

# TRADE & INVESTMENT CHALLENGES REGARDING FREE TRADE DEAL WITH ISRAEL

Submission by Mark Bradbeer

3 Fallon St, Brunswick, 3056

Submission to Levant Section,

Middle East Branch

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## POINT ONE – HUMAN RIGHTS & APARTHEID

Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, hosted the 1981 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Melbourne, in which Commonwealth Heads of Government reaffirmed their total and unequivocal condemnation of apartheid as a crime against humanity and their total rejection of all policies designed to perpetuate this inhuman system. They accepted that it was the solemn and urgent duty of each of their Governments vigorously to combat the evil of apartheid by the adoption of effective measures against it and to assist those struggling to rid themselves of it.

Last year, the United Nations Human Rights Council declared Israel to be an apartheid state,<sup>1</sup> and this year, the Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, reported that Israel's "one organising principle lies at the base of a wide array of Israeli policies: advancing and perpetuating the supremacy of one group – Jews – over another – Palestinians" (*The Guardian*, 11/Jan., 2021). But even in 1961, it was apparent to the architect of South African apartheid, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, that "Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state" (*Rand Daily Mail*, November 23, 1961), and on this rare instance, anti-apartheid activist, Nelson Mandela, would have agreed with him.<sup>2</sup>

Multicultural Australia should continue to demonstrate to the global community, in words and actions, that apartheid anywhere is a crime against humanity.

## POINT TWO – MASSACRES & JUSTICE

Over the last 17 years, Israel has conducted a so-called Disengagement Plan against Gaza. This has involved severe sanctions and siege against the people of Gaza, putting them on "a diet" that is directly responsible for children having stunted growth, a measure of malnutrition.<sup>3</sup>

In 2004, Arnon Soffer the architect of this plan described it thus:

When 2.5 million people live in a closed-off Gaza, it's going to be a human catastrophe, "Those people will become even bigger animals than they are today, with

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council "Israel Entrenches Crime of Apartheid over the Palestinian People" Feb./Mar. 2020. See online <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/AHRC43NGO185.pdf> .

<sup>2</sup> Nkosi Zwelivelile, "My grandfather Nelson Mandela fought apartheid. I see the parallels with Israel", *The Guardian*, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2018. See also Richard P. Stevens, "Zionism, South Africa and Apartheid: The Paradoxical Triangle", *Phylon*, 1971, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1971), pp. 134. Published by: Clark Atlanta University, page 134.

<sup>3</sup> Hanan Rahim et al, "Maternal and Child Health in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" *The Lancet*, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2009, Vol. 373, 972.

the aid of an insane fundamentalist Islam. The pressure at the border will be awful. It's going to be a terrible war. So, if we want to remain alive, we will have to kill and kill and kill. All day, every day." (11<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2004, *Jerusalem Post*)

Over these last 17 years, the world has been shocked as Israel has pursued this plan. With modern telecommunications, more than ever, we live in a global community, and the world has witnessed innumerable atrocities by Israel against Palestinians, particularly in Gaza. As Noam Chomsky said, "Israel uses sophisticated attack jets and naval vessels to bomb densely-populated refugee camps, schools, apartment blocks, mosques, and slums to attack a population that has no air force, no air defence, no navy, no heavy weapons, no artillery units, no mechanized armour, no command in control, no army ... and calls it a war. It is not a war, it is murder." Indeed, the Israeli military themselves dismissively refer to these "operations" as "mowing the lawn." The International Criminal Court is now preparing to investigate Israel for war crimes, as reported last month in *The Guardian* newspaper.<sup>4</sup>

Australia should not be caught on the wrong side of history by nurturing trade links with this apartheid state. A Free Trade Deal with Israel will also damage our relationships with other countries.

### **POINT THREE – CONTEMPT FOR AUSTRALIA**

As an occupying power, Israel has the obligation to provide for those of the country they occupy, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention. Yet it is other countries which provide aid to Palestinians. According to DFAT's own website:

"The Australian Government will provide an estimated \$29.8 million in total ODA to the Palestinian Territories (PTs) in 2020-21. Australia's development cooperation with the PTs is a demonstration of our practical and genuine commitment to the Palestinian people."

This aid is put at risk by Israeli bulldozers and the Israeli military. In 2012, the European Commission listed many aid projects totalling \$65 million, which were damaged or destroyed by Israel. These include a fleet of ambulances, and waste management and water treatment plants. Australian aid money and initiatives were contemptuously destroyed by Israel.

Israel has a reputation for forging Australian passports, to take advantage of Australia's reputation as a pluralistic and multicultural nation – something Israel cannot claim. Despite promises from Israel never to do this again, they forged four Australian passports in 2010. Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, expressed Australia's collective outrage, saying that "any state that chooses to do this in relation to Australian passports, frankly, is treating the Australian people, the Australian government and the Australian nation with contempt".<sup>5</sup>

How can Australia trust Israel, particularly as its government continues on a trajectory more overtly racist and fascist with every year?

Kind regards,  
Mark Bradbeer

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Beaumont, "ICC opens investigations into war crimes in Palestinian Territories" *The Guardian*, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Phillip Hudson and Elissa Doherty "Three Australians named as new suspects in the assassination of a Hamas militant", *Herald-Sun*, 25/2/2010.