

Peter Fa'afiu  
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23 Feb 2022

Dear Mr Fa'afiu,

We are writing to you as Deputy Chair of Amnesty International. Your appointment, as the first Pacific Islander at that level of the organisation, was lauded around our nation and we see you as the Pacific community's *de facto* Amnesty International representative.

As a leader within the international governance group that published the report 'Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System Of Domination And Crime Against Humanity' ([The AI Report](#)), you bear responsibility for its contents and consequences.

We are gravely concerned by the report. It is replete with lies, false accusations, and racism.

**The AI Report is racist.** The report meets Natan Sharansky's 3D test for antisemitism, in that it displays demonisation, double standards and de-legitimation<sup>1</sup>, and it meets the International Holocaust Remembrance Association's definition of antisemitism.

Some examples of the antisemitic tropes in The AI Report include the repeated use of "Jewish domination", which echoes the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion fabrication; repeating the canard that Jewish self-determination and indigeneity is inherently racist and a quest for "Jewish supremacy"; and suggesting that Israel's existence as a Jewish state is inherently racist<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, you have displayed racist hypocrisy by targeting the sole Jewish state ahead of actual and extreme human rights violators on Israel's borders or, for example, China's treatment of the Uighars<sup>3</sup>.

**The AI Report is replete with lies.** It recycles false accusations and tropes from a Human Rights Watch report published in April 2021<sup>4</sup>. Dan Diker, Research fellow, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs has called the AI report "a-factual, a-historical and a-contextual"<sup>5</sup> and there have been several other groups point out numerous examples of misinformation in The AI Report<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-sharansky-f04.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/amnesty-apartheid-analysis/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amnesty-to-oi-no-double-standard-in-accusing-israel-but-not-china-of-apartheid/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/amnestys-apartheid-report-recycled-tropes-in-the-guise-of-research/>

<sup>5</sup> Dan Diker, 'BDS Unmasked: Radical Roots, Extremist Ends', Creative Community for Peace, <https://www.creativecommunityforpeace.com>

<sup>6</sup> Eg <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/amnesty-apartheid-analysis/> and <https://www.thinc.info/amnestys-one-sided-analysis-ignores-reality-and-misuses-international-law/>

**The AI Report repeats a false and contrived definition of “apartheid”<sup>7</sup>.** It misleadingly relies on the 1973 Apartheid Convention, which was adopted during the Cold War and which was not acceded to by any Western country<sup>8</sup>. By manipulating the definition of Apartheid and framing the Jewish state as an equivalent, the crimes of Apartheid South Africa are cynically and implicitly minimised to serve a racist agenda.

**The AI Report calls for an end to Israel.** The recommendations of The AI Report are a clear call for the elimination of Israel, demanding a Palestinian “Right of Return”, for which there is no legal precedent and would also lead to a demographic annihilation, which can only mean an end to Jewish self-determination<sup>9</sup>. The AI Report also reiterates calls to pressure the international community to enforce an arms embargo against Israel, rendering her less able to defend herself against numerous existential threats from surrounding Islamist theocrats<sup>10</sup>.

**The AI Report minimises terrorism.** Terrorist threats are minimised, ignored, or whitewashed in The AI Report. This includes the history of extreme violence directed at Israeli civilians by various Palestinian terrorist organisations. The wave of violence that saw the murder of approximately 1,000 Israelis from 2000-2004, in which buses, pizzerias, religious gatherings, night clubs, and other civilian locations were targeted for suicide bombings, is callously minimised in your report before it turns to chastise the Israeli response<sup>11</sup>.

More recently, the anti-Jewish riots during the 2021 conflict<sup>12</sup> and the 4,000 rockets fired indiscriminately into Israel from Gaza receive only cursory mention with no acknowledgement of the reason for Israel’s defensive response, or that Hamas’ unprovoked targeting of civilians from within civilian areas constitutes a double war crime. The only mention of the word “terrorist” in the entire document utilizes scare quotes for paraphrases or quotations of Israeli sources.

**The AI Report contributes to antisemitic attacks.** There is increasing evidence and consensus that the double standards applied to Israel and the demonising language which The AI Report exemplifies, as well as support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign,<sup>13</sup> contributes to racist attacks against Jews around the world<sup>14</sup>. It should be no surprise that in the hours after your AI Report was announced, a Rabbi in Melbourne, Australia, received antisemitic phone calls in which he was called “Captain Apartheid”<sup>15</sup>.

Sadly, this is not the first example of overt anti-Israel bias from Amnesty International. While you were Chair of the New Zealand chapter, Amnesty International was openly supportive of the BDS

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/apartheid-report/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.thinc.info/amnestys-one-sided-analysis-ignores-reality-and-misuses-international-law/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/War-Return-Indulgence-Palestinian-Obstructed/dp/1250252768/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.commentary.org/articles/michael-oren-2/seven-existential-threats/>

<sup>11</sup> ibid

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.jns.org/arab-israelis-in-lod-riot-set-fire-to-synagogue/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/amnestys-bds-strategy-hijacking-business-and-human-rights/>

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, <https://www.jewishpress.com/news/global/report-2021-was-most-antisemitic-year-in-a-decade/2022/01/25/>,

