

PRESS RELEASE

CONFERENCE IN SHEFFIELD 26TH NOVEMBER

Launch of Sheffield Palestine Coalition against Israeli Apartheid

The conference held on Saturday 26th November, at Victoria Hall, 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.

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.

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 – the Trades Council, Kairos Sheffield, Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine and – 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.

The 90 participants heard testimony from 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 and the impact on workers of the political situation; 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.

The organisers would welcome 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 Trades 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 Defense Coalition (LDC)
 - Andrew Feinstein- Former ANC MP, author and political analyst
 - Mike Reed – Manchester Chair of Amnesty International UK.