

The Case for Palestine:

A Guide for CWU members

**No One is
FREE, until
Everyone
is FREE!**

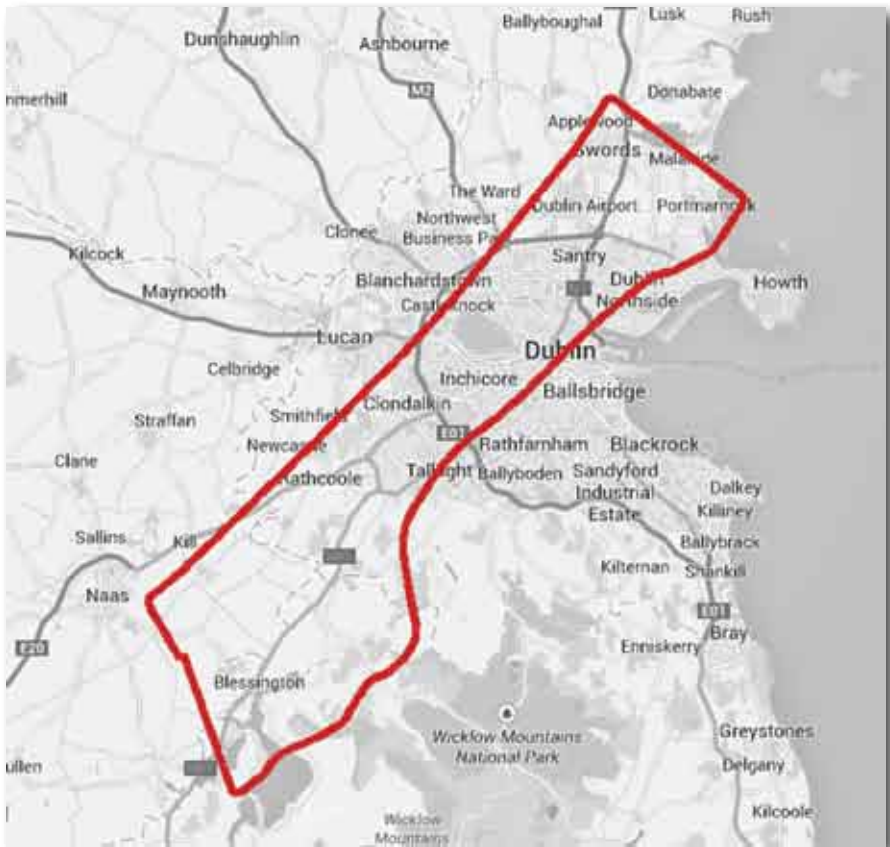
Martin Luther King, Jr.



**TEAR
DOWN
THIS
WALL!**
Intl. Court of Justice 131



PUTTING THE GAZA STRIP IN PERSPECTIVE



The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas on the planet; the 360km² enclave is home to approximately 1.8 million Palestinians. Its borders are closed on all sides, controlled mostly by Israel, excluding a small border in the south which is controlled by Egypt. Israel also controls Gaza's airspace and territorial waters, leaving no way out for this besieged people, whether in times of incredible violence or in times of relative calm.

Another perspective: The land area of County Tipperary is 4,303km²; the Gaza Strip would fit twelve times over into County Tipperary.

Please note that the CWU's support for the Palestinian-led international Boycott, Divesment and Sanctions Movement is not an "Anti-Israel" or "Anti-Semitic" position; it is an answer to Palestinian civil society's call for solidarity. Furthermore, our condemnation of Israel's military actions within Gaza does not constitute, in any way, support for any Palestinian political or military faction.

Colleagues,

The oppression of the Palestinian people is one of the most urgent issues facing the world today. Having suffered more than six decades of displacement and discrimination and almost 50 years of military occupation, daily life for people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza is defined by poverty, restrictions, humiliation and murder with impunity. Up to five million Palestinians are considered to be refugees; a stateless people with little access to services, land or adequate housing. Israel continues to annex Palestinian land, building colonial settlements and expanding its Separation Wall – all in contravention of international law.

The Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated areas on earth, is home to 1.8 million Palestinians. Since 2007, a brutal and illegal Israeli blockade continues to restrict the civilian population's access to food, energy, medicine and the outside world. At the time of writing, over 2,000 Palestinians (roughly 80% civilians) – including 470 children – have been killed by the Israeli military in an onslaught which included attacks on homes, schools and hospitals.

This aim of this booklet is to inform members of the Communications Workers' Union about the appalling situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and what they can do to help people on the ground. In 2009, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions supported the call by Palestinian civil society to build an international movement to impose boycotts, divestment and sanctions on the state of Israel. As such, we are encouraging our members to join this campaign. This booklet will briefly outline the issues in the conflict and provide information on the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. We encourage you to think about how you can contribute to the BDS campaign in your workplace and community.

In 1984, a group of courageous Irish trade union members in Dunnes Stores went on strike for over two years after refusing to handle fruit from Apartheid South Africa. Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, said: *"Young workers who refused to handle the fruits of apartheid 21 years ago in Dublin provided inspiration to millions of South Africans that ordinary people far away from the crucible of apartheid cared for our freedom"*. It is in this proud trade union tradition and principle of internationalism that we are calling on our members to show the same solidarity to the Palestinian people in their darkest of hours.

In closing, I would quote Archbishop Desmond Tutu who commented that: *"I think the West, quite rightly, is feeling contrite, penitent, for its awful connivance with the Holocaust. The penance is being paid by the Palestinians. I just hope ordinary citizens in the West will wake up and say 'we refuse to be part of this'"*, and that refusal is what we are asking of you, as conscientious members of our Union, to consider.

Yours fraternally,
Steve Fitzpatrick
General Secretary

What are the issues?

The Siege of Gaza (Israeli Blockade)

Since 2007, Israel has laid siege to the Gaza Strip, blockading the enclave by land, sea and air. The Gaza Strip is now essentially an 'open air prison', with the movement of people and goods severely restricted by the Israeli military. These restrictions are so tight that musical instruments, crayons, canned fruit and fresh meat are among the items banned from entering. This blockade has led to severe hardship and poverty; a situation amounting to collective punishment and which is now considered to be a humanitarian disaster. Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories said: *"Such a massive form of collective punishment is a crime against humanity, as well as a gross violation of the prohibition on collective punishment in Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention."*

Home Demolitions

Since 1967, Israel has demolished more than 38,000 Palestinian homes, aimed at collectively punishing Palestinians or making way for illegal Israeli settlements. This practice has continuously been condemned by the United Nations, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Illegal Settlements

Since 1967, Israel has continued to build illegal settlements in Palestinian territories it occupies, despite constant condemnation by the United Nations, including the United States, Israel's main supporter. Israelis are encouraged, through generous state compensation schemes, to settle in these colonies. The aim of the Israeli state is to increasingly colonise the West Bank thus making a viable Palestinian state impossible. These settlements are linked up by segregated roads, which Palestinians are forbidden from using.

Separation Wall

In April 2002, Israel began constructing an enormous wall around the occupied West Bank, ostensibly to prevent potential suicide bombers entering Israel. As a result, more than 10% of the West Bank has been annexed, with families and neighbourhoods divided by the concrete barrier. Widely known as the 'Apartheid Wall', the structure stands 8 metres (25ft) high and will span more than 700km once completed. In 2004, the International Court of Justice found the wall to be illegal because it vastly encroached upon Palestinian land and recommended Israel dismantle it. Despite the finding, Israel has refused to comply. The Red Cross, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also spoken out against the wall.

War Crimes

Israel's war crimes have been widely documented by human rights monitors, civil society organisations within Palestine, Israel and the wider international community, and the United Nations. For example, in 2009 an UN-backed mission of inquiry found that Israel committed *"serious war crimes and breaches of humanitarian law, which may amount to crimes against humanity"*. Yet Israel is granted impunity as the United States, its closest ally and largest military aid provider, shields it from any decisive action for such crimes and the EU continues trade, research and civil cooperation projects.

