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To: EK-postbus <postbus@eerstekamer.nl>
Subject: Nederland en Israël/Palestijnen — inzake het gevaar van normalisering [Voor de Commissie BDO van de Eerste Kamer]

Attachments:
TOESPRAAK BUSHRA KHALIDI, 135E SIT-IN DD 10.09.26.pdf

U ontvangt niet vaak e-mail van 5.1.2.e @xs4all.nl. Ontdek waarom dit belangrijk is

Voor de Commissie Buitenlandse Zaken, Defensie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (BDO) van de Eerste Kamer

Geachte heer/mevrouw,

Heel gaarne, namens de organisatoren van de wekelijkse Sit-In bij het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, alsnog uw aandacht voor het volgende.

Ruim een maand geleden, op 10 september j.l., vond de 135ste opeenvolgende Sit-In van ambtenaren en oud-ambtenaren – ondersteund door oud-bewindslieden – plaats. Opkomst ca. 240 personen.
Zulks vanwege grote bezorgdheid dat Nederland zich niet houdt aan zijn internationaalrechtelijke verplichtingen voor wat betreft het Israëlische optreden ten koste van de Palestijnen in Gaza alsook op de Westoever van de Jordaan. Een Israëlisch optreden dat er steeds duidelijker op gericht blijkt de verwezenlijking van het internationaal erkende Palestijnse recht op zelfbeschikking definitief onmogelijk te maken.

Van praktisch nut voor uw commissie – volgens ons – is de op deze Sit-In gehouden toespraak van de Palestijnse advocate 5.1.2.e 5.1.2.e op de Westoever woonachtig en werkzaam als Global Humanitarian Policy Lead van Oxfam International. .
In haar toespraak gaat zij in op het levensgrote gevaar van normalisering. D.w.z. normalisering van het onophoudelijk voortgaande, 't internationaal recht en humanitair recht schendende, Israëlische optreden als rechtstreeks gevolg van een niet-handelen c.q. een dubbelhartig handelen van Nederland en andere landen.

De volledige tekst van 5.1.2.e 's met een ovatie begroette toespraak treft u bijgaand aan.

Zeer erkentelijk indien u deze email met bijlage onder de leden van de vaste commissie Buitenlandse Zaken, Defensie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking kunt verspreiden.
Tevens erkentelijk natuurlijk indien u dat zou willen bevestigen :)

Met hartelijke dank en vriendelijke groet,

namens de organisatoren van de wekelijkse Sit-In,

5.1.2.e

oud-diplomaat (o.a. te Tel Aviv '93/'96 en als Ned. vertegenwoordiger bij de Palestijnen in de Bezette Gebieden '93/'94) en voormalig uitgever

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5.1.2.e – speech at 135th Sit-In – 10.09.26

Good afternoon everyone.

I want to begin by thanking you for being here.
And I want to say what an honour it is to open alongside someone who cycled across the Netherlands for Palestine. There is something very Dutch, and very beautiful, about that kind of solidarity: take a bicycle, take a cause, probably take a lot of rain, and decide that people are going to have to listen.
But seriously, that kind of commitment matters. Being here matters.

Some of you are here as former civil servants. Some of you are here from different ministries, different institutions, different parts of public life. And I know that solidarity costs people different things. Some people can stand here openly. Some people cannot. Some people carry their conscience quietly, in rooms, in emails, in advice, in small refusals, in the insistence that the law must mean something.
So I do not take this gathering lightly.

I am speaking to you today as a Palestinian. I am also speaking as someone who works for Oxfam, where so much of our work is about trying to make visible what is being made invisible.
And that is what I want to talk about today: the danger of normalisation.
Because one of the most devastating things about this moment is not only the violence itself. It is that the violence is being folded into normal life. It is being managed, explained, briefed, categorised, reduced to language that makes it easier to live with.
A ceasefire is announced, and then people are still killed.
A peace plan is announced, and Palestinians are still not the ones deciding their future.
Humanitarian access is discussed, and children are still walking for water.
And somehow the world starts to adjust.

Last week, one of the images that stayed with me was of a little girl killed on her way back to school. What remained in the image were her schoolbooks.
And I keep thinking about that. Because schoolbooks are such an ordinary thing. They are supposed to mean routine. They are supposed to mean a morning argument about being late, a parent fixing a collar, a child carrying a bag that is slightly too heavy. They are supposed to mean a future.
In Gaza, even that has been made unsafe.

And for me, this is not abstract. My own family is now scattered. Some are in Egypt. Some are in Europe. Some are still in Gaza. My nephews are no longer there, but their father is.
And I remember, two years ago, visiting them and watching the children turn survival into a game, running with pots to the soup kitchen, because children will do what children do. They will play, even when adults have failed them.
But now even that memory feels like part of a larger devastation. Because in Gaza today, childhood itself has been reorganised around survival. A child's job is to fetch water. To queue for food. To walk because there is no fuel. To know the sound of drones and airstrikes.

