 million people signed a petition organised by Avaaz and campaigners protested at bank branches across the UK.



Barclays has made no public commitment that it won't own shares in Elbit in the future and still holds shares in other arms companies that supply Israel.

Mahmoud Nawajaa, coordinator with the BDS National Committee, said: "The fact that Barclays is no longer listed as a shareholder in Elbit Systems is a welcome development. Elbit plays a key role in Israel's brutal massacres of Palestinians and in the proliferation of drone technology across the world."

## Veolia sells up

**T**he international boycott campaign notched up a huge success with the announcement in April that the French multinational Veolia has completed the sale of its water, waste and energy contracts that served Israeli settlements to Oaktree Capital, a Los Angeles based investment firm.

The Boycott Veolia Campaign was launched in Bilbao in November 2008 and cost the company billions of dollars in lost contracts. A vigorous campaign in the UK, brilliantly inspired by the PSC's Angus Geddes, saw many councils in the UK stop using the company to collect waste and city councils across Europe passed resolutions excluding the firm from tenders.

Many investors, including the Dutch ASN Bank and the Quaker Friends Fiduciary Corporation, divested from Veolia while other major banks and the Swedish AP pension fund issued public statements condemning Veolia's role in the settlements.

Veolia sold its bus operations in Israel in 2013 and claimed last year that it had also ended its involvement in the Tovlan landfill site, which dumped waste from settlements on Palestinian land, three years previously. Official records obtained from the Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection in September 2013 showed this was false and the site was still being operated by Veolia's subsidiary, TMM Integrated Recycling Services.

Ownership of the Tovlan site and wastewater treatment contracts for Israeli settlements is now expected to transfer to Oaktree. Veolia continues to remain involved in the Jerusalem Light Rail that ferries colonisers from settlements in East Jerusalem to West Jerusalem but has announced its intention to sell its holding.

Mahmoud Nawajaa, coordinator with the BDS National Committee, said:

"We warmly thank the impressive number of principled activists and civil society organisations around the world whose dedicated and strategic efforts have made the campaign against Veolia such a success."

But he added that the boycott of Veolia would continue "until it ends its participation in the Light Rail project and pays reparations to those Palestinian communities impacted by its support for Israel's colonisation of Palestinian land.

"International corporations cannot simply profit from Israel's war crimes and then leave when the going gets tough, without being held accountable."

## Anti-boycott law approved

**I**srael's move to crush the rights of its citizens to call for a boycott of the country or of its illegal settlement colonies in the West Bank got the final go ahead in April.

The High Court of Justice voted by 5 to 4 to uphold the law which was first passed by the Knesset in 2011. It allows individuals to sue for damages anyone calling for an economic, cultural or academic boycott of Israel or "areas under its control," a reference to the West Bank settlements.

The Law for Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel through Boycott, authorises the finance minister to impose financial penalties, including the removal of tax-exempt status, on NGOs that call for a boycott or commit to participate in one. The judicial panel upheld this part of the law.

But the court unanimously rejected a section of the law that allowed courts to impose unlimited compensation payments on those calling for a boycott, even if no damage could be proved. This means that compensation can be imposed on boycotters only if damage or losses are established.

The petitions against the law were filed by several human rights organisations, including the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. They said: "The law imposes a 'price tag' on legitimate political expression and harms public debate, on those very issues that are most urgent and controversial."

The Women's Coalition for Peace said: "Boycotts and encouraging divestment are recognised throughout the world as legitimate, nonviolent tools. In its decision, the High Court is approving the silencing and restriction of legitimate protest aimed at criticising and working to change Israeli policy."

Justice Hanan Melcer, who wrote the ruling for the majority, said that while the Anti-Boycott Law indeed impinges on freedom of expression, overall it advances a worthy cause and thus the harm done to freedom of expression is proportionate.

Gaby Lasky, a lawyer for the petitioners, said: "This is a regrettable decision with far-reaching ramifications; the High Court justices are changing Israeli constitutional law and put the interests of perpetuating the settlement enterprise over all the state's citizens' basic right to freedom of expression."



# PSC Annual General Meeting 2016



**Saturday 23 January, 2016, 10am–5pm  
Central London**

The PSC Annual General Meeting is a vital event, discussing our work over the last year, and planning the future of our campaign – including motions and elections to the Executive Committee. Please join us there!

All members of national PSC are strongly encouraged to attend the AGM. If you are not sure whether your membership is up to date, please contact [psc.admin@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:psc.admin@palestinecampaign.org) or 020 7700 6192.

**Cost and accommodation**

Cost: £8 waged, £6 unwaged (to cover cost of lunch). We will try to arrange accommodation with other members of PSC if requested by 8 January 2016.