The BDS Movement: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions

Archbishop Desmond Tutu on BDS

"I have been to Palestine where I've witnessed the racially segregated housing and the humiliation of Palestinians at military roadblocks. I can't help but remember the conditions we experienced in South Africa under apartheid. We could not have achieved our freedom without the help of people around the world using the nonviolent means of boycotts and divestment to compel governments and institutions to withdraw their support for the apartheid regime."

On the 9th July 2005, 170 Palestinian civil society organisations, including trade unions, refugee rights associations, charitable organisations, academics and cultural groups, called for an international movement to impose boycotts, divestment and sanctions on the state of Israel. This nonviolent tactic was inspired by a similar boycott campaign that was used against Apartheid South Africa to isolate the then white supremacist government. Similarly, this boycott campaign is aimed at forcing Israel to guarantee Palestinians their inalienable human rights.

The key demands of the BDS Movement are for Israel to:

- (1) End its occupation and colonisation of all Arab lands occupied in June 1967 and dismantle the Wall**
- (2) Recognise the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality**
- (3) Respect, protect and promote the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194**

The BDS Movement has been growing rapidly in recent years, with a number of high-profile individuals lending their support, including Pink Floyd's Roger Waters, renowned scientist Stephen Hawking and Ireland's own Damien Dempsey. In 2011, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions reaffirmed its support for the BDS campaign in response to ongoing Israeli human rights violations.

BDS Successes

Boycott campaigns can work. Popular international pressure helped topple the Apartheid South African regime and such pressure can help end Israeli Apartheid too, delivering justice for the Palestinian people. Here are a very few examples where the campaign has seen success, there are numerous others, small and large.

G4S

Following pressure from BDS activists, the Bill Gates Foundation divested from security firm G4S in June 2014 because of the company's complicity in maintaining Israel's brutal prison system. As a result, G4S has informally announced that it will not renew its contracts with the Israeli prison service, which are due to expire in 2017.

SodaStream

In July 2014, a well-organised campaign in Britain highlighting the role of SodaStream in illegal Israeli settlements forced John Lewis to announce that it will no longer stock SodaStream products. In August 2014, Soros Fund Management – the fund management company owned by billionaire George Soros – agreed to divest from SodaStream, following pressure on investors to avoid companies profiting from or operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Soros Fund Management also agreed guidelines, similar to those adopted by the EU, to prevent any investment into companies that sustain the Israeli occupation and settlements in particular.

Veolia Transdev

A two-year campaign carried out by citizens in Boston prevented French multinational Veolia Transdev from obtaining a contract to operate the city's rail system. Veolia, which currently operates Dublin's LUAS, is helping to build tram lines in East Jerusalem which link illegal Israeli settlements, in breach of international law. It is also complicit in Apartheid, operating a 'settler-only' bus service to link the illegal colonies with Israel and a gender segregated service where women must sit at the back. In May 2010, Dublin City Council unanimously passed a resolution instructing the City Manager not to enter into or renew any contracts with Veolia on the basis of its

involvement in Israeli Apartheid. Veolia has since announced that it is attempting to sell its stake in the Light Rail system and has dumped its other Israeli interests in the Occupied Territories.

Mairéad Corrigan-Maguire, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, on BDS

“When anyone in the international community is brave enough to articulate the facts of Israel’s repression of the Palestinian people, they are bullied, threatened and accused of anti-Semitism. We all know the Jewish narrative but our sadness for one of humanity’s greatest acts of inhumanity should not stop us from speaking out on Israel’s current policy of a ‘silent genocide’ of the Palestinian people, and currently today of the people in Gaza... Prof. Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur for Palestine, who in his 6 years has often been refused entry into Palestinian territory by Israeli authorities, has recommended that UN member states should impose a ban on imports of products from Israeli settlements. I hope many will follow his advice.”

What you can do in your workplace and/or community

The most basic step you can take to help the BDS Movement is to stop buying products and services of Israeli companies as revenues from these help to fund Israel’s human rights violations. Try to encourage your friends, family and community to join you in doing so.



