

52 leading international figures call for a Military Embargo on Israel

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Russell Tribunal

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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Occupied Palestine – On the eve of the International Day of Solidarity with the People of Palestine, 52 international notables issued a statement calling for “urgent ... international action towards a mandatory, comprehensive military embargo against Israel.” Though directly motivated by Israel’s latest war of aggression against the 1.6 million Palestinians in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip, the statement is also a reaction to Israel’s decades-old military occupation and persistent denial of the UN-sanctioned rights of the Palestinian people. Expressing horror at Israel’s latest bloodbath in Gaza which claimed 160 Palestinian lives, including 34 children, the statement argues that this recurring brutality has been allowed to continue due to the impunity Israel enjoys. It highlighted the particular complicity of the US, the EU, India, Brazil and South Korea, as Israel’s key military partners and enablers.

The statement signed by Nobel Peace laureates Mairead Maguire and Adolfo Perez Esquivel, former Pink Floyd front man Roger Waters, Directors Mike Leigh and Ken Loach, Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker, international best-seller Naomi Klein and co-drafter of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Holocaust survivor Stéphane Hessel, among others, adds that “Israel’s attempt to justify this kind of illegal use of belligerent and disproportionate military force as “self-defence” does not stand up to legal – or moral – scrutiny, as states cannot invoke self-defence for acts that serve to defend an unlawful situation which they have created in the first place.”

This appeal echoes the Palestinian civil society call for a military embargo on Israel issued last year and draws parallels to the effective action taken against apartheid South Africa as a practical means to pressure Israel to fall in line with international law.

The full text of the Statement follows.

Now is the time for a military embargo on Israel!

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” –Nelson Mandela

Horried at the latest round of Israeli aggression against the 1.5 million Palestinians in the besieged and occupied Gaza Strip and conscious of the impunity that has enabled this new chapter in Israel’s decades-old violations of international law and Palestinian rights, we believe there is an urgent need for international action towards a mandatory, comprehensive military embargo against Israel. Such a measure has been subject to several UN resolutions¹ and is similar to the arms embargo imposed against apartheid South Africa

in the past.

Israel's unchecked belligerence and persistent denial of basic human rights and self-determination to the Palestinian people call for a concerted effort by international civil society to force world governments to end the links of complicity. This impunity has allowed Israel to continue its occupation, colonization and denial of Palestinian refugees their UN-sanctioned rights.

While the United States has been the largest sponsor of Israel, supplying billions of dollars of advanced military hardware every year, the role of the European Union must not go unnoticed, in particular its hefty subsidies to Israel's military complex through its research programs. Similarly, the growing military ties between Israel and the emerging economies of Brazil, India and South Korea are unconscionable given their nominal support for Palestinian freedom.

Military ties with Israel have fueled relentless acts of aggression. Israel continues to entrench its subjugation of Palestinians while provoking or initiating armed conflict with its neighbors in the region.

Israel's attempt to justify this kind of illegal use of belligerent and disproportionate military force as "self-defence" does not stand up to legal – or moral – scrutiny, as states cannot invoke self-defence for acts that serve to defend an unlawful situation which they have created in the first place².

We therefore support the call from Palestinian civil society for an urgent and comprehensive military embargo on Israel as an effective, non-violent measure to stop Israel's wars and repression and to bring about Israel's compliance with its obligations under international law. This is now a moral and legal imperative to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

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¹ See, for example UN General Assembly Resolution 3414 (1975): "[the UNGA] Requests all states to desist from supplying Israel with any military or economic aid as long as it continues to occupy Arab territories and deny the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people". <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43376#.UKEIxYdyGSo>

² According to the basic tenet of international law, *ex injuria non oritur ius* (a legal right or entitlement cannot arise from an unlawful act) <http://www.definitions.uslegal.com/e/ex-injuria-jus-non-oritur/>

Initial List of Signatories (alphabetical order):

Udi Aloni, filmmaker, Israel

Anthony Arnove, editor and writer, US

Etienne Balibar, academic, France

Robert Ballagh, artist and president of the Ireland Institute for Historical and Cultural Studies, Ireland

Walden Bello, academic, author and member of Senate, Philippines

Shyam Benegal, director and screenwriter, India

John Berger, author, critic, UK

Howard Brenton, playwright and screenwriter, UK

Judith Butler, academic, United States

Clayborne Carson, Director, Martin Luther King, Jr. Research & Education Institute, Stanford University, USA
Noam Chomsky, academic, USA
Caryl Churchill, dramatist, UK
Angela Davis, scholar and author, US
Raymond Deane, composer, Ireland
Danilo Dolci, sociologist, Italy
John Dugard, professor of international law, South Africa
Felim Egan, artist, Ireland
Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Laureate 1980, Argentina
Dror Feiler, musician and artist, Sweden
Don Andrea Gallo, presbyter, Italy
Charles Glass, journalist, US
Margherita Hack, astrophysicist, Italy
Denis J. Halliday, former UN Assistant Secretary-General (1994-98), Ireland
Stéphane Hessel, diplomat, Holocaust survivor and co-author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, France
Tor B Jørgensen, Bishop, Norway
Christian Juhl, member of Parliament, Denmark
Ronnie Kasrils, politician, South Africa
Aki Kaurismäki, screenwriter and film director, Finland
Marcel Khalife, musician, Lebanon
Naomi Klein, writer and activist, Canada
Paul Laverty, filmmaker, UK
Taeho Lee, Secretary General, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, South Korea
Ken Loach, filmmaker, UK
Vibeke Løkkeberg, actress and director, Norway
Mike Leigh OBE, Director, UK (Palm D'Or 1996)
Jean-Marc Levy-Leblond, academic, France
Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1976, Ireland
Michael Mansfield, lawyer, UK
Miriam Margolyes, actress, UK
Cynthia McKinney, politician, United States
Saeed Mirza, filmmaker, India
Luisa Morgantini, former president of the European Parliament
Bjørnar Moxnes, member of Oslo city council
Suzanne Osten, writer and director, Sweden
Nurit Peled, professor of language, Israel
John Pilger, journalist, author, filmmaker, Australia
Ahdaf Soueif, writer, Egypt/UK
Alice Walker, author, US
Roger Waters, musician, UK
John Williams, musician, UK
Vincenzo Vita, senator, Italy
Slavoj Žižek, philosopher, Slovenia

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