

Pro-Israel Lobby Ensures Israeli “Terrorist State” Operates with Legal Impunity

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Last week, Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced the intention of the Israeli state to further expand [Israeli settlements](#) in the West Bank in an attempt to annex an additional 400 hectares of Palestinian land. A further escalation of this program so soon after the onslaught on the Palestinian people has sparked outrage both inside and outside the state of Israel.

The 50-day war fought between Hamas and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) concluded only last week, a war which left over 2,100 Palestinians dead – [70% of which were civilians](#) according to the United Nations (UN) – and 70 Israeli’s dead, 64 of which were soldiers. Israel has been widely condemned for violating international law and committing [war crimes](#) in Gaza during ‘Operative Protective Edge’. In July, Bolivian President Evo Morales denounced Israel as a “[terrorist state](#)” and filed a request with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to prosecute Israel for “crimes against humanity”.

Israeli settlements are initiatives that build Israeli civilian communities in occupied Palestinian land, with the settlements “[grossly illegal under international law](#)”. A [UN fact-finding mission](#) in 2012/2013 concluded that the settlements violated “international humanitarian law”, in addition to the programs being “developed through a system of total segregation”:

“The settlements have been established and developed at the expense of violating international human rights laws and international humanitarian law” (p.20).

The report continues:

“The settlements are established for the exclusive benefit of Israeli Jews; settlements are being maintained and developed through a system of total segregation between the settlers and the rest of the population living in the OPT. This system of segregation is supported and facilitated by a strict military and law enforcement control to the detriment of the rights of the Palestinian population” (p.20).

The Power of the Israeli Lobby

Britain and the US are home to two of the most powerful Israeli lobbying groups on the planet, with both nations’ foreign policies considerably shaped by organisations loyal to

Israel. A 2009 investigative documentary in Britain asserted that [50%](#) of the conservative cabinet were members of the [Conservative Friends of Israel](#) (CFI), a pro-Israel lobbying group founded in 1974 by Michael Fidler. According to the documentary, £10m was donated to the conservative party over a period of 10 years in return for support to the state of Israel and their policies. David Cameron was also accused in 2009 of accepting £15,000 from Poju Zabludowicz, the chair of the 'British Israel Communications and Research Centre' (BICOM) at the time. The film exposes that Zabludowicz has business interests in an illegal West Bank settlement.

Cameron has repeatedly supported Israel's right to defend itself since taking office in Britain, leading many to question if Cameron's political allegiance to Israel is a direct result of membership and financing by the Israeli lobby? One politician in the UK who is not controlled by the CFI is Sayeeda Warsi, who showed incredible courage and moral fibre after resigning over the UK's "[morally indefensible](#)" policy on Gaza last month.

In America, one of the most pre-eminent lobbying groups in Washington is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a pro-Israel organisation that promotes strong US-Israeli relations and funds political campaigns. Barack Obama revealed his close relationship with the group during an AIPAC conference that he delivered a speech at, describing the "bond between the United States and Israel" as "[unbreakable forever](#)":

"I know that when I visit AIPAC I'm among friends - good friends, who share my strong commitment to make sure that the bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable today, unbreakable tomorrow - unbreakable forever."

AIPAC's education arm is the American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF), which organises expeditions for US politicians to Israel. In 2011, AIEF spent \$2m on arranging "[one-sided congressional trips to Israel](#)" which negated the Palestinian perspective on the situation and failed to even take the politicians to the Gaza Strip. An example of the biased nature of these trips was when Rep. Mike Pompeo visited Israel on a nine-day tour of the region. Over the course of his visit he only spent one hour talking with a Palestinian official.

Western Politicians Ensure Israel Avoids Prosecution

As Israeli Professor of History, Ilan Pappé, wrote in an article titled: '[The Historical Perspectives of the 2014 Gaza Massacre](#)', the West often protects Israel from prosecution at the "international court of justice":

"The political elites in the West continue to provide the old immunity to the Jewish state. The recent appeal by Western governments to the prosecutor in the international court of Justice in The Hague not to look into Israel's crimes in Gaza is a case in point. Wide sections of the Western media followed suit and justifies by and large Israel's actions."

Pappé continues to argue that the international community has to stop deploying "double standards" in relation to Israel's crimes to have any legitimacy and effectiveness in dealing with other atrocities around the world:

"A world that would stop employing double standards in its dealing with Israel is a world that could be far more effective in its response to war crimes

elsewhere in the world. Cessation of the incremental genocide in Gaza and the restitution of the basic human and civil right of Palestinians wherever they are, including the right of return, is the only way to open a new vista for a productive international intervention in the Middle East as a whole.”

Considering the relationship between Western leaders and the Israeli lobby however, it remains highly unlikely that Israel will ever be prosecuted under international law for the crimes they have committed in Palestine.

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