Supermarket Products from Occupied Palestinian Territories – check country of origin label:

Oranges	Fresh Rosemary	Dates
Avocados	Fresh Chives	Figs
Grapefruits	Fresh Parsley	Sharon Fruits
Potatoes	Fresh Sage	Golan Heights Wine
Fresh Basil	Bell Peppers	Meat Free Mince

Supermarket Brands from Occupied Palestinian Territories (including, but not limited to):



For a full list of products to boycott please visit www.ipsc.ie/big

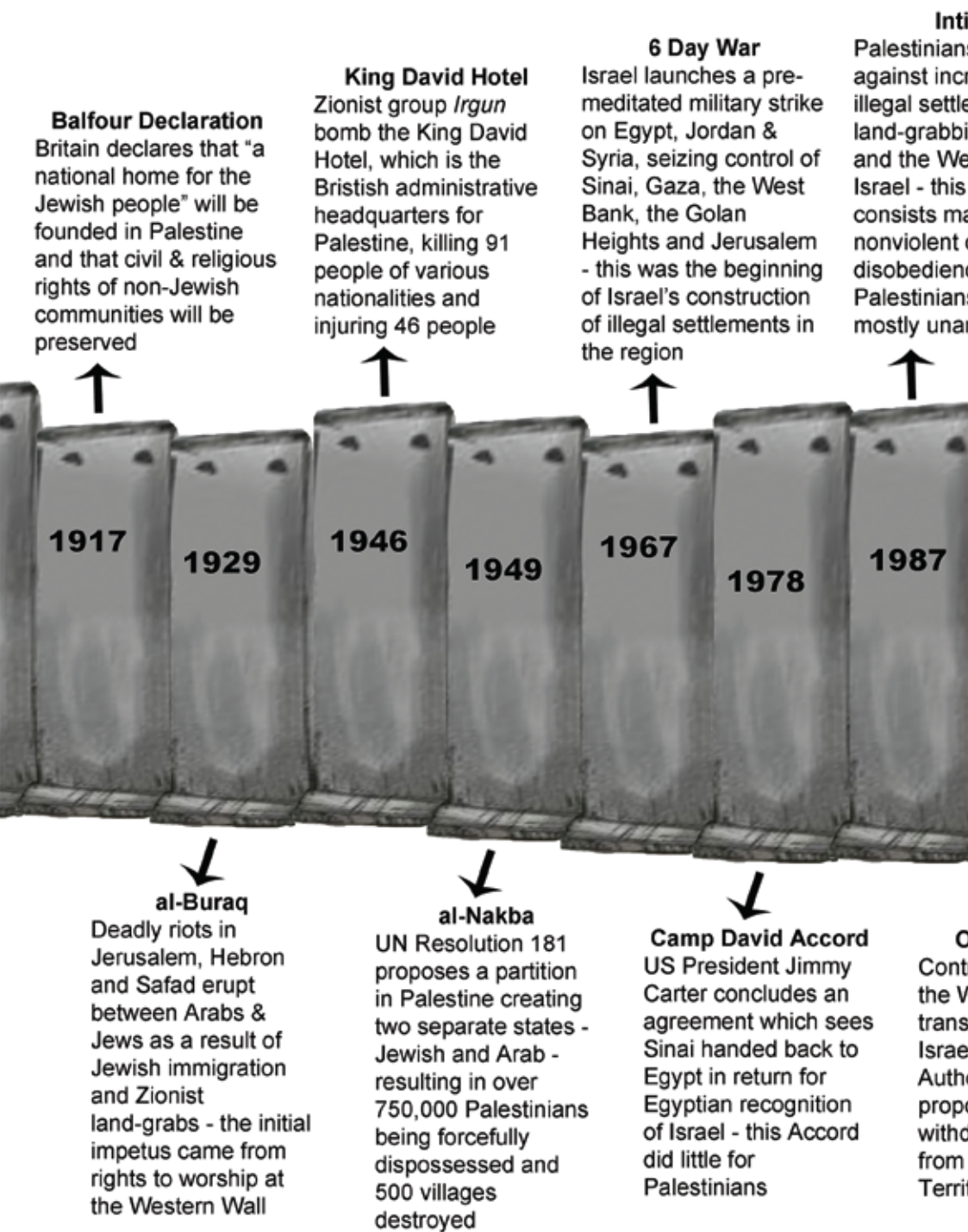
Other actions that you can take as part of the BDS campaign include:

- **SEND THE POSTCARD AT THE END OF THIS BOOKLET**
- Talk to managers in your supermarket expressing your wish that they stop selling Israeli goods
- Ask your local elected representatives to support the call for an Arms Embargo on Israel
- Write to TDs and Senators requesting sanctions and an end to the Euro-Med Preferential Trade Agreement until Israel ends its occupation and respects international law
- Join solidarity demonstrations around the country in support of Palestine
- Spread the word to your friends and family to boycott Israeli goods!

