

New Zealand Even Hand against Palestine: Jacinda Adern, that Tweet, and Gaza

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Global Research, November 19, 2019

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#),
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The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFAT) [tweet](#) on 12 November condemning rocket fire from Gaza while failing to condemn the Israeli extrajudicial assassinations and civilian killings that generated Islamic Jihad's rocket-fire in defensive response, reveals the hypocrisy at the heart of New Zealand's so-called "even-handed" foreign policy and practice towards Palestine.

The message of the MFAT tweet is clear – Palestinian lives do not matter to the current New Zealand government. The Gazan lives lost in the past week are somehow considered less worthy of protection or comment than the Muslim lives lost in the Christchurch mosque attacks which were so rightly mourned, and condemned throughout the country, and the world.

Our Prime Minister garnered much positive PR mileage nationally and internationally for her principled response to that terrorist attack by an individual – but the MFAT tweet suggests that state terrorism is a different kettle of fish.

We are deeply concerned about the firing of rockets from Gaza to Israel. Targeting civilian populations is unacceptable and we condemn these attacks. New Zealand urges all parties on the ground to avoid confrontation and exercise maximum restraint.

— MFATgovtNZ 🇳🇵 (@MFATgovtNZ) [November 13, 2019](#)

It wasn't always so.

Given the threat that atmospheric nuclear testing in the Pacific posed to Pacific citizens' health and rights, NZ's third labour government led by Norman Kirk bravely took on the French government not only in the International Court of Justice, but also by sending [a NZ navy frigate into the nuclear testing zone with a Cabinet Minister on board](#) in 1973. (France ceased atmospheric testing the following year.)

Such warrior-like behaviour was not without fallout – the [French government blew up Greenpeace anti-nuclear protest ship The Rainbow Warrior in Auckland](#) harbour twelve years later. This time it was the fourth NZ Labour government that stood strong, exerted our right to an independent foreign policy even against some of our closest allies, and again held France to account. (Two French agents served time, however comfortably, and our exports

to Europe were protected.)

Twenty years later it was Israeli muscle most publicly and notably felt in NZ when, in 2004, two Mossad agents, Uriel Kelman and Eli Cara, were caught attempting to fraudulently obtain New Zealand passports.

These more recent gross violations of both New Zealand sovereignty and international law were [met with both anger and diplomatic sanctions](#) by Prime Minister Helen Clark and the fifth NZ Labour government, as well as earning six-month jail sentences from the courts for the two captured agents – and another soon-to-be-broken Israeli promise to cease the faking and misuse of foreign passports for its terrorist activities (following as it did a previous promise after the 1997 incident in which Mossad agents used fake Canadian passports in an [assassination attempt in Jordan](#) on Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, resulting in the Israeli ambassador being ordered out of Canada. Similarly, the promise to NZ to desist was soon broken in 2010, with the [assassination in Dubai of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh by Mossad](#) agents using fake British, Irish, French, German and Australian passports... Israeli misuse-of-passport promises are seemingly as reliable as their word on ceasefire agreements...)

This week, even more blatant Israeli violations of international law and the right to life have taken place in Gaza. But instead of the condemnations we became accustomed to from NZ governments when the aforementioned serious breaches of human rights and international law occurred, this week's response more resembles that of a cowed Israelophile, than that of a country upholding the rule of law without fear or favour.

It reflects the type of intimidation that almost every New Zealand broadcasting or media outlet informally reports having been subjected to by the Zionist lobby, in the form of endless vexatious, frivolous or trivial complaints designed to deter coverage of any and every Palestinian issue, an intimidation also familiar to potential political candidates, politicians, academics, activists and ordinary citizens everywhere when supporting Palestinian self-determination, or criticising Israeli government policy or practice.

It accepts and ignores the brutality experienced daily by Palestinians going about their lives in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the brutality confronting each Gazan daring to protest along the fence, to resist, or to exercise their legitimate right to self-defence.

Every Gazan home right now has children cowering in fear, along with their families, unsure where the next bomb will fall and who it will take with it. There are no shelters in Gaza; NOWHERE is safe.

It is now up to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Adern to step up to that tweet, and demonstrate the sort of leadership we rightly expect – to show us that donning the hijab after the Christchurch mosque attacks was not just the type of senseless and theatrical gimmick the NZ government's 1973 frigate protest was accused of being.

Gazans are people.

Most, if not all, of those killed in Gaza this week were Muslims. Over 30% were women and children.

Come on, Jacinda Adern – show that their lives matter, too.

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