**Voting eligibility**

- At the AGM, every member in good standing has one vote, but a minimum period of membership of 3 months, ie by 23 October 2015, is necessary before voting rights are acquired. Following changes to the constitution adopted at PSC’s 2015 AGM, all members who wish to attend the AGM must register by 12pm on **Wednesday 20 January 2016**.
- PSC branches can send a delegate but this will only be valid where the branch affiliated has paid its subscription (£25 annually in January) Delegates from affiliated national organisations with over 100,000 members are entitled to 3 votes. Delegates from all other affiliated organisations will have one vote.
- The names of delegates from affiliated national organisations and PSC branches must be nominated by their affiliated organisation and registered with the PSC office by 12pm on Wednesday 20 January 2016.
- Voting for candidates will be by ballot at the AGM. Tellers will be appointed by the meeting.

**Motions and amendments**

Motions to the AGM, and nominations to the executive must be received in the PSC office by 5pm on 27 November 2015. Please keep any motions to no more than 300 words. These will be sent to members by 12 December 2015. Amendments to motions must be received in the PSC office by 5pm on 15 January 2016.

Please keep any amendments to no more than 100 words.

**Elections to the PSC Executive Committee**

The following positions are elected at the AGM: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Trade Union Liaison Officer, Student Liaison Officer, Campaigns Officer, Publications Officer, 8 ordinary members of the Executive Committee. Election regulations and copies of the constitution are available from the office on request.

Nominations must have the name of proposer, seconder and candidate’s agreement.

(All of the above must have been a national PSC member for 6 months before the AGM. Candidates can write 100 words in support of their nomination.)

**Nominations to the EC of Palestine Solidarity Campaign**

I propose .....

for the post of .....

Nominated by .....

Seconded by.....

I agree to this nomination .....

Date .....

Please complete and return to the PSC office by 27 November 2015 with your 100 word statement.

**Deadlines**

*Please see relevant sections above for more detailed information about the following deadlines.*

**23 October 2015** – To vote at AGM, your membership must be in good standing from this date.

**27 November 2015, 5pm** – Deadline for motions and nominations

**8 January 2016** – Receipt of accommodation requests

**15 January 2016, 5pm** – Deadline for amendments

**20 January 2016, 12pm** – Registration for delegates of affiliated national organisations, PSC branches and PSC individual members

## Annual General Meeting 2016 – PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE

PSC members who wish to attend the 2016 AGM should register in advance by 12pm on 20 January 2016.

You can register on-line at [www.palestinecampaign.org/psc\\_agm](http://www.palestinecampaign.org/psc_agm) or complete and return the form below for individual member registration. Please fill in the form clearly, using block capitals.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode .....

Email.....

Telephone number.....

Mobile.....

Registration fee is waged £8 / unwaged £6.  
Subscription renewal can be included for Waged £24 / Unwaged £12 (current status can be checked via the office – contact details below).

I enclose a cheque/P.O. payable to PSC for registration fee (including lunch) of £..... plus £..... donation to PSC’s campaign costs.

Alternatively payment can be made by credit / debit card by phoning 020 7700 6192.

**Deadline for receipt of forms: 20th January 2016, 12pm**

Signed .....

Date .....

Please return to: PSC, Box BM PSA, London, WC1N 3XX  
If you have any questions about registration for the AGM please contact the PSC Office: [psc.admin@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:psc.admin@palestinecampaign.org) or **020 7700 6192**

# Don't break your fast with an Israeli date

## Please check the label before you buy!



Avoid: **'Produce of Israel'**, and Israeli exporters including **'Hadiklaim'**, **'Mehadrin'**, **'Agrexco'**, **'Arava'**, **'Edom'**, **'MTex'**.

### DON'T BUY INTO ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION REMEMBER TO CHECK THE LABEL THIS RAMADAN!

# Join the Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Join PSC / make a donation

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

E-mail

Individual £24.00  Unwaged £12.00

Plus a donation (optional) of

I enclose a cheque of

(payable to PSC)

Affiliation fees for trade unions and other organisations are: £25 local; £50 regional; £100 national.

To cover the additional costs of overseas membership please pay the equivalent of US\$35 in your local currency.

Standing order

Paying this way helps PSC plan ahead more effectively

Name of Bank

Address

Postcode

Account number

Sort code

Please pay £12  £24  Other £

Monthly / Quarterly / Yearly (delete as applicable)

To PSC Cooperative Bank

Account No. 65147487 (sort code 08 92 99)

From (date) \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ until further notice

Name

Signature

Please return this form to:

PSC Box BM PSA London WC1N 3XX

# PSC sponsored walk

Join our fun and friendly sponsored walk along a beautiful section of the River Thames from Putney to Richmond

**Sunday, 13 September**

For more information and to sign up, contact the PSC office:  
020 7700 6192  
info@palestinecampaign.org

Photo: JuTa

# Conference season

**Come to learn about Palestine!**

**PSC will hold fringe meetings at the major political and union conferences this season**

For dates and times, check the website:  
[www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org)

Or phone **020 7700 6192**  
or email [info@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:info@palestinecampaign.org)