Roger Waters, Pink Floyd, on BDS

"In my view, the abhorrent and draconian control that Israel wields over the besieged Palestinians in Gaza and the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank (including East Jerusalem), coupled with its denial of the rights of refugees to return to their homes in Israel, demands that fair-minded people around the world support the Palestinians in their civil, nonviolent resistance... Where governments refuse to act people must, with whatever peaceful means are at their disposal. For me this means declaring an intention to stand in solidarity, not only with the people of Palestine but also with the many thousands of Israelis who disagree with their government's policies, by joining the campaign of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel."

TIMELINE OF EV



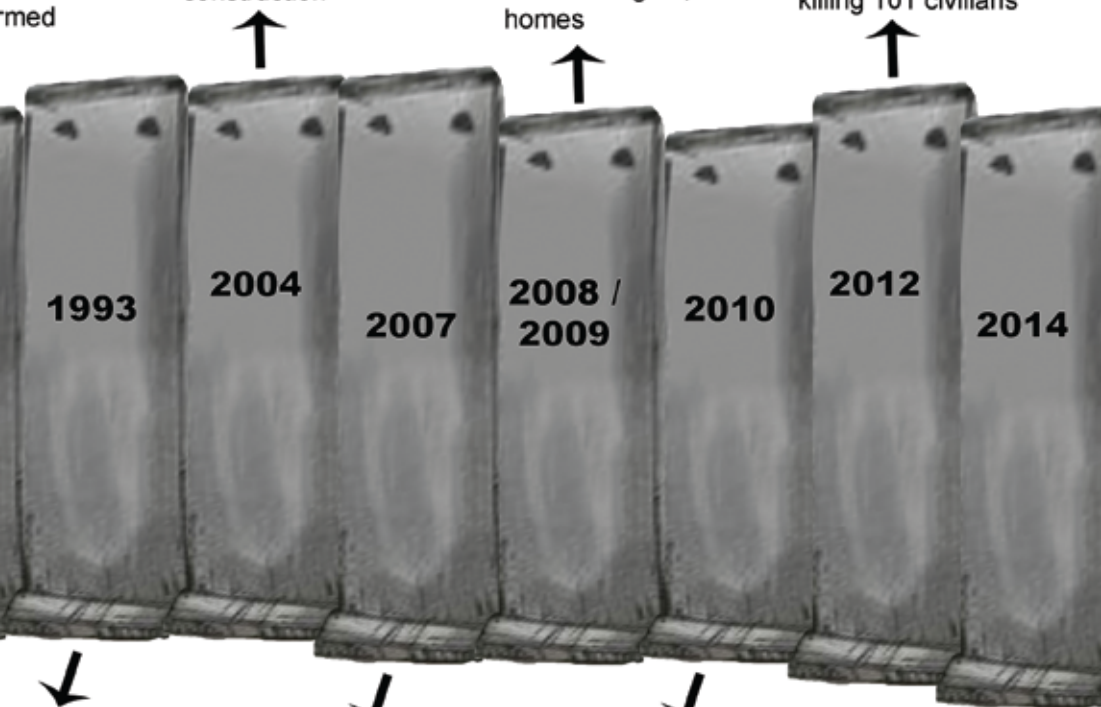
EVENTS 1917-2014

Oslo Accords
The Oslo Accords are signed, transferring control of Gaza and the West Bank from Israel to the Palestinian Authority, with the expectation of incremental withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Occupied Territories.

Israeli 'Apartheid' Wall
The ICC votes 14 to 1 that the Israeli-constructed separation wall is illegal, must be dismantled and reparations paid, and that states and the UN should take action against further construction.

