

[REDACTED]

From: Gareth Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 28 February 2017 9:45 PM
To: White Paper
Subject: The Case for Palestine

aThis public submission to the DFAT White Paper is made on behalf of Byron Friends of Palestine. We wish to register how appalled we are over Australia's persistent support for the apartheid state of Israel. Successive Australian governments have regurgitated Zionist propaganda that Israel is the only democratic state in the Middle East but how democratic can it be when its Palestinian citizens do not have equal rights with their Israeli counterparts?

Why is it that:

- * Palestinians have their freedom of movement dramatically restricted? They cannot move freely but must apply for permits to travel. Young people for example, have been barred from taking up scholarships overseas and doctors have found themselves so time restricted that they cannot fulfil their duties.
- * Palestinians are administered under military law unlike Israelis who enjoy civil law?
- * Israelis enjoy a far more bountiful supply of water than Palestinians?
- * There are roads exclusive to Israelis on which it is forbidden for Palestinians to travel, for example, Hebron's Shuada Street?
- * Australia persists in concert with most Western media, in portraying the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as a contest between equals, when Palestinian weapons amount to no more than kitchen knives, scissors, slingshots and rockets (described as "fireworks" by Norman Finkelstein) while Israel is listed by Global Firepower as being the 16th most powerful military in the world possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction?
- * Israel can ignore numerous U N resolutions with impunity and take comfort in the Turnbull government's castigation of the United Nations because of the claim it makes that it is biased against Israel?

Australian governments cannot use the excuse of ignorance because there is now a plethora of well researched and documented books detailing the brutal nature of Israel's occupation of Palestine, for example, *War Against the People: Israel, The Palestinians And Global Pacification*, Jeff Halper, Pluto Press, 2015 or *Israel's Occupation*, Neve Gordon, University of California Press, 2008. Additionally, there are facts on the ground in Israel supplied by indigenous human rights organisations like *Breaking the Silence*, *B'Tselem* and the *Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions* detailing the most appalling violations of basic human rights: extrajudicial execution, denial/delay of critical medical aid, administrative detention, torture including that of children, arbitrary declarations of military zones which expel Palestinians from their family lands, the violent encroachment of settlers upon Palestinian children going to school, upon farmers tending their fields and orchards and the deliberate burning of olive groves and crops.

Speaking of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 Ilan Pappé writes, ".....there is no other way for us to fully understand the roots of the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But above all, of course, there is a moral imperative to continue the struggle against the denial of the crime..... I want to explore both the mechanism of the 1948 ethnic cleansing, and the cognitive system that allowed the world to forget, and enabled the perpetrators to deny, the crime the Zionist movement committed against the Palestinian people in 1948..... I have no doubt that the absence so far of the paradigm of ethnic cleansing is part of the reason why the denial of the catastrophe has been able to go on for so long..... I accuse, but I'm also part of the society that stands condemned in this book. I feel both responsible for and part of the story and, like others in my own society, I am convinced, as my final pages show, that such a painful journey into the past is the only way forward if we want to create a better future for us all, Palestinians and Israelis alike (*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, OneWorld Publications, 2015).

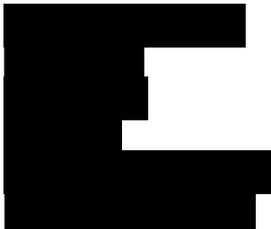
It is abundantly clear that due to the systematic and strategic building of settlements together with their protective military and police infrastructure, that the possibility of a viable Palestinian state has now evaporated. President Trump has already alluded to the possibility of a one state solution in which all citizens enjoy equal rights. The white supremacist state of apartheid South Africa was brought down by a concerted worldwide policy of economic and cultural sanctions. We call on the Australian government to change its foreign policy in regard to the conflict between Israel and Palestine and to support the 2005 call from Palestinian civil society for a global regime of Boycott, Sanctions and Divestment to compel Israel to cease its apartheid policies and obey international law. We call on the Australian government to join the 136 countries which have recognised the state of Palestine.

AThe words of Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel are particularly pertinent:

"We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

--

Gareth W R Smith
Palestine Liberation Centre



"Those who can make you believe in absurdities can make you commit atrocities." Voltaire

George Orwell, 'Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.'

"The sleep of reason produces monsters." Goya