

Report Part Title: The Main Arenas of Assault on Israel's Legitimacy in the UK

Report Title: Building a Political Firewall against the Assault on Israel's Legitimacy
London as a Case Study

Report Subtitle: Version A

Report Author(s): Reut Institute

Reut Institute (2010)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep10573.10>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Reut Institute is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to this content.

JSTOR

Chapter 3:

The Main Arenas of Assault on Israel's Legitimacy in the UK

53. **The assault on Israel's legitimacy is mainly concentrated in specific arenas,** such as the judiciary; academia and campuses; churches; and, most vigorously, the trade unions.

The judicial system

54. **Certain groups exploit the legal arena to attack Israel.** These efforts comprise attempts to utilize laws of universal jurisdiction in order to