Over 166 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israeli snipers, air strikes and missile attacks since 30 March, when unarmed protests began, demanding the Right of Return for refugees and an end to the illegal siege on Gaza. Victims included journalists wearing press markings, medics tending the wounded, and children, some shot in the head from behind. A shoot-to-kill spree on 14 May slaughtered 61, including 8 children. No hostile media coverage, policy decisions or Codes of Conduct can erase these facts, and to deny the reality or censor Palestinian voices or blame them for the deaths is itself a racist act.

Instead, we should recognise that Israel is an apartheid state, facing Palestinian resistance (a right in international law) in the Occupied Territories (West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and Gaza); inside Israel; and with refugees in the Middle East and worldwide.

To sustain repression, Israel relies on international support – military, economic, financial, diplomatic – principally from the US but also from Britain, where the story began. Withdrawing that support can be our contribution to ending Israeli apartheid.

Palestinian civil society: reject biased IHRA definition

Before the Labour NEC voted to accept the IHRA definition and all 11 examples of anti-Semitism, Palestinian unions and organisations spelled out their opposition. Palestinian civil society urges the UK Labour Party and unions to reject IHRA’s false, anti-Palestinian definition which seeks to conflate anti-Semitism with criticism of Israel. This definition aims to silence criticism of Israeli policies that clearly violate Palestinian human rights. This non-legally binding definition attempts to erase Palestinian history, demonise solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality, suppress freedom of expression, and shield Israel’s far-right regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid from effective measures of accountability in accordance to international law.

We concur with British Palestinian personalities who have asserted that: “[A]ny use by public bodies of the IHRA examples on anti-Semitism that either inhibits discussion relating...”
It was never implemented. Instead, amidst mass lobbying against repatriation, Israel set up a Transfer Committee to prevent a refugee return. Palestinian villages were levelled and "Absentees' property" managed by the Israeli government.

By contrast, Israel’s Law of Return, adopted on 5 July 1950, embodies the Zionist project to colonize Palestine, regardless of the Palestinians. It states “every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh [immigrant].”

Torture
Amnesty International’s report for 2017/18 states “Israeli soldiers and police and Israel Security Agency officers subjected Palestinian detainees, including children to torture and other ill-treatment with impunity, particularly during arrest and interrogation. Reported methods included beatings, slapping, painful shackling, sleep deprivation, use of stress positions and threats. No criminal investigations were opened into more than 1,000 complaints filed since 2001.”

Apartheid Wall
The Wall and its associated regime in the occupied Palestinian West Bank will annex some 46% of the area, isolating communities into Bantustans, ghettos and ”military zones”. In 2004 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the construction of Israel’s Apartheid Wall and its regime – of Israeli settlements, land confiscation, separate roads, permit systems and movement restrictions – is illegal under international law. The ICJ ruled that Israel must dismantle the Wall and make reparation for all the damage caused by its construction.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)
Governments, including the UK, failed to implement the IJC ruling which required them to bring Israel into line with the 4th Geneva Convention. Therefore, in 2005 Palestinian civil society issued a comprehensive call to the world.

Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, the Palestinian BDS call urges nonviolent pressure on Israeli until it complies with international law by:

● Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
● Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality
● Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194

BDS targets
The BDS movement has targeted settlement goods – produced on stolen Palestinian land; Veolia – for its role in the Jerusalem Light Railway and bus routes linking the settlements; G4S – for its involvement in Israeli prisons; artists accepting invites to perform in Israel; Israeli artists funded by the state to promote Brand Israel...

There has been occasional industrial action as after the murderous Israeli attack on the Turkish ship, the Mavi Marmara, attempting to deliver medical supplies to break the siege of Gaza. In response, dockers in Oakland, California refused to handle an Israeli Zim lines ship. This August, Tunisian dockers and campaigners forced Zim to end its trade with Tunisia.

But we expect social-justice oriented political parties, like Labour, and progressive trade unions to effectively contribute to ending British complicity in Israel’s system of oppression that denies us our rights, to protect the right to freedom of expression, and to stand on the right side of history. We expect them to help us in the struggle against apartheid and for equal rights of all humans irrespective of identity. Is this too much to expect?

full text and list of signatories here: https://tinyurl.com/y9egr2mh