

For immediate release

Sheffield Palestine Coalition against Israeli Apartheid

CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED AT CONFERENCE IN SHEFFIELD 26TH NOVEMBER

NEW COALITION AIMS TO MAKE SHEFFIELD AN ISRAELI APARTHEID FREE ZONE

A new initiative to make Sheffield an Israeli Apartheid Free Zone was launched on Saturday 26th November, at a well-attended conference held at Victoria Hall. The packed conference with inspiring speakers wildly surpassed the organisers expectations. Inspired by Sheffield's historic solidarity with the South African struggle against apartheid, the conference launched another anti-apartheid campaign in the city. This time it is in solidarity with the Palestinians and opposing Israel's settler colonial and apartheid regime.

SHEFFIELD – AN APARTHEID FREE ZONE in 1981

In 1981, Sheffield was the first city in the UK where the local authority pledged to end all links with South African apartheid. It withdrew pension fund investments from companies with South African subsidiaries and barred South African sports teams from its playing fields.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS DECLARED ISRAEL AN APARTHEID STATE

In the wake of Amnesty International declaring that Israel rules over the Palestinians by a system of apartheid, "a cruel system of dominations and a crime against humanity," four organisations – Sheffield Trade Union Council, Kairos Sheffield, Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine – have formed a coalition to campaign for Sheffield to become an Israeli Apartheid Free Zone by cutting the city's ties with all financial, commercial, educational and cultural organisations which are complicit in Israeli Apartheid.

BIG SUPPORT TO MAKE SHEFFIELD AN APARTHEID FREE ZONE AGAIN

The audience of 90 were inspired by four speakers: Dr. Haidar Eid spoke from Gaza (by Zoom) giving a Palestinian perspective on Israeli Apartheid; Manal Shqair, described the environmental destruction of Palestine under Israeli rule and the impact on workers of the apartheid system; Andrew Feinstein endorsed the campaign and drew on his experience of South African apartheid, having served as a Jewish MP within the African National Congress and Mike Reed explained the significance of Amnesty International's landmark report.

COALITION WELCOMES NEW SUPPORTERS AND AFFILIATES TO DEVELOP THE CAMPAIGN

The Coalition asks individuals and organisations to become supporters of this campaign and its aims. The Coalition also welcomes invitations from union bodies, religious groups, political groups, student societies,

sporting bodies and so on, to meetings to discuss the new Apartheid, how the city-wide campaign can be supported and what practical measures can be taken by individuals and organisations.

For more information, contact one of the Coalition members involved in the launch of the campaign:

o Sheffield Trade Union Council: tucsheffield@gmail.com

o Kairos Sheffield: kairossheffield@gmail.com

o Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign: enquiries@sheffieldpsc.org.uk

o Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine: chair@slfp.org.uk

NOTES FOR THE EDITOR:

1. An archive record of the city of Sheffield's proud history of challenging South African apartheid can be seen [here](#)
2. Israeli Apartheid, which is a crime against humanity, has been documented by [Professors Falk and Tilley](#), [B'Tselem](#) (Israel's premier human rights organisation), [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#).
3. The UN's Special Rapporteur, Francesca Albanese, has added to the global criticism of Israel in [her recent report](#) to the United Nations.
4. The speakers' credentials:
 - Dr Haidar Eid – Associate Professor of English Literature, Al Aqsa University, the Gaza Strip, Palestine.
 - Manal Shqair - International advocacy officer-Stop the Wall Campaign, and International Outreach Coordinator of the Land Defence Coalition (LDC)
 - Andrew Feinstein- Former ANC MP, author and political analyst
 - Mike Reed – Manchester Chair of Amnesty International UK.



Left: "Sheffield Forward", paper of the Local Trade Union and Labour Movement, reporting Sheffield becoming the first South African Apartheid-Free Zone in 1981. (Source: [City Council archive](#))



Above: the Coalition members display their banners outside Sheffield City Town Hall to mark the launch of the campaign to make Sheffield an Israeli Apartheid-Free Zone. (Left to right Kairos Sheffield; Sheffield TUC; Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine.)