



New Zealand Geographical Society

Executive Committee

Tēnā koutou,

The Executive Committee of the New Zealand Geographic Society is joining other professional organisations in recognising our moral and professional responsibility to speak out against the war crimes in Gaza and act beyond symbolic solidarity.

While we have not traditionally issued statements of this kind, the gravity and urgency of this humanitarian crisis call for a reflection of our values, collective commitment, and responsibility as a community.

Similarly to international legal bodies, we recognize the health, psychological, social, economic, educational, and structural collapse that the state of Israel has exacted on Gaza alongside widespread loss of life. As a collective of educators and researchers in geography, we have also watched with alarm as all of Gaza's higher education institutions and [almost all schools have been destroyed or significantly damaged](#). Almost a million children in Gaza have had their education severely disrupted, and [17,000 have been killed](#).

Drawing on [recommendations from international experts in disarmament law](#), we call for the New Zealand Government to:

1. Stop trade with Israel

Despite the [Joint Statement on Humanitarian Situation in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories](#), [every signatory continues to trade](#) with Israel. Companies profiting from activities in the occupied Palestinian territories have been [specifically criticised](#) by the United Nations Special Rapporteur. The requisite legislation could be put in place by parliament agreeing to support Greens co-leader [Chlöe Swarbrick's private members bill](#) to "sanction unlawful occupation of Palestine". That bill draws on the existing [Russia Sanctions Act](#) passed in 2022 over the Ukraine war.

2. Change immigration rules

New Zealand has already created a [special visa](#) category for Ukrainians and their families. The same could be done for Palestinians on the basis of family reunification.

3. Order an intelligence inquiry

The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security can exercise his powers under the Intelligence and Security Act 2017 to open an inquiry into direct or indirect intelligence sharing with Israel, specifically through the Five Eyes network. Four of the five members

of Five Eyes are signatories to the joint statement, but there is currently no way of knowing whether New Zealand's contribution is aiding Israel's military actions.

4. Refer Netanyahu to the International Criminal Court

Using starvation as a method of warfare is recognised as a war crime. It is thus appropriate to refer the Israeli prime minister to the International Criminal Court for prosecution.

The position of the executive committee of the New Zealand Geographical Society is that in times of humanitarian crises, professional silence and inaction is not neutrality but complicity. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the current plans of the state of Israel to occupy the entire Gaza strip, the blockades against aid, and the continued destruction of human life. We draw on our country's previous stands for what is right, such as our nuclear free policy.

Our statement will be published on our website and written up in a letter to send to the Minister of Trade and Investment and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Todd McClay, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Winston Peters. It will also be sent to the International Geographical Union to register our position.

Ngā mihi,



Professor Kelly Dombroski

President, NZGS

On behalf of the members of the executive committee of the New Zealand Geographical Society.