

**Written submission to the Foreign Affairs Committee Enquiry
into the Israel/Palestine Conflict from Michael Kennard (IPC0055)**

- 1) I am Michael Kennard, born in the same year as the state of Israel. I became more aware of the conflict during the 1967 War but did not become fully active in campaigning until the 2014 Israeli attack on Gaza, during which war crimes were committed against a largely defenceless civilian population.
- 2) While I consider that the granting of 56% of the land of Palestine in 1948 was a serious error guaranteed to lead to conflict, the state of Israel exists and it is important to seek a solution which is fair to both Palestinians and Israelis.
- 3) Britain has an important role, not only as a current major ally of Israel, to the detriment of the Palestinian people, but also because of its historic part in the creation of the state of Israel, starting with the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and the Balfour Declaration of 1917.
- 4) The treatment of Israel contrasts greatly with that of other states which have attacked their neighbours and attempted to annex land. Both Iraq and Russia were subject to immediate sanctions when they invaded Kuwait and Ukraine respectively, and in the case of Iraq, a counter-invasion by a UN sanctioned international force was conducted. In contrast, Israel has invaded Egypt, Lebanon and Syria as well as occupying Palestinian territory, and to this day has annexed the Golan Heights in contravention on international law, and continues to annex land in Jerusalem.
- 5) Q1. What can – and should – the UK do, in co-operation with regional and international partners to help to bring about a ceasefire?
 - a. Only significant and effective international action will bring about a ceasefire and end the lethal siege of Gaza, so the UK should:
 - b. Immediately recognise the state of Palestine; international treaties are between states and no conclusive progress can be made until the Israeli government is made to understand that it must negotiate with the Palestinians on an equal footing.
 - c. Recognise that the continued occupation of the West Bank
 - d. Recognise that war crimes have been committed both by the Hamas-led resistance in Gaza and Israel, but also that the Israeli response is grossly disproportionate.
 - e. Give support to the ICC instruction to Israel to cease and desist its siege of Gaza and its attacks on civilian targets.
 - f. Further to (c), cancel all arms export licenses to Israel, including components for F-35 aircraft.
 - g. Suspend military and intelligence co-operation with Israel in respect of Palestine, including reconnaissance flights from Akrotiri and information gathering by GCHQ.
 - h. In co-operation with international partners, the UK should institute economic and movement sanctions against Israel to force it to comply with international law and enter into meaningful time-limited negotiations. This also applies to sanctions on companies illegally operating on the West Bank.
 - i. In co-operation with international partners and humanitarian agencies, end the Israeli blockade of food, medical and other humanitarian aid.

- j. Use its diplomatic influence, both directly on the Israeli government and on international partners to achieve an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of IDF forces from Gaza and the presence of international observers and journalists to the territory.
- 6) Q2. What can be learned from the record of UK government policies to date?
- a. The historical role of Britain has been referenced in (3) and (4). To describe it as shameful would be an understatement. In 1948, Israel was not due to have statehood declared until August of that year, but in the face of increasing activity of Zionist terror groups, the British Mandate Authority and British forces cut and ran in May, having provided no protection to the indigenous Palestinian population against massacres by Zionist terrorist groups such as in Tantura.
 - b. The UK's reputation in the Global South has suffered by its hypocritical support of actions against other state actors in breach of international law, such as Iraq and Russia while providing diplomatic and military support for Israel despite its often repeated illegal actions. Placing meaningless bans on a handful of non-governmental bad actors does not persuade anyone that the UK is not a supporter of Israel, whatever it does.
 - c. The UK's position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council gives it a special position in international affairs. While it has supported resolutions critical of Israel, often secure in the expectation of a US veto, it has done nothing to bring Israel to heel. As an example, resolution 480 (1980) draws attention to Israel's failure to comply with previous Security Council rulings, but again, no action was taken:

Reaffirming again that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible,

Deeply concerned over the enactment of a "basic law" in the Israeli Knesset proclaiming a change in the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, with its implications for peace and security,

Noting that Israel has not complied with resolution 476 (1980),

Reaffirming its determination to examine practical ways and means, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, to secure the full implementation of its resolution 476 (1980), in the event of non-compliance by Israel,

 1. *Censures in the strongest terms the enactment by Israel of the "basic law" on Jerusalem and the refusal to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions;*
 2. *Affirms that the enactment of the "basic law" by Israel constitutes a violation of international law and does not affect the continued application of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem;*
 3. *Determines that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recent "basic law" on, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith;*
 4. *Affirms also that this action constitutes a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;*
 5. *Decides not to recognize the "basic law" and such other actions by Israel that, as a result of this law, seek to alter the character and status of Jerusalem and calls upon:*
 - (a) *All Member States to accept this decision;*
 - (b) *Those States that have established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such*

missions from the Holy City;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the present

resolution before 15 November 1980;7 Decides to remain seized of this serious situation.

- d. The conclusion that can be drawn is that UK policies have been and remain hypocritical and ineffective in relation to Israel.

7) Q3,How can the UK assure the resilience of efforts to bring about a lasting peace at a time of uncertainty caused by conflicts elsewhere and changes in leadership in the international community?

- a. Cut the hypocrisy, apply consistent standards to the actions of all other countries.
- b. Recognise that Israel's actions are in breach of international law, support the ICC and ICJ rulings and warrants, recognise that genocide is taking place as part of Israeli government policy (ref. Prof. Amos Goldberg, professor of Holocaust History, Hebrew University *in Sikha Mekomit* April 2024).
- c. Having recognised Palestine as a sovereign state, work with international partners to establish a UN Conference to set the framework for meaningful negotiations towards a final settlement between Israel and Palestine, with the agreed conclusions to be protected by an international force with an enforcement mandate.

8. Conclusion As indicated above, the UK has a special position in relation to this conflict and should attempt to recover its international reputation by the meaningful actions proposed. As a first step, it should cease its diplomatic support for what by any objective standards would be determined a rogue state, end all arms export licenses and intelligence and military co-operation. Then it should work with like-minded governments to apply meaningful international pressure for a ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, with a view to a long-term settlement.

31st December 2024