

July 12, 2006

**End this punishment of the Palestinians- Statment**

The Israeli government's behaviour at present is to be condemned (Report, July 8). The failure of our government to speak out against Israel's oppression of the Palestinian population is complicit with those actions of the EU, the US and Israel. It is, in effect, a coordinated attempt to collectively punish the Palestinian people for electing a government of which they disapprove. Having lectured the people of the Middle East about democracy for decades, Europe and the US are seeking to trample upon the democratic rights of the Palestinian people.

The suspension of aid by the EU and the US, the withholding of Palestinian taxes by Israel, and Israel's illegal blockade are crimes against the Palestinian people. They are creating a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the West Bank and have emboldened Israel to sustain an unrelenting bomb and missile barrage, which regularly kills innocent children and other noncombatants in violation of the fourth Geneva convention which protects civilians under occupation. Israel has bombed the only power station in Gaza, destroying electricity and water supplies to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and forcing tens of thousands to flee from their homes. These are crimes against humanity.

Israel has now kidnapped a quarter of the parliament elected by the Palestinians, and half of its democratically elected government. They join thousands of other Palestinians illegally kidnapped or imprisoned, including over 300 children. We call upon the British government: 1) To immediately work for the restoration of EU aid to the Palestinian Authority; 2) to demand that Israel ends its blockade and pass on taxes; 3) to demand that Israel cease all military action in the occupied territories; 4) to demand the release of all elected Palestinian officials and the instigation of a programme for the release of all prisoners held in violation of international law; 5) to apply pressure through the UN for Israel to respect the UN resolutions requiring its withdrawal from the territories it illegally occupied in 1967; 6) to end Britain's arms trade with Israel until it abides by international law.

Ken Livingstone

Mayor of London

John Pilger

Betty Hunter

Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Lord Ian Gilmour

Prof Moshe Machover

Prof Avi Shlaim

Daniel Machover

Juliet Stevenson

Bella Freud

Ahdaf Soueif

Peter Kilfoyle MP

Clare Short MP

Derek Wyatt MP

Helen Goodman MP

Jeremy Corbyn MP

Paul Flynn MP

Frank Cook MP

John Austin MP

Hywel Williams MP

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*Source: The Guardian*