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PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Challenging the UNHRC
Report "From Occupation to
Genocide": A Rebuttal



JULY 2025



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In July 2025, UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese submitted a 21,000-word report to the UN Human Rights Council alleging that Israel is guilty of genocide, apartheid, and economic exploitation of Palestinians. Titled *From the Economy of Occupation to the Economy of Genocide*, the report calls for sanctions, arms embargoes, and corporate boycotts.

Our analysis finds that the report is legally imprecise, methodologically flawed, and ideologically driven. It omits critical context—including terrorism, war, and rejected peace offers—and misapplies international law to delegitimise the State of Israel. This summary outlines key counterpoints for UK policymakers.

Key Findings

1. Misuse of the Term “Genocide”

- The report uses the word “genocide” 57 times yet omits all mention of Hamas, including the 7 October 2023 massacre, ongoing rocket attacks, and calls for Jewish extermination.
- Under the 1948 Genocide Convention, genocide requires specific intent to destroy a group “as such.” There is no evidence that Israel intends to destroy the Palestinian people. On the contrary, the population in Gaza has increased by 77% since 2000 (UN data).
- Israel continues to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza during conflict, including fuel, food, medical supplies, and warnings to evacuate prior to military operations—actions incompatible with genocidal intent.

2. The “Apartheid” Allegation Is Legally and Factually Unsound

- Apartheid under international law (Rome Statute and Apartheid Convention) refers to systematic racial oppression. Israeli Arabs comprise 21% of Israel’s citizenry, vote, serve in parliament, judiciary, and military, and lead public institutions.
- Legal disparities in the West Bank stem from unresolved territorial disputes and the application of different legal systems to different populations under interim agreements—not racial segregation.
- No other conflict zone using dual legal systems (e.g., Cyprus) is labelled apartheid.

3. “Economic Exploitation” Claims Ignore Shared Dependencies and Agreements

- Israel’s economy is not reliant on Palestinian resources, nor does it exploit them in colonial fashion. The territories lack exploitable resources (e.g., oil, rare minerals).
- The Oslo Accords established agreed frameworks for economic cooperation, including shared utilities and labour arrangements. These are mutual, not unilateral.
- The report omits mention of Palestinian Authority corruption, Hamas’s misappropriation of aid, and internal mismanagement—factors acknowledged by the UN itself (CESCR, 2023) as major barriers to Palestinian development.
- Companies providing public services to both Jewish and Arab populations (e.g., the Jerusalem Light Rail) are unfairly targeted under a politicised narrative of “genocidal profiteering.”
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Policy Recommendations

- 1. Reject the report as a credible legal or policy document. Its findings do not meet the evidentiary standards of international law.
- 2. Call for greater scrutiny of the appointment and accountability mechanisms of UN Special Rapporteurs.
- 3. Affirm that UK foreign policy must rest on fact-based, balanced assessments—recognising both Israeli and Palestinian rights.
- 4. Condemn the use of legal terminology (e.g., genocide, apartheid) as political tools that trivialise real atrocities and undermine genuine justice efforts.

Legal and Regulatory Frameworks at Stake

Law/AgencyRelevance

Equality Act 2010

Bars nationality-based discrimination and harassment (ss.13, 26, 29).

Competition Act 1998

Prohibits anti-competitive agreements, collusion, and market abuse.

CMA, DEFRA, BEIS

Can investigate sourcing distortions, inconsistent ESG claims, and supply chain discrimination.

ASA (CAP Code 4.1)

Prohibits offensive or misleading marketing based on nationality or religion.

Policy Recommendations

- 1. **Voluntary Code of Conduct**
- 2. **Develop a Retail Sourcing Ethics Code with non-discrimination clauses, global consistency standards, and transparency mechanisms.**
- 3. **Regulatory Clarification and Oversight**
- 4. **Encourage the CMA, ASA, DEFRA, and Groceries Code Adjudicator to publish guidance on political boycotts and their legal/market consequences.**
- 5. **Consumer Reporting Tools**
- 6. **Launch an official platform for public complaints about politically motivated and potentially discriminatory sourcing decisions.**
- 7. **Public Accountability Measures**
- 8. **Institute a public report or “Fair Trade Scorecard” naming retailers engaged in politicised or discriminatory sourcing practices.**
- 9. **Recognition of Anti-Zionism as Antisemitism**
- 10. **Encourage Parliament and regulators to apply the IHRA definition when evaluating anti-Israel campaigns and their social impacts.**

Conclusion

Retail-driven boycotts that target Israel on ideological grounds undermine fairness, distort markets, and may foster antisemitism. Parliament is urged to:

- Investigate these practices.
- Ensure regulatory bodies uphold the principles of non-discrimination, fair competition, and ethical consistency.
- Reinforce that foreign policy is a matter for government, not activist-influenced commercial policy.
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The UK must not allow its ethical commerce landscape to be distorted by political agendas or hostile narratives cloaked in rights-based language.