

British government and Labour leadership reported to Scotland Yard as accomplices to Israeli war crimes

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British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and senior government officials, alongside Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, Shadow Attorney General Emily Thornberry and Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy, have been notified they will be prosecuted as accomplices to war crimes if they continue to support the Israeli government's military assault on Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

The International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP) served legal notice on Labour's leadership this morning, following a similar letter to Sunak, Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and Attorney General Victoria Prentis on Friday. The ICJP warned they were about to become complicit in the "imminent commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity by Israel in Gaza."

The ICJP, an independent organisation of lawyers, politicians and academics advocating for the rights of Palestinians, wrote to Sunak on Friday: "We put the Government on notice that we intend to bring legal proceedings against politicians in the UK and elsewhere where there is evidence that they have aided, abetted or in any other way supported, encouraged or provided material assistance in the commission of a war crime." The letter was signed by ICJP Director Tayab Ali, a partner at law firm Bindmans, and Crispin Blunt, Tory MP and former head of parliament's Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On Monday, the ICJP formally notified Labour's leadership that they may be "individually criminally liable" for their role in aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity.

A statement issued by the ICJP explained, "Last week, both Keir Starmer, Leader of the Opposition, and Emily Thornberry, Shadow Attorney General, spoke out in defence of Israel's withholding of food, water and electricity to Gaza. They justified this collective punishment based on 'Israel's right to defend itself'.

"Both politicians are human rights lawyers and should be well aware that this argument does not justify collective punishment, which is illegal under international law. ICJP sent a private letter to the Shadow Attorney General last week, urging Labour Party politicians to comply with international law or action would be taken, and now a notice to prosecute has

been issued."

The ICJP's letter to Starmer, Thornberry and Lammy stated, "It is unacceptable that since the start of the current hostilities, the Labour Party leadership has publicly and repeatedly expressed its complete and unequivocal support for Israel, not least by stating that Israel has an unconditional right to defend itself."

They added, "While statements made over the past three days by members of the Labour leadership have referred to international law, these statements have been equivocal. They have nominally called for compliance with international law yet failed to call for obvious and concrete actions which would ensure such compliance."

The ICJP has submitted evidence of the government's and Labour's support for Israeli violations of humanitarian law to the War Crimes Unit at Scotland Yard, headquarters of London's Metropolitan Police.

Evidence of war crimes

The ICJP cited clear evidence of war crimes and knowledge by government and opposition leaders of crimes committed under international law:

"For example, attacks on Gaza not complying with the requirement under international law for proportionality and distinction have indiscriminately killed and injured civilians; including women, children, and the elderly. Entire residential housing blocks have been levelled to the ground, killing all inside. Reports document entire families being killed; with all members of the family from every generation, young to old, being killed. And over 500 children have already been killed since 7 October—in the span of only 6 days. It also includes credible reports on Israel's use of white phosphorus munitions against the civilian population in Gaza – a substance which known to cause burns and risk fire to those who are impacted by it, here the Palestinian civilians.

“It is also inescapable that these most recent crimes must be understood within the context of the decades of documented abuses and international crimes committed under Israel’s military occupation with impunity and suffered by Palestinian civilians.”

Citing the Israel Defence Force’s (IDF) evacuation order against Palestinians, the ICJP said British political leaders had evidence that further serious breaches of international criminal and humanitarian law are imminent, “If carried out, this order may well amount to both a war crime and a crime against humanity, particularly the crime of forcible transfer and displacement.”

Israel’s blockade and total siege of Gaza since October 8 was also a crime, “The withholding of food, water and other basic necessities from civilian populations during international armed conflicts is expressly forbidden under IHL [International Humanitarian Law], and amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity under the ICC [International Criminal Court] Rome Statute. Moreover, such action constitutes collective punishment which is ‘prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever, whether committed by civilian or by military agents under the Geneva Conventions of 1949.’ It must be remembered that the prohibition against collective punishment is absolute.”

Israel’s “disproportionate” actions had already caused “immeasurable harm and suffering to the people of Gaza,” including, “massive and indiscriminate airstrikes, destroying thousands of civilian homes, and killing over 1,799 people, including 583 children.”

Recalling that the existing framework of international law was established in response to “the appalling actions of the belligerent powers” during World War II—above all the genocidal policies of the Nazis that produced the Holocaust—the ICJP called on the UK government to “support the UN Secretary General’s call for an immediate ceasefire to prevent further loss of life on both sides and for an immediate end to the siege. We also ask you to urgently work with international partners to secure the access of humanitarian aid to Gaza.”

It called on Labour to “call for an end to Israel’s illegal siege and evacuation order for North Gaza, condemn Israel’s war crimes and crimes against humanity. They should then press the government into immediate action to do the same.” It cautioned Labour’s leaders: “We are placing you on notice that ICJP is now gathering evidence of the complicity of UK politicians in Israel’s ongoing and potential future crimes in Gaza, and any public statements that you or your shadow cabinet members make will be interpreted in this context.”

There will be no retreat by the government or Labour from total commitment to Israel’s genocidal war. Today’s address by Sunak in the House of Commons and Starmer’s reply saw both restate their unqualified support for “Israel’s right to defend itself”, coupled to lying declarations that Israel would abide by international law. Any loss of Palestinian lives was the sole responsibility of Hamas.

Starmer and his shadow cabinet of war mongers have backed the government’s deployment of a Royal Navy task group to the eastern Mediterranean, including RFA Lyme Bay and RFA Argus. Royal Air Force patrols have already commenced over Israel, with additional P8 aircraft, surveillance assets, three merlin helicopters and a company of Royal Marines on standby “to deliver practical support to Israel and partners in the region, and offer deterrence and assurance’. Sunak today confirmed that British military assets will be involved in targeting Iran.

The case made by the ICJP is a devastating exposure of the criminal depths to which the British ruling class has descended in its embrace of crimes against humanity. The call by the ICJP and other Palestinian rights groups for war crimes charges against the political and military leaders of Israel, the United States and Britain is fully justified. But 20 years after their illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq that killed more than one million people, former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair and his US counterpart George W. Bush, have evaded any prosecution.

New and worse crimes are now being unleashed in virtually every corner of the planet, from the Middle East to NATO’s proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, to the preparation of war against China. Meanwhile, Britain’s judiciary continues its decade-long conspiracy with the US Department of Justice, Pentagon and CIA to imprison and silence WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange who courageously exposed British and US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan before the eyes of millions.

The only social force that can stop Israel’s genocidal assault in Gaza and halt World War III is the international working class. The past week’s global mass demonstrations must be expanded and joined by industrial action on the docks, transport and telecommunications to paralyse the Israeli war machine and defeat its backers in Washington, London and Europe. The working class must unite throughout the Middle East and worldwide in the struggle for socialism.



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No retreat