Operation Cast Lead
Israel launches an air and ground assault in Gaza, killing 1,391 & wounding 5,300 Palestinians, and demolishing 11,514 homes.

Operation Pillar of Defense
Israel intentionally breaks the ceasefire, leading to a resumption of rocket fire by Hamas; Israel responds with 1,500 air strikes, 7 navy strikes and 360 mortar shell strikes, killing 101 civilians.



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Siege of Gaza
Israel imposes a border and sea blockade on Gaza, placing severe restrictions on the movement of goods and people.

Flotilla Massacre
9 Turkish activists (including 1 US dual citizen) were murdered in a commando attack on the Mavi Marmara in international waters after Israel attacked the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, delivering medical aid & building supplies.

Operation Protective Edge
Israel attacks Gaza after a Palestine unity government formed - over 2,000 Palestinians killed (mostly civilians).

Why is this apartheid?

The 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines apartheid as *“inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them”*. The acts which fall within the domain of apartheid include the following: **(1)** murder; **(2)** torture; **(3)** inhuman treatment and arbitrary arrest of members of a racial group; **(4)** deliberate imposition on a racial group of living conditions calculated to cause it physical destruction; **(5)** legislative measures that discriminate in the political, social, economic and cultural fields; **(6)** measures that divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate residential areas for racial groups; **(7)** the prohibition of interracial marriages; and **(8)** the persecution of persons opposed to apartheid (*Source: Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, Prof. John Dugard*).

The acts prescribed to the crime of apartheid read like a catalogue of Israeli practices and policies in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, to wit:

- (1) Murder:** 8,900+ Palestinians killed by Israeli military since 2000 (vast majority were civilians);
- (2) Torture:** At least 72 Palestinians tortured to death in Israeli prisons since 1967;
- (3) Arbitrary Arrest:** Israel allows for the arbitrary detention of any Palestinian civilian for up to 6 months without trial and detention orders can be extended indefinitely for additional 6-month periods. In practice, however, many have been detained for much longer periods, some up to or over 7 years. There are now roughly 6,000 Palestinians – including at least 200 children, 17 women and 11 elected Palestinian officials – being held in Israeli prisons or detention centres;
- (4) Physical Destruction:** The Israeli military made precise calculations of the daily calorie needs of Palestinians in 2008 and restricted the type and amount of food allowed to enter Gaza as a form of collective punishment. This action was taken after Hamas won elections and went on to take control of Gaza in 2007, with Israel subsequently deeming the region a ‘hostile territory’;
- (5) Discrimination:** The call to recognise Israel as a ‘Jewish State’ entrenches the policy of preserving institutionalised Jewish privilege in the majority of the Palestine-Israel region,

through ethnic separation and exclusion; Israel operates separate legal systems for Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories and within Israel, Palestinian citizens face a raft of legal discrimination;

- (6) **Separate Residential Areas:** Illegal Jewish settlements – connected by segregated roads – in the occupied West Bank have more than doubled since 2000, exceeding 500,000 settlers living on land beyond the pre-1967 borders. This is in contravention of numerous UN Security Council resolutions deeming these settlements illegal and demanding a halt to construction;
- (7) **Interracial Marriage:** There is no civil marriage in Israel, marriages are only allowed on a confessional basis meaning that without conversion people of different religions cannot marry;
- (8) **Persecution:** The persecution of the Palestinian people has been ongoing since 1947. What was recently witnessed in Gaza was only the latest in a long line of Israeli crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people.

MYTHBUSTER

(1) Israel does not occupy the Gaza Strip

14% of Gaza's total land and at least 48% of total arable land are taken up by Israel-imposed buffer zones. While 85% of the maritime area promised to Palestinians in the Oslo Accords is taken up by such buffer zones, reducing fishing areas from twenty nautical miles to three (*Source:* Boston Globe). Furthermore, Israel controls the population registry for residents of the Gaza Strip, despite withdrawing its ground forces and settlements from the enclave in 2005 (*Source:* Human Rights Watch).

