



23 Hui-tanguru 2022

23 February 2022

Newsletter No 65

Government hypocrisy in calling out human rights abuse

Last week the New Zealand Herald printed this opinion piece from PSNA National Chair John Minto. It is at the [Herald on this link](#) but it is paywalled so we are printing the full article here for you:

John Minto: A two-tiered system for calling out human rights abuses

15 Feb, 2022 05:00 AM 5 minutes to read



At the 1 February launch of Amnesty International's report labelling Israel an apartheid state. Amnesty International's Saleh Hijazi, left, Philip Luther, Secretary-General Agnes Callamard, and activist Orly Noy. Photo / Maya Alleruzzo, AP

OPINION

On December 30, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade published a tweet condemning the forced closure of two Russian human rights groups, International Memorial and the Memorial Human Rights Centre.

The groups were shut down by the Russian Supreme Court which was enforcing strict laws relating to dealings with "foreign agents".

In releasing the tweet, the Government urged Russia to "live up to its civil and political rights commitments".

Our Government has also been speaking out against human rights abuses in China against the Uighur people, to the extent of facilitating a parliamentary motion condemning the cruel policies of the Chinese Government.

Compare the criticism of Russia and China with MFAT's reaction to Israel's outrageous attacks on Palestinian human rights groups last October when it declared six of them to be "terrorist" organisations. The targeted groups (Bisan, Al-Haq, Addameer, Defense for Children International-Palestine, the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees) typically challenge human rights violations by the Palestinian Authority as well as Israel, both of which routinely detain Palestinian activists. Israel's "terrorist" claim against these groups was a blatant attempt to undermine some of the most effective Palestinian civil society organisations, stifle their collective voices, and cut their sources of funding. But not a peep from MFAT. No tweets, no public statements, nothing.

When our Foreign Minister is asked about these things her officials say the Government is "very concerned" about developments in the Middle East and "keeping a close watch" on the situation. They say they regularly raise human rights concerns with the Israeli ambassador in meetings with officials.

Heaven only knows what goes on in those meetings but if all human rights abuses by Israel against the Palestinian people were discussed, the Israeli ambassador would be in permanent residence at MFAT.

MFAT gives similar responses when massive human rights abuses are perpetrated against the people of West Papua by the Indonesian Army, which has occupied the territory since 1962. These are discussed behind closed doors, if they are raised at all, with Indonesian officials.

So what's the difference that results in the Russian and Chinese Governments being castigated for human rights abuses but for countries like Indonesia and Israel, there is minimal, if any, public comment?

The awful truth is that our current Government has moved New Zealand closer to the US than at any time since the 1980s and MFAT calls out human rights abuses to a US agenda. If the abuses are perpetrated by enemies of the US, such as in Russia or China, they get a full public blast but if US allies are killing unarmed people protesting the occupation of their

country then it's all hushed up. It's kept "in the family", behind closed doors. Martin Luther King's comment about "the injustice of silence" applies.

Human rights abuses against Palestinians and the people of West Papua continue because countries like New Zealand have self-important ministry officials who think it's clever to operate a public/private hierarchy of human rights abuses according to US criteria. Aotearoa New Zealand is complicit in many ongoing human rights abuses through our silence.

Cowardice is another word that comes to mind. It's not acceptable.

The hypocrisy of the US, and Aotearoa New Zealand's, position on human rights was laid bare this week when Amnesty International released a 280-page report which concluded that Israel was an apartheid state. US Government officials attacked the report outright without reading it and without challenging any of the report's substance.

At a Washington press conference, a State Department official was left to try to explain why US Human Rights Reports have quoted extensively from Amnesty International regarding Ethiopia, China, Iran, Burma, Syria and Cuba but reject outright Amnesty's report on Israel.

Needless to say, MFAT hasn't uttered a word on the Amnesty report but is busy helping support a webinar intending to "build strategic partnerships in agriculture" with Israel through AgriTech New Zealand. This is deeply embarrassing to this country and MFAT should cancel Aotearoa New Zealand's involvement in this webinar.

