

To the Petitions Committee,
House of Representatives,
Wellington

18th April 2024

Dear Madams/Sirs,

I would be grateful if the following petition could be presented to the House of Representatives.

Title: Support for criminal investigation into crimes committed in Gaza and West Bank.

Request: That the House of Representatives urge the Government to put additional pressure on Israel to end the conflicts in Gaza and the West Bank by supporting criminal liability proceedings for violations of international law and human rights committed by either side.

Reason: We believe this would show moral leadership. We believe criminal liability is a matter of natural justice, and that international calls for it would be an appropriate form of pressure. When there is more that could be done, we believe that history can rightly ask why it wasn't done (as with Rwanda, 30 years later). We expect our nation to be respected for standing up for human rights, and we note that some nations are already taking similar initiatives.

With good wishes,

Peter Cullinane.

The Rt Honourable Prime Minister and Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs,
New Zealand Government,
Wellington.

Dear Sirs,

We, the undersigned, respectfully ask that on behalf of the people you represent you take some form of action that applies more pressure on Israel to heed the resolutions of the United Nations and decisions of the International Court of Justice.

There is no need for us to list the international and humanitarian laws that Israel is alleged to be breaking, or to explain the tactics of its propaganda. More to the point of our letter is the fact that Israel's Prime Minister has no intention of being dissuaded by friends or foes, or Security Council resolutions, or by the prospect of eventual accountability at the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court.

It was this kind of international violence that the UN was established to help prevent. But the ability of the UN and its agencies to fulfil those original purposes are too easily frustrated by nations for their own political purposes. For this reason, commentators are now calling for alternative forms of pressure by other nations around the world. We believe that taking some such action is a matter of moral integrity, and that the need to do so is urgent.

It will be said that sanctions, boycotts, and suspension of diplomatic relations by small nations would be too insignificant to make much difference, and not worth the cost to themselves. Of course, these countries' commercial relationships are important, but with so much is at stake, they are not of a higher order than moral integrity. When there is more than could be done, history will be entitled to ask why wasn't it. Complicity can be by inaction as well as by actions.

New Zealanders are not unaffected by the sacrifices they see being made in Gaza, whether by people trying to survive or by people who put their own lives at risk to help them. Fair-minded kiwis often show their willingness to reach out to people in need, but they tend to "give up" when they feel there is little they can do. Those who represent them in government have nothing to lose by taking a stand New Zealanders could be proud of.

New Zealand has shown before that it is capable of showing leadership, on moral grounds, which other nations have been willing to follow. It is time to show leadership again. We expect our nation to be respected for standing up for human rights within and among the community of nations. South Africa is being applauded for its initiative with the International Court of Justice, and the Republic of Ireland has now announced a similar intention. Together with nations like these, we might well be able to take actions where words on their own are too easily ignored. Even helping to form a coalition of countries calling for eventual accountability would be a positive and needed initiative, and an appropriate form of pressure. So, too, would calling for a arms embargo to all sides...

Actions taken by countries acting outside the auspices of the UN demonstrate the determination of nations to support international peace-making even when the UN seems unable. This could also lead to insights into how the UN itself might eventually be reformed.