



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

*United Nations Consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO and UNCTAD
Special relations with the ILO, FAO, UNICEF, and other organisations and
agencies*

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11 November 2015

Murray McCully
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Private Bag 18041
WELLINGTON 6160

Dear Mr McCully

I am writing on behalf of the Women's International League For Peace and Freedom Aotearoa Section (WILPF) with regard to the appalling situation that exists in the occupied territories of Palestine.

While we welcome your speech raising the issue, given during the UNSC open debate on 15 October, we think a much stronger statement is required.

The extreme power imbalance in the relationship between Israel and Palestine and the constant harassment, persecution and excessive force used by the Occupiers over many years has led to a situation where those oppressed live without hope and engage in desperate acts of violence, with no regard for the consequences to themselves or others.

WILPF Aotearoa agrees that there has been a total failure of the diplomatic and political process. Not surprising when countless United Nations resolutions condemning the behaviour of the Occupying force have been treated with contempt and ignored by the state of Israel.

It is obvious that there is no intention on the part of the present government of Israel to agree to a viable Palestinian State. The continuous illegal settlement building in the occupied West Bank and the annexation of properties in East Jerusalem is a clearly stated strategy to impede that solution. Statements made by many of the current members of the Israeli parliament have indicated their unequivocal support for that approach.

Given this attitude to a two-state solution, the expectation that the parties will ever be "ready for direct talks" is unrealistic at this time. We urge you to use the Security Council tenure to make a bold statement upholding the Palestinians' right to self determination, denied them since 1948.

There are good precedents for New Zealand to take a stance for peace and justice, as we have done over apartheid and nuclear testing in the Pacific. WILPF Aotearoa strongly recommends that everything possible be done to insist that Israel lives up to its obligations under international law.

Given the news from 2 November, that the government of Israel will not engage in any discussion about resuming peace talks, our government should be calling for sanctions to be imposed against Israel. Once again diplomacy has failed, even before it has begun.

We should not be providing the state of Israel with yet another opportunity to reject a United Nations resolution.

WILPF believes that there can never be peace without justice. Because of the inertia of the international community, the beleaguered Palestinians have waited far too long for justice.

Yours sincerely

Celine Kearney
President, WILPF Aotearoa

cc Sir Jim McLay, Representative to the Palestinian Authority