Trident Ploughshares abhors UK complicity in Gaza Statement of 12th December 2023

On Friday 8th December 2023, the UN Security Council voted on a draft resolution that would have demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, and immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. There were 13 votes in favour, I abstention by the UK and 1 veto by the USA. Trident Ploughshares[1] was ashamed and horrified that the UK once more ignores the humanitarian pleas of the majority of nations to stop the genocidal and terroristic attacks by Israel on Gaza. This n contrast to the Welsh Senedd which voted in favour of a ceasefire on 8th November and the Scottish Parliament which voted in favour on 21 November.

No one is safe in Gaza. Journalists there have said: *'the phase of risking your life to show what's happening is over and the phase of trying to survive has started.'* More than 63 journalists have been killed and more than 50 media outlets have been destroyed. After the so-called 'humanitarian pause' that ended after a week, Israeli forces resumed the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza, killing and injuring thousands of civilians, and destroying hospitals, schools and refugee camps. The terrible statistics continue to rise – to date over 18,000 have been killed and 48,000 wounded. There are an unknown number of people buried under rubble who cannot be accounted for. About 70% of the dead and injured are children and women. Over 250 of those killed were medical staff.

The violence is not confined to Gaza. Israel is now also increasing attacks on the West Bank, openly issuing weapons to settlers there who terrorise Palestinian villages (17 have been emptied and destroyed so far), uproot olive trees, steal water and pollute Palestinian village wells. Children are being arrested with no charge, and taken from their homes at night by the IDF – Israeli Defence Force. Although hundreds of Palestinian prisoners were released to enable hostages to be returned during the 'pause', more than 8,000 have since been arrested of whom 3,000 are in so-called administrative detention, i.e. held indefinitely without charge. A total of 266 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 3,365 others injured, by Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank since October 7th.

Despite, rightly, calling the Hamas attacks on October 7th war crimes, Israel, the US and UK still claim that Israel is acting in self-defence. But Israel is also committing war crimes, and on a far greater scale, as what is happening now amounts to genocide – forbidden under international law. There is a fundamental and increasingly blatant disregard for international humanitarian law as a tentative project to codify our mutual responsibilities across the globe. We have long known that the "rule- based" rhetoric of the Western powers was at best partial and at worst utterly cynical, but that characteristic is now on open display as rarely before.

In November this year, Defence of the Child International Palestine (DCIP), alongside Palestinians in Gaza, sued the Biden administration for failure to prevent the genocide of the Palestinian people. This lawsuit has been filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights in a federal court in California, and asks the courts to stop President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, and Secretary of Defense Austin from continuing to provide weapons, military funding, and diplomatic support to Israel as U.S. government officials have a legal duty to prevent genocide. We in the UK have a responsibility to act too.

The UK allows the US to use its RAF Akrotiri base in Cyprus as an international military hub to support Israel's bombing of Gaza and provides 15% of the components in the F35 stealth combat

1 Trident Ploughshares is a part of the international nuclear disarmament movement. Trident Ploughshares activists make a commitment to disarm the UK Trident nuclear weapons system in a non-violent, open, peaceful, safe and fully accountable manner.

aircraft that are currently being used to bombard Gaza. Between 2018 and 2022, the UK exported £146m in arms sales to Israel.

We must keep calling for a ceasefire and for all governments to work together to ensure an end to the horrors, and to find a diplomatic and just way to move on. Palestinians have been under an illegal and brutal military occupation for 75 years and this is a major cause of the present violence. Trident Ploughshares demand an end to Israeli impunity; a prohibition on providing funds and military equipment to Israel; an honest and accurate account of the reality of the illegal Israeli occupation, and serious diplomacy to enable equal rights and resources for all peoples in Israel/Palestine.

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