
THE BERTRAND RUSSELL PEACE FOUNDATION

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RUSSELL TRIBUNAL ON PALESTINE

Preparations for the Tribunal continue, as this new bulletin shows.

We call for the creation of a Russell Tribunal on Palestine. This Tribunal will work rigorously and in the same spirit as the Tribunal on Vietnam that sat in 1967, under the presidency of Jean-Paul Sartre. The Tribunal will have to judge the breaches of international law, of which the Palestinians are victims, and which deprive the Palestinian people of a sovereign State.

The Advisory Opinion given by the International Court of Justice of The Hague on the 9th of July, 2004 sums up those violations, and concludes, in particular, with the obligation for Israel to dismantle the Wall and to compensate the Palestinians for all the damage suffered from its construction. This Opinion recalls, in its §163,D, that ‘All States are under an obligation not to recognise the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction; all State parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of the 12th of August 1949 have in addition the obligation, while respecting the United Nations Charter and international law, to ensure compliance by Israel with international law as embodied in that Convention’.

This Opinion has been confirmed on the 24th of July 2004, by the resolution ES-10/15 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted by 150 Member States. The General Assembly ‘demands that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations as mentioned in the advisory opinion’ and ‘calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations as mentioned in the advisory opinion’.

Drawing in particular on the Advisory Opinion and the UN resolution, the Russell Tribunal on Palestine will reaffirm the primacy of international law as the basis for the settlement of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It will identify breaches to the application of the law and will condemn all the perpetrators before international public opinion. Your support of this Tribunal will give it the moral weight necessary to advance the cause of justice and law in this part of the world. Thanking you for your attention and your response to this appeal, and with cordial greetings.

Ken Coates, Chairman of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation,
Nurit Peled, Sakharov Prize 2001, **Leila Shahid**, General Delegate of
Palestine to the European Union, Belgium, Luxembourg

‘May this Tribunal **prevent the crime of silence**’... declared Bertrand Russell to define the spirit and the objective of the International War Crimes Tribunal constituted in 1966 to investigate crimes committed in Vietnam and judge them according to international law. Initiated by Lord Russell, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950, and supported by eminent intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, who chaired the Tribunal, Lelio Basso, Günther Anders, James Baldwin, Simone de Beauvoir, Lazaro Cardenas, Stokely Carmichael, Isaac Deutscher, Gisèle Halimi, Laurent Schwartz ... this Tribunal was named the Russell Tribunal.

The Russell Tribunal has no legal character but acts as a court of the people, a Tribunal of conscience, faced with injustices and violations of international law, that are not dealt with by existing international jurisdictions, or that are recognised but continue with complete impunity due to the lack of political will of the international community.

Today, and in the same spirit, the Bertrand Russell Foundation supports the setting up of a Russell Tribunal to examine the violations of international law, of which the Palestinians are victims, and that prevent the Palestinian People from exercising their rights to a sovereign State.

This Tribunal has been named the Russell Tribunal on Palestine. It will reaffirm the supremacy of international law as the basis for a solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It will identify all the failings to the implementation of this right, and will condemn all the parties responsible for these failings, in full view of international public opinion.

It will thus examine the various responsibilities that lead to the persistence of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by Israel and the non-application of the United Nations resolutions, from Resolution 181 of the 29th of November 1947, on the partition of Palestine, to the Resolution ES-10/15 of the 20th of July 2004, that acknowledges the Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – of the 9th of July 2004 – on the construction of the Wall by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and requests all the UN Member States to acquit themselves of their legal obligations as defined by the ICJ Opinion. The responsibilities of Israel and also of other states, particularly the United States and the Member States of the European Union, the Arab States and the international organizations concerned (United Nations, the European Union, the Arab League) will be scrutinised.

The Tribunal also aims, by this approach, to contribute to the mobilisation and involvement of civil society in all the states concerned with the question of Palestine.

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine is composed of personalities from all states, including Israel, which will be one of the states investigated. The legitimacy of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine does not come from a government or any political party but from the prestige, professional interests and commitment to fundamental rights of the Members that constitute this Tribunal.