(2) Hamas doesn't want a ceasefire but Israel does

A Hamas spokesperson said the group wants the *"aggression to stop tomorrow, today, or even this minute. But [Israel must] lift the blockade with guarantees and not as a promise for future negotiations"*. The spokesperson went on to say: *"we will not shut the door in the face of any humanitarian ceasefire backed by a real aid programme"* (*Source:* Al Jazeera). Hamas **proposed a 10-year end to hostilities** in return for its conditions being met by Israel, the day after an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire, which had been accepted by Israel but rejected by Hamas (*Source:*

Jerusalem Post, emphasis added). It was also reported that Israel's security cabinet rejected a week-long Gaza ceasefire proposal put forward by US Secretary of State John Kerry "*as it stands*" (Source: BBC).

(3) Israel doesn't deliberately target civilians

The Guardian newspaper reported that a second [Israeli] shell hit the beach, with those firing apparently adjusting their aim to target fleeing survivors. Journalists standing by the terrace wall shouted: "*They are only children*" – regarding the murder of four Palestinian boys playing on the beach in July 2014 (Source: The Guardian). The tactics used by the Israeli military in the Gaza offensive are consistent with previous practices, most recently during the Lebanon war in 2006. A concept known as the *Dahiya* doctrine emerged then, involving the application of disproportionate force and the causing of great damage and destruction to civilian property and infrastructure, and suffering to civilian populations. A UN Fact Finding Mission concluded from a review of the facts on the ground that it appears to have been precisely what was put into practice (Source: UN Fact Finding Mission on Gaza Conflict, 2009).

(4) Israel is not guilty of war crimes

The Israeli military may have knowingly or recklessly attacked people who were clearly civilians – such as young boys and civilian structures, including a hospital – laws-of-war violations that are indicative of war crimes (Source: Human Rights Watch). Deliberately attacking a civilian home is a war crime, and the overwhelming scale of destruction of civilian homes, in some cases with entire families inside them, points to a distressing pattern of repeated violations of the laws-of-war (Source: Amnesty International).

(5) Hamas uses civilians as 'human shields'

"I saw no evidence during my week in Gaza of Israel's accusation that Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields" (Source: Jeremy Bowen, BBC). It was reported by The Guardian newspaper that it has seen large numbers of people fleeing different neighbourhoods and no evidence that Hamas had compelled them to stay (Source: The Guardian). In 2013 a United Nations human rights body accused the Israeli military of mistreating Palestinian children, including by torturing those in custody and using others as human shields (Source: Reuters).

(6) Hamas constantly fires rockets into Israel

The Times of Israel reported that Hamas launched a series of rockets into Israel, the first time in years the group had directly challenged the Israeli state. The Israeli security forces assessed

that Hamas had **probably launched the barrage in revenge for an Israeli airstrike several hours earlier**, killing one person and injuring three. Hamas had not fired any rockets into Israel since ‘Operation Pillar of Defense’ ended in November 2012 (*Source: Times of Israel, emphasis added*).

(7) Hamas kidnapped and killed three Israeli teenagers to provoke Israel

It was reported that the Israeli government knew from the beginning that the three Israeli teenagers were dead. It maintained the fiction that it hoped to find them alive as a pretext to dismantle Hamas’ West Bank operations. It was clear from the beginning that the kidnappers, from a Hamas-linked Hebron family, acted without the knowledge of Hamas leadership (*Source: Jewish Daily Forward*).

(8) Israel’s blockade is not to blame for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza

Israel confirmed to US Embassy officials on multiple occasions that it intends to keep the Gazan economy functioning at the lowest level possible consistent with avoiding a humanitarian crisis. Israeli officials have confirmed on multiple occasions that they intend to keep the Gazan economy on the brink of collapse without quite pushing it over the edge (*Source: US State Department*).

(9) The Israeli government wants a two-state solution

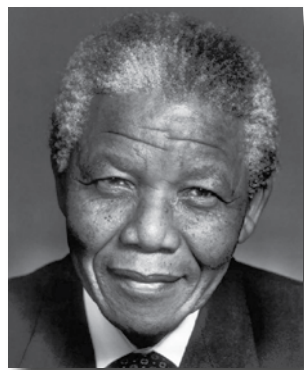
Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, made explicitly clear that he could never countenance a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank. Amid the current conflict, he elaborated: *“I think the Israeli people understand now what I always say: that there cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory west of the River Jordan”* (*Source: Times of Israel*).

