



Israel stands increasingly isolated

Its genocidal actions must be stopped and brought to account

The widespread eruption of activism in solidarity with the people of Gaza in so many institutions of higher learning in the United States, Europe, and beyond is a source of inspiration. Such nonviolent activism is a legitimate response to the complicity of Western governments.

SHAPE APPLAUDS the call of students, faculty, and staff at college and university campuses for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and an end to settler violence in the West Bank. SHAPE hopes that this emerging movement of concern will gather strength and spread to countries in the Global South.

SHAPE DEPLORES the actions of those educational institutions that are taking unwarranted measures to suppress or overly restrict such activism in the name of public safety. Evidence based allegations of antisemitism should be investigated. More often than not, however, such allegations are either unsubstantiated or refer to the actions of outsiders who are in no way connected to the otherwise peaceful protesters. Certainly, such allegations do not justify shutting down the rights of free speech and peaceful assembly simply to placate the loud voices of the Zionist lobby.

Signs of increasing collusion between police forces, security agencies and some educational institutions, especially but not only in the United States, is cause for alarm. Places of higher learning cannot be reduced to fortresses of entrenched interests. They must take care not to succumb to pressure exerted by the extreme right, or the rich and the powerful.

Instead of resorting to repressive or punitive measures, educational administrators should be welcoming expressions of moral concern on the part of their academic staff and students. Universities are called upon to be places where scholars and students can speak truth to power. Such plain speaking is now a moral imperative.

SHAPE REMINDS educators everywhere that they have a responsibility, especially at this time, to initiate or support discussion groups, seminars, workshops, forums, conferences, podcasts, publications, and other forms of communication which invite serious reflection on the gravity of the situation in Gaza and consider ways of putting a stop to the unspeakable atrocities reported daily in real time.

That political leaders in many supposedly liberal democracies have thus far refused to oppose such blatant criminality on Israel's part is deplorable. That some should be using their influence to render Israel impervious to the processes of international law and the authority of the UN is nothing short of scandalous.

SHAPE COMMENDS those governments and civil society organisations that are more attuned to ethical priorities. Calls for sanctions on Israel are growing louder by the day. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is gathering renewed momentum. BDS now has branches in 40 countries

and is advocating the boycott of Israeli sporting, cultural and academic events. Such sanctions played a critically important part in the worldwide campaign that led to the end of Apartheid in South Africa.

SHAPE WELCOMES the decision of the Egyptian Government to formally join the case filed by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). This is the first substantial step taken by Egypt in response to Israel's escalating assault on Palestinian lives. The decision is significant because of Egypt's longstanding relationship with Israel, and its strategic role within the Arab world.

Egypt is the latest in a growing number of countries, including Libya and Turkey, that have either formally applied to intervene in support of South Africa's genocide case or declared their intention to do so. The Turkish intervention is a sign of things to come. In April, Turkey curbed exports to Israel for blocking its attempt to take part in aid air-drop operations for Gaza. All remaining trade between the two countries has since been halted.

SHAPE also commends Chile and Mexico for submitting a complaint to the International Criminal Court (ICC) seeking an investigation of Israel's crimes in Occupied Palestine, including the possibility of issuing indictments and arrest warrants for top Israeli leaders, including Netanyahu.

SHAPE CALLS on governments in Arab and Muslim majority countries that have yet to announce their intentions to follow the example set by Egypt, Chile, and others.

SHAPE IS HEARTENED by the determined efforts of civil societies around the world to support the Palestinian people in their hour of need. Especially significant is the increasing willingness of the UN General Assembly to support Palestinian self-determination. On 10 May, it voted overwhelmingly in favour of a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member and requested the UN Security Council to follow its lead. In opposing the resolution, Israel and the United States stood in splendid isolation with only 7 other relatively small countries casting a "no" vote.

May these efforts grow and multiply. Much depends on this, not least the efficacy of international law and the possibility of a transformed UN system able to fulfil the promise of a just and ecologically sustainable peace.

Issued on behalf of SHAPE by

Professor Emeritus Richard Falk, Dr Chandra Muzaffar and Professor Emeritus Joseph Camilleri

SHAPE Co-Conveners

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Email: <https://mail.google.com/>

Website: <https://www.theshapeproject.com/>