To understand, before they should have to understand anything, that the next meal is not guaranteed and the next night may not be safe.
And then we are told that things are improving because the numbers are lower. Because it is not one hundred people killed today, maybe it is ten. Maybe it is twenty. Maybe it is "only" one family.
But a lower daily death toll is not peace. It is a different rhythm of the same dehumanisation.
At Oxfam, we are often asked to speak about humanitarian access, aid delivery, trucks, crossings, water, food, shelter. And yes, all of that is urgent. It is lifesaving. It matters.

But aid cannot become an alibi for inaction.
We cannot water-truck our way out of a policy that destroys water systems. We cannot food-parcel our way out of starvation created by siege and obstruction. We cannot rebuild homes while the machinery that destroys them is still funded, armed, traded with, and politically protected.
This is fundamentally a political crisis that demands a political resolution. And the real test is not what is announced in The Hague, Brussels, Washington, or anywhere else. The real test is very simple: can Palestinians live? Can families reunite? Can children go to school and come home? Can people return safely and voluntarily? Can hospitals function? Can water run? Can Palestinians decide their own future?
That is the test.

And this is why today's solidarity matters. Not because Palestinians need pity. We do not need pity. We need rights, protection, accountability, and an end to impunity.
And we need people, especially people who understand how policy is made, to refuse the slow normalisation of the unacceptable.
Because nothing about this is inevitable.
Settlements are not inevitable. Annexation is not inevitable. Forced displacement is not inevitable. The starvation of a population is not inevitable. The destruction of Gaza is not inevitable.
These are political choices. And political choices can be stopped.

In the West Bank, we see the same logic every day, sometimes more slowly, sometimes less visibly. Where I grew up, an outpost does not appear as a whole settlement overnight. It begins with a caravan. Then a road. Then electricity. Then soldiers. Then protection. Then the map changes. And suddenly what was Palestinian land is treated as if it was always meant to be taken.

In June 2024, settlers took over our family home in the Old City of Jerusalem. Our home. And even when you fight, even when you have documents, even when you win something back, the message is still clear: under occupation, even your most intimate places are made conditional. Your home, your land, your movement, your safety, all made temporary.
So when we talk about a settlement trade ban, we are not talking about symbolism. And we are not talking about who someone is. We are talking about what states are enabling.
A settlement economy is an illegal economy built on occupied land. Goods and services from settlements are not normal trade. They are part of a system that takes land, fragments Palestinian life, and makes dispossession profitable.

So yes, the Dutch decision to move on settlement trade matters. It is important. It is also overdue. Palestinians have been saying this for decades. The International Court of Justice made clear in 2024 that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful, and that states have duties not to recognise or assist that situation.
So the question is not whether action is too political.
The question is how it became acceptable to keep trading with illegality and call that neutrality.
And this applies beyond settlements. Governments know how to use consequences when they choose to. They know how to restrict trade. They know how to suspend cooperation. They know how to review agreements. They know how to stop arms transfers when there is a clear risk they will be used in serious violations of international law.
So why, when it comes to Palestinians, is the threshold always moved?
There always seems to be money for weapons, for warplanes, for military cooperation, for security language. And then humanitarian assistance is treated as optional, as generous, as something to be cut, debated, delayed.
But no government can help repair with one hand what it enables with the other.
That is the responsibility here. Not charity. Responsibility.

Palestine is not isolated from the world. The occupation is sustained through international money, trade, arms, diplomatic protection, corporate involvement, and political choices. That means the responsibility to stop complicity is also international.
And that is where your solidarity has impact.
Because every time people gather like this, it becomes harder for governments to pretend that people do not know. Every time civil servants, former civil servants, lawyers, aid workers, students, unions, churches, communities, and ordinary people insist on the law, it becomes harder to reduce Palestine to a humanitarian file.
The work now is to keep pushing for consequences.
A full and effective ban on settlement trade and the financial links that sustain it.
No arms, ammunition, components, or military cooperation where there is a risk they will be used in violations of international law.
Protection for UNRWA, Palestinian civil society, humanitarian workers, and the people documenting what is happening.
Humanitarian access that is unimpeded, principled, and not used to manage suffering while the causes of suffering remain untouched.

And any recovery or reconstruction must be Palestinian-led, rights-based, reparations-oriented, and tied to freedom and self-determination across Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.
That sounds like a lot. But honestly, it is not complicated.
For Palestinians, it has never been complicated. We are asking for the same things any people would ask for: to live, to be free, to return, to be safe, to decide our future, to have our rights treated as rights and not as rewards for good behaviour.
So thank you for being here.
Thank you for refusing numbness.
Thank you for understanding that solidarity is not only standing with Palestinians when the images are unbearable. It is also staying when the cameras move on, when the language becomes technical, when the violence is made quieter, when the world tries to call it normal.

Because it is not normal.

A child carrying schoolbooks should come home.
A family home should remain a family home.
Aid should not be used to cover for destruction.
International law should not depend on who violates it.
And Palestine should not have to keep proving its humanity before the world acts.
We do not need more expressions of concern.
We need consequences.
And we need all of us, wherever we stand, to make sure that the cost of complicity becomes higher than the cost of doing the right thing.
Thank you.