Scottish Palestinian Forum

STATEMENT ON THE RULING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

We welcome the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on November 21st, 2024, to formally issue arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes against the Palestinian people and crimes against humanity, as well as the indictment of Hamas commander Mohammed Deif.

For over 75 years, despite the crimes against humanity committed by successive Israeli governments, Israeli leaders have benefitted from incessant and prevalent impunity. This is a watershed moment for international justice and rightly challenges the perception that Israeli leaders are beyond the reach of international law. The ICC ruling gives hope that the wheels of international justice are finally moving to secure justice for those impacted by Israel's illegal occupation.

We are glad the UK government spokesperson said it "*would fulfil its obligations under the act and indeed its legal obligations.*"* However, the same spokesperson described Israel as "*a key partner across a range of areas.*"* The Forum is deeply concerned that the UK government appears keen to ally itself with a regime facing such serious charges in international courts.

Not only did the ICC judges conclude that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Netanyahu and Gallant are responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, but the International Court of Justice found, in January 2024, that it was plausible that Israel, under the leadership of Netanyahu and Gallant, is committing genocide and continue to investigate this. Furthermore, in July 2024, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion that Israel's 57 year occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, "is unlawful", and called on States to review all diplomatic, political, and economic ties with Israel.

We call on the government to end UK complicity in Israel's occupation, genocide and war crimes by stopping all arms sales to Israel, end all military cooperation, including surveillance flights from Cyprus bases, and end all trade with this criminal regime.

* BBC News online, 22 November 2024, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cjr4gvydxeno

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