It goes without saying this country should stand against all abuses of human rights in a principled and forthright manner. This won't happen until the current leadership of MFAT is stood down.

• John Minto is a political activist and spokesperson for Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa.

Something you can do right now with a couple of clicks

Write to the parliamentary Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee asking the committee to open an investigation into the hypocrisy of our government's double standards in failing to call out Israel's human rights abuses.

To: *Members of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee*

Jenny Salesa (Labour Chair)

Gerry Brownlee (National Deputy Chair)

Ingrid Leary (Labour)

Golriz Ghahraman (Greens)

Todd McClay (National)

Louisa Wall (Labour)

[Jenny.Salesa@parliament.govt.nz;](mailto:Jenny.Salesa@parliament.govt.nz)

[Gerry.Brownlee@parliament.govt.nz;](mailto:Gerry.Brownlee@parliament.govt.nz)

[Ingrid.Leary@parliament.govt.nz;](mailto:Ingrid.Leary@parliament.govt.nz)

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[Ingrid.Leary@parliament.govt.nz;](mailto:Ingrid.Leary@parliament.govt.nz)

[Louisa.Wall@parliament.govt.nz;](mailto:Louisa.Wall@parliament.govt.nz)

Kia ora koutou,

Request for a Foreign Affairs Select Committee investigation

I am asking the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee to investigate the government's hypocritical approach to human rights abuses where we call out some countries like China and Russia but for the most part ignore human rights abuses in countries such as Israel and West Papua.

These issues are outlined in an opinion piece in the New Zealand Herald [here](#).

I would like the committee to encourage interested groups to make submissions and for the entire proceedings to be held in public – including the questioning of Foreign Affairs officials as they are held accountable for their hypocrisy.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Regards,

(Your name)

Government building “strategic partnerships” with Israel in agriculture

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, Minister of Agriculture Damien O'Connor did not withdraw from the Agritech Summit hosted by the Israeli embassy (see previous newsletter), which seeks to help Israel profit from stolen Palestinian land, ethnic cleansing and massive human rights abuses against the Palestinian people.

The principled stance from the Green Party was welcomed. Here is their letter:



Hon. Damien O'Connor
Minister of Agriculture
Minister for Trade and Export Growth
Parliament Buildings, Wellington

08 February 2022

Tēnā koe Minister,

We are writing today to request that the New Zealand Government withdraws their participation from next week's New Zealand-Israel 2022 AgriTech Summit, and ceases any further agricultural co-operation with Israel until we can be assured that such cooperation does not implicate New Zealand in breaches of international human rights law.

Last week, Amnesty International released a report finding that Israel is an apartheid state which runs a cruel system of domination of the Palestinian people, constituting a crime against humanity.

Israel's agricultural sector propagates this system of apartheid, including but not limited to:

- Theft of water from Palestinian farmers, as documented by Al-Haq and EWASH to the CESC
- Occupation of agricultural land in the West Bank
- Destruction of Palestinian crops and olive groves
- Instances of draining sewage onto Palestinian land and crops
- Spraying of herbicide near Palestinian crops

Given the well documented, widespread and systematic harm suffered by the Palestinian people as a result of these practices, we implore the Government to uphold New Zealand's commitment to international rule of law and human rights.

Ngā mihi,

Teanau Tuiono, Green Party spokesperson for Agriculture

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teanau Tuiono'.

Golriz Ghahraman, Green Party spokesperson for Human Rights and Foreign Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Golriz Ghahraman'.

The Green Party logo, featuring the word 'Green' in a bold, green, sans-serif font, with a stylized green leaf icon to its left.

Freepost Parliament, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160 | DDI +64 4 817 6700 | Email green.party@parliament.govt.nz

www.greens.org.nz

In the meantime you can help name and shame the minister and others who took part in the summit by circulating this poster via email and online.