Members of the Support Committee (2008)

Madam Nguyen Thi Bin Former Vice-President, Vietnam, **Ahmed Ben Bella** First President, Algeria, **Milan Kucan** Former President, Slovenia, **Andreas Van**

Agt Former Prime Minister, Netherlands, **Tariq Ali** Writer, UK, **Henri Alleg** Journalist, France, **Martin Almada** Lawyer, Writer, Right Livelihood Award 2002, Paraguay, **Kader Asmal** Professor, Former Minister, MP, South Africa, **Raymond Aubrac (and Lucie Aubrac †)** Former Members of the French Resistance, France, **Etienne Balibar** Professor Emeritus, France, **Anna Balletbo** President of Fundació Internacional Olof Palme, Spain, **Russell Banks** Writer, USA, **Mohammed Bedjaoui** Former President of the International Court of Justice (The Hague), Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Algeria, **Amar Bentoumi** President Emeritus of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Algeria, **John Berger** Writer, UK, **Howard Brenton** Writer, UK, **Carmel Budiardjo** Right Livelihood Award 1995, UK, **Judith Butler** Professor, USA, **Monique Chemillier-Gendreau** Professor Emeritus, France, **Noam Chomsky** Professor MIT, USA, **Vicenzo Consolo** Writer, Italy, **Jonathan Cook** Writer, Journalist, Israel, **Georges Corm** Writer, Former Minister of Finance, Lebanon, **Mairead Corrigan Maguire** Nobel Peace Prize 1976, Northern Ireland, **Miguel Angel Estrella** Pianist, Former Ambassador to UNESCO, Argentine, **Irene Fernandez** Right Livelihood Award 2005, Malaysia, **Norman Finkelstein** Writer, USA, **Cees Flinterman** Director of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Netherlands, **Eduardo Galeano** Writer, Uruguay, **Johan Galtung** Founder and Co-director of Transcend, Right Livelihood Award 1987, Norway, **Geraud de Geouffre de la Pradelle** Professor Emeritus, France, **Juan Goytisolo** Writer, Spain, **Trevor Griffiths** Writer, UK, **Gisele Halimi** Lawyer, Former Ambassador to UNESCO, France, **Jeff Halper** Coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Israel, **Mohammed Harbi** Historian, Algeria, **Eric Hazan** Writer, France, **Stephane Hessel** Ambassador, France, **François Houtart** Professor Emeritus, Belgium, **Albert Jacquard** Professor, France, **Alain Joxe** Director of Studies at the EHESS, France, **Naomi Klein** Writer, USA, **Felicia Langer** Lawyer, Writer, Right Livelihood Award 1990, Germany, **Paul Laverty** Screenwriter, UK, **Ken Loach** Filmmaker, UK, **José Antonio Martin Pallin** Magistrado Emérito Sala II, Tribunal Supremo, Spain, **François Maspero** Writer, France, **Gustave Massiah** Chairman of CRID, France, **Avi Mograbi** Filmmaker, Israel, **Radhia Nasraoui** Human Rights Lawyer, Tunisia, **Susie Orbach** Professor, UK, **Simone Paris de Bollardiére** Movement for Non-violence Alternative, France, **Tamar Pelleg-Sryck** Human Rights Lawyer, Israel, **Artur Pestana 'Pepetela'** Writer, Angola, **Jeremy Pikser** Writer, USA, **Harold Pinter** Writer, Nobel Prize for Literature 2005, UK, **François Rigaux** Professor Emeritus, Belgium, **Jacqueline Rose** Professor, UK, **Eric Rouleau**, Writer, Former Ambassador, France, **François Roux** Lawyer, France, **Jean Salmon** Professor Emeritus, ULB, Belgium, **Elias Sanbar** Writer, Palestine, **José Saramago** Nobel Prize for Literature 1998, Portugal, **Raji Surani** Vice-President of the FIDHs, Palestine, **Vandana Shiva** Right Livelihood Award 1993, India, **Sulak Sivaraksa** Professor, Right Livelihood Award 1995, Thailand, **Philippe Texier** Magistrate and Member of the UN Human Rights Committee, France, **Gerard Toulouse** Physician, France, **Andy de la Tour**

Actor/Screenwriter, UK, **Sir Brian Urquhart** Former Undersecretary-General of the United Nations, UK, **Itala Vivian** Professor, Italy, **Naomi Wallace** Playwright/Screenwriter, USA, **Michel Warschawski** Activist, Israel, **Francisco Whitaker** Right Livelihood Award 2006, Brazil, **Betty Williams** Nobel Peace Prize 1976, Northern Ireland, **Jody Williams** Nobel Peace Prize 1997, USA.

Call for contribution

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine aims to be a high quality moral, intellectual and scientific contribution, with the purpose of restoring rights and dignity to a people. It is open to any qualified person who feels they can contribute as expert, witness, assistant in the organisation of the Tribunal, or of a national support Committee. Essential financial support is welcome.

Organising Committee of the Tribunal

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Footnote

1. Speech by Bertrand Russell to the First Meeting of Members of the War Crimes Tribunal, London, 13 November 1966 in *Autobiography* (Allen & Unwin, 1969) vol. III, pp 215.