Ilan Pappé, Jewish Israeli Historian, on Israel’s apartheid policies

“The Zionist strategy of branding its brutal policies as an ad hoc response to this or that Palestinian action is as old as the Zionist presence in Palestine itself. It was used repeatedly as a justification for implementing the Zionist vision of a future Palestine that has in it very few, if any, native Palestinians.”

Voices for Peace

“We know all too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians”



Nelson Mandela
Former President of South Africa

“I would urge all writers, artists and others in the creative arts, as well as those academics engaging in joint educational projects with Israeli institutions, to consider doing everything they can to convince Israel of its moral degradation and ethical isolation, preferably by simply having nothing more to do with this outlaw state”



Iain Banks, British Author

“For a lasting peace to be achieved, Israel must be held accountable for its human rights violations. In solidarity with the international Palestinian call for nonviolent resistance to Israeli brutality through boycotts... we must divest university endowments, pension funds, and church funds from companies that profit from and perpetuate the suffering of Palestinians”



US-based activist group *Jewish Voice for Peace* works to achieve a lasting peace that recognises the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians for security and self-determination

Useful Resources

Websites:

BDS Movement [www.bdsmovement.net]

Communications Workers' Union [www.cwu.ie/Activists/Campaigns]

Gaza Action Ireland [www.facebook.com/GazaActionIreland]

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign [www.ipsc.ie]

Irish Congress of Trade Unions [www.ictu.ie]

Books:

BDS: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights, Omar Barghouti, Haymarket Books

Europe's Alliance with Israel: Aiding the Occupation, David Cronin, Pluto Press

Gaza in Crisis: Reflections on Israel's War against the Palestinians, Noam Chomsky & Ilan Pappé, Penguin

The Case for Sanctions against Israel, ed. Audrea Lim, Verso

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, Ilan Pappé, Oneworld Publications

Documentaries:

5 Broken Cameras, Emad Burnat & Guy Davidi, Kino Lorber

Occupation 101, Abdallah Omeish & Sufyan Omeish, Trip'ol'ii Productions

Palestine is still the Issue, Anthony Stark & John Pilger, Bullfrog Films

Roadmap to Apartheid, Eron Davidson & Ana Nogueira, Journeyman Pictures

The Law in these Parts, Ra'anana Alexandrowicz, Cinema Guild

FREE GAZA, FREE PALESTINE

Dear Minister Flanagan,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen regarding both the recent conflict in Gaza and the ongoing struggle of the Palestinian people to live in peace and dignity. In the last month over 2,000 Palestinians (80% civilians) – including 470 children – have been killed and over 10,000 wounded, by the Israeli Defense Forces. The level of force used by the Israeli military is completely disproportionate and is highlighted by the massive loss of civilian life and destruction of civilian infrastructure. To that end, I _____ call on you, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, to take action as follows:

1. Petition the EU to help broker and implement the full ceasefire agreement, which includes an end to the blockade of Gaza and the free movement of people and goods.
2. Back Palestinian calls for immediate United Nations intervention to provide protection for civilians across the occupied West Bank and Gaza from Israeli military and settler attacks.
3. Support the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations and war crimes committed in the recent Gaza conflict, and advocate for appropriate action(s) in line with the findings of this investigation.
4. **Fulfil our obligations as one of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 under Article 1; i.e. to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances, and our obligation under Article 146 to prosecute persons alleged to commit grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention.**

Most recently, over 200 survivors and descendants of survivors of Nazi genocide unequivocally condemned the actions of Israel in Gaza, stating: *“Never Again’ must mean NEVER AGAIN FOR ANYONE!”* No state is above the law of nations and compliance with international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, must be upheld.

I hope I can count on your support for this call for solidarity with the beleaguered people of Gaza and all Palestinians.



Mr Charles Flanagan TD

Minister for Foreign Affairs

C/O Communications Workers' Union

William Norton House

575 North Circular Road

Dublin 1