Collaborators with **apartheid** Israel

 <p>Wayne McNee Former CE of Livestock Imp... Wayne McNee Consulting L...</p>	 <p>Stuart Upton Marketing, Business Develo... Netafim Australia & New Z...</p>	 <p>Eitan Dan Managing Director CropX Australasia</p>	 <p>Greg Bryan Chief Technology Officer ZeaKal, Inc</p>	 <p>Bruce Smith Director Eko360 Ltd</p>
 <p>Leila Deljkovic Co-Founder Cropxy Technologies</p>	 <p>Sean Walters Co-Founder Machines at Work</p>	 <p>Andrew Kersley Chief Executive Officer Smart Machine</p>	 <p>Sarah Adams Global Strategy and New Ve... Gallagher Animal Manage...</p>	 <p>Darryn Keiller Founder & CEO WayBeyond</p>
 <p>Geoffrey Bates Founder and Director Pastoral Robotics</p>	 <p>Bridgit Hawkins Chief Sustainability Officer CropX Technologies LTD</p>	 <p>Gil Meron CEO Sprout Agritech</p>	 <p>Damien O'Connor Minister of Agriculture</p>	
 <p>Ben Van Delden Head of AgriFood Tech and... KPMG</p>	 <p>John Roche Chief Science Adviser New Zealand Ministry for P...</p>	 <p>Kenneth Irons Exec Director, Precision Far... Chairman, AgriTech New Z...</p>		

These are speakers at an online summit this week organised by Agritech New Zealand, building “strategic partnerships” with Israel’s agriculture sector which is based on racist apartheid policies, stolen Palestinian land, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and human rights abuses against the Palestinian people. Shame on them all!

**PALESTINE
SOLIDARITY
NETWORK
AOTEAROA**

www.PSNA.NZ

More details on Israel building “strategic relationships in agriculture” with other countries are here:

- Israel greenwashing apartheid [here](#)
- Israeli corporate complicity in Indian agriculture [here](#)
- Israeli agriculture sustains illegal Israeli settlements [here](#)

Reminder: Dates for Palestine Solidarity activity in 2022

Israel apartheid week has been added to the dates for likely local and national Palestine solidarity activity this year.

28 Mar – 4 Apr	Israel Apartheid Week
30 Mar	Land Day Palestine
5 Apr	Palestinian Childs Day
9 Apr	Deir Yassin massacre - Irgun Terrorism - 107-120 Palestinian men, women and children massacred
17 Apr	Palestinian Prisoners Day
11 May	World Kufiya Day
15 May	Nakba Day – marking the mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Palestine in 1948
5 Jun	Naksa Day - Start of 1967 War - Land Grab – Invasion of Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza, Egypt and Syria - 5 June 1967 – 10 June 1967
20 Jun	Attack on Gaza - 6–21 May 2021 (2 weeks and 1 day)
28 Sep	Second Intifada - 28 Sept 2000 – 8 Feb 2005
2 Nov	Balfour Declaration
29 Nov	United Nations - International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
8 Dec	"First Intifada - 8 Dec 1987 – 13 Sept 1993

T-Shirts from Mondoweiss

Mondoweiss is an online reporter on the Palestinian struggle with good up to date articles on the Palestinian struggle. [You can find them here](#)

They have produced a really nice T-shirt which [you can purchase here](#)



Important stories from the Web

- Palestinian Australian challenges government over failure to call out human rights abuses by Israel [here](#)
- Former Israeli Attorney General “My country is now an apartheid regime” [here](#)
- Israel’s apartheid and the myth of a democratic Jewish state [here](#)
- How a Palestinian academic defeated a campaign to silence her [here](#)
- Dr Salman Abu Sitta’s return to Gaza [here](#) (Salman toured Aotearoa New Zealand in 2019)

Are you able to donate a cup of coffee a month to the campaign?

We will need some serious money to make our campaign as effective as possible. For example, we will need somewhere in the vicinity of \$25,000 to bring speakers to New Zealand over the next year and organise large public meetings to help spread the message.

You can help. Are you able to donate a cup of coffee a month to the campaign? In other words, **can you afford to make an automatic payment of \$5 per month to support the Palestinian struggle?** (If you can afford more that would be great!)

Our account details are:

Account name: Palestine Solidarity Network

Account number: 38-9015-0849542-00

Or Pay Pal account: admin@palestinesolidaritynz.net

We are happy to provide a receipt upon request (*however, we are not a registered charity so this is not tax-deductible*)

Merchandise for sale

We have Merchandise you can buy including T-shirts from our website.



Go here - <https://www.psna.nz/shop>

In Occupied Palestine daily newsletter – an invitation to subscribe from Leslie Bravery

Because of mainstream news media complicity, daily headlines and commentary only occasionally ever mention the relentless Israeli violence in Palestine, not even the frequent air strikes!

However, daily news and statistics regarding the violence Palestinians are forced to live under are regularly reported on in the “In Occupied Palestine daily newsletter”, sourced and compiled for easy reading and correlation chiefly from the Palestinian Monitoring Group's daily situation reports.

The “In Occupied Palestine” daily newsletter continues to be circulated, by email, worldwide to subscribers only, as it has been over the last two decades.

Contact: [Palestine Human Rights Campaign](#)

(Please note we have changed the link).

More ways you can get involved

- Forward this Newsletter – If you know people who may be interested in this movement, please forward this Newsletter to them.
- Join in local activities in your area monthly Rallies - In Auckland at 2.00 pm on the first Saturday of every month. Please consider doing the same in your community. Contact Secretary@PSNA.nz if you would like to know where and how to get Flags and Banners
- Help set up a Students for Justice in Palestine groups on your campus
- Tell Your MP your opinions on Divestment and Sanctions of Israel.
- Write Letters to Newspapers – Call Talkback Radio
- Keep in touch with the campaign on social media
 - ❖ Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa (PSNA) website: www.PSNA.nz
 - ❖ PSNA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/671376706283605/
 - ❖ PSNA email: Secretary@PSNA.nz
- The Palestine Human Rights Campaign produces the *In Occupied Palestine* newsletter. It is a regular daily newsletter on the daily situation in Palestine, compiled by Leslie Bravery and emailed to subscribers. If you would also like to become a subscriber, please contact Leslie at “sumud1 @ outlook. com” (remove the spaces to use as an email address) for further information.
- Keep Updated on our Facebook pages and websites (listed below)

PSNA Groups

National Committee

Website	www.PSNA.nz	
Chair – John Minto	Chair@PSNA.nz	
Secretary – Neil Scott	Secretary@PSNA.nz	

Regional Groups

Bay of Islands	PSNA Bay of Islands	email
Whangarei	PSNA Whangarei	Facebook
Auckland	PSNA Auckland – Tamaki Makaurau	Website
Hamilton	Palestine Human Rights Campaign Waikato	Facebook
Tauranga	Tauranga Moana 4 Palestine	Facebook

Napier/Hastings	Aotearoa Standing with Palestine	Facebook
Palmerston North	PSNA Palmerston North	email
New Plymouth	PSNA Taranaki	Facebook
Whanganui	Whanganui@PSNA.nz	email
Wellington	PSNA Wellington	email
Nelson	Te Tau Ihu (Nelson) Palestine	Facebook
Christchurch	PSNA Christchurch	Facebook
Dunedin	Dunedin for Justice in Palestine	Facebook
Invercargill	PSNA Invercargill	email

Other groups supporting Palestinian Rights

- [Palestinian Community of New Zealand](#)
- [Palestinian Youth Aotearoa](#)
- [Preserved Identity \(Palestinian products\)](#)
- [Boycott Divestment and Sanctions NZ](#)
- [Kia Ora Gaza](#)
- [Letters for Palestine](#)
- [Auckland Peace Action](#)
- [Global Peace and Justice Auckland](#)
- [Auckland Uni– Students for Justice in Palestine](#)
- [Massey Uni- Students for Justice in Palestine](#)
- [Tamaki Loves Palestine](#)
- [Justice for Palestine](#)
- [Palestine Human Rights Campaign](#)