# Palestine's Neverending Nakba

Labour & Palestine

*Newsletter Autumn 2026*



## ***Hugh Lanning**, Labour & Palestine*

If one were to listen to many supporters of Israel, you would believe that it was somehow Palestine that was the obstacle to peace and a two-state solution. But it is Israel that since its foundation has been fundamentally opposed to any notion of there being a Palestinian state. It has never said it would recognise Palestine in any form and it has never put any limitations on its borders. Indeed, recent events prove that it regards its borders as a one-way trap door that give it the right to attack any country within military range that denies their "right" to rule the Middle East.

The Nakba - the catastrophe, did not start or finish in 1948. Whereas until the current war, it was the most significant act in the strategy to eliminate Palestinians from their own land, it should be seen as a fundamental part of the long term, systematic plan of colonisation.

Throughout this process Israel has tried to use the law to legitimise their theft of land. And land is the key issue, the ownership of land by indigenous Palestinians obstructs the invasive settlement of that land. The Israeli answer, therefore, is to remove that right.

Within Israel after 1948 all rights and registration of land by Palestinians was wiped away and derecognised. The same is being done in the West Bank, removing rights stemming from the time of the Jordanian mandate and before.

And so, the never-ending Nakba continues, replicating the processes that have been used time and time again.

This is an inversion that Israel is planning to repeat in the West Bank, with settlers mimicking the methods of terror groups in 1948 to drive Palestinians out of their homes. Then the land will be 'bought' and settled.

However, Israel has a fundamental problem it did not have in 1948. Then it was physically able to drive the Palestinians off the land. Now there are over 5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and a further 2 million living within Israel – leaving aside the millions of Palestinian refugees in bordering countries. Its problem is that Israel wants the land and not the people. Even the genocide in Gaza and the terror in the West Bank has not rid Israel of this problem.

It is not international law that is preventing Israel from actually annexing the West Bank. Annexation, illegal under international law, is the forcible acquisition and assertion of legal title over territory by another state, usually following military occupation of that territory.

What holds Israel back is what to do with the Palestinians.

When Israel officially and illegally annexed Jerusalem in 1980, having occupied it since 1967, it had to create a new category of 'permanent residents' for the non-Jewish Palestinians.

Israel sees itself in a demographic war with the Palestinians. It is inconceivable that it would give rights in any shape to a further 5 million people.

Also, any such arrangement would expose even more transparently the apartheid nature of the Israeli regime.

With Israel in total military control of all the land from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, it is meaningless to talk about a one or two state solution. Without a total rebalancing of power, no solution is possible. The ending of the occupation sounds like a minimalist demand, but in reality, it is huge. Palestinians would need to be given back not just their rights, but their water, energy and most importantly their land.

Whilst Palestinians continue to die in their thousands we must continue to protest, but we must also organise to help bring about political change through our campaigning. BDS - boycott, divestment and sanctions, are central to this. As South Africa proved, we will need government sanctions to end the occupation. It might seem a distant hope, but it must be our aim.

# TUC Backs Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions Against Israel's Genocide

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Israel's genocide on Gaza has killed over 70,000 Palestinians, and displaced millions. In Gaza, key workers have been targeted by Israel - with over 250 journalists and media workers, over 200 academics, over 1,700 health workers and nearly 600 humanitarian aid workers killed since 2023. People have been deliberately starved.

Additionally, recently in the West Bank, Israeli settlers' violence and attacks - supported by Israel's army (the IDF) - on Palestinian communities, has left Palestinians terrorised and been condemned globally as against international law.

This is the context to the TUC 2026 Congress passing a motion that backed the Palestinian-led global call for a BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) movement against Israel's illegal occupation, noting that "BDS is an effective strategy to pressure Israel to end its ongoing genocide, system of apartheid, occupation and denial of the right of return for refugees."



*TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak*

**This is the time to turn these words into action. This means that those who support Palestinian rights within and beyond the Labour Party should both amplify and build on the demands and decisions of the TUC resolving to:**

*"**1.** campaign for a permanent ceasefire and just peace plan that respects international law and successive UN resolutions, providing for a two-state solution*

***2.** campaign for legislation banning trade with the illegal settlements and suspension of the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, until international law is respected*

***3.** support the Palestinian led BDS movement; trade union-led campaigns in support of Palestine; the workplace days of action; divestment from companies complicit in Israel's crimes against Palestinians, in cooperation with union members in those companies*

***4.** end all military cooperation and arms trade with Israel to comply with international law*

***5.** call on the government to impose wide-ranging sanctions on Israel until it complies with international law, and commit to freedom of speech and end attempts to censor artists and art organisations expressing solidarity with Palestine*

***6.** support trade unionists, including artists, culture workers and education workers who refuse to handle goods and services linked to violations of international law."*




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**Thank-you to ASLEF for supporting L&P's presence at Labour Conference 2026**

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