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28063&LangID=E>,

[https://www.academia.edu/34561284/Antisemitism\\_in\\_contemporary\\_Great\\_Britain](https://www.academia.edu/34561284/Antisemitism_in_contemporary_Great_Britain), and

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/02/09/fueled-by-free-palestine-demonstrations-antisemitic-incidents-soar-to-new-heights-in-uk/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-695505>

campaign against Israel<sup>16</sup>. The German government has compared BDS to the Nazi boycott of Jews<sup>17</sup>. Several countries have outlawed BDS actions. You may be aware that it is illegal to practise trade discrimination against other ethnic groups<sup>18</sup>

**NZ involvement brings shame.** No democratic country has welcomed The AI Report. New Zealand's Foreign Minister has maintained conspicuous silence. However, New Zealand's allied democracies have forcefully rejected it. For example:

- the Australian Foreign Minister said The AI Report was "**divorced from reality.**"<sup>19</sup>
- a German Foreign Ministry spokesperson said "We reject expressions like apartheid or a **one-sided focusing of criticism on Israel.** That is not helpful to solving the conflict in the Middle East."<sup>20</sup>
- the United Kingdom rejected The AI Report, saying "**We do not agree** with the use of this terminology."<sup>21</sup>
- the president of the Czech Republic sent a letter to the president of the State of Israel in which he wrote that he "was informed about an alarming document made by the international organisation Amnesty International... **I am horrified about such strong antisemitic stand and I completely condemn such unilateral statement.**"<sup>22</sup>
- the Austrian Foreign Ministry said they "do not consider the use of the term 'apartheid' in the context of the Middle East conflict to be appropriate. The serious crime of apartheid refers to a specific context. **We reject the application of this term to the State of Israel.**"<sup>23</sup>
- the United State Department noted that it "reject[s] the view that Israel's actions constitute apartheid" and that "it is important as the world's only Jewish state that the Jewish people must not be denied their right to self-determination, and **we must ensure there isn't a double standard being applied.**"

It is also noteworthy that no Arab nation has endorsed the report. This is amidst a backdrop of increasing closeness in trade and cooperation, under the Abraham Accords<sup>24</sup>, between Israel and countries that have traditionally been hostile, to the point of boycotting, the Jewish state.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/amnestys-bds-strategy-hijacking-business-and-human-rights/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-bds-israel-idUSKCN1SN204>

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, <https://www.ita.org/2016/05/24/global/bds-is-anti-constitutional-and-discriminatory-spanish-tribunal-rules>, <https://forward.com/news/breaking-news/323207/france-court-upholds-bds-is-discrimination-ruling/>, and <https://www.ita.org/2016/06/15/opinion/anti-bds-laws-dont-perpetuate-discrimination-they-prevent-it>

<sup>19</sup>

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/world/amnestys-apartheid-claim-divorced-from-reality-says-israel-foreign-minister/news-story/0f0d19b67d4923dd5fec4bfc6e1ed241>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/germany-rejects-amnestys-apartheid-label-for-israel/ar-AATpiit>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/we-do-not-agree-uk-rejects-amnesty-report-accusing-israel-of-apartheid/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://twitter.com/CzechEmbassyIL/status/1489233510183444481>

<sup>23</sup> [https://twitter.com/MFA\\_Austria/status/1489335864496951298](https://twitter.com/MFA_Austria/status/1489335864496951298)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/322521>

We also note that the executive director of Amnesty International Israel, Molly Malekar, has criticized The AI Report calling it a “punch to the gut” and she says it is not helping the situation, but may be making things worse <sup>25</sup>.

The reputation of Amnesty International is clearly deeply tarnished by this report and it raises many ethical and strategic questions, particularly as they impact our Pacific and New Zealand communities.

It is possible that American politicians may question New Zealand’s unhelpful proximity to this report through your link with MFAT, particularly in light of recent NZ MFAT attacks on Israel at the UN and NZ Sovereign Fund’s blacklisting of Israeli banks.

Your key involvement with a blatantly racist document that has been resoundingly rejected by some of New Zealand’s closest diplomatic allies, casts a dark shadow.

We call on you as one of the leaders responsible for the production of this report and as a representative of Kiwi and Pacific Island values of balance, fairness and anti-racism, to distance yourself from the report and condemn its contents.

We call on you to be an ‘upstander’ for all human rights, in this case the human rights of the Jewish people.

We are open to discussing this with you and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

**Dr David Cumin and  
Ashley Church**  
Co-directors  
Israel Institute of New Zealand

**Rob Berg**  
President  
Zionist Federation of NZ

**Nigel Woodley**  
Flaxmere Christian Fellowship,  
Hastings

**Perry Trotter**  
Co-founder  
Holocaust and Antisemitism  
Foundation, Aotearoa New  
Zealand

**Beth Mather**  
National Coordinator  
Bridges for Peace New  
Zealand Inc.

**Hon. Alfred Ngaro and  
Dr Sheree Trotter**  
Directors  
Indigenous Coalition for Israel

**Derek McDowell**  
Director  
ICEJ New Zealand

**Trish Nicholls**  
Coordinator  
Israel Focus Group

**Bryce Turner**  
National Executive Director  
Christians for Israel NZ

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amnestys-israel-chief-criticizes-groups-report-accusing-israel-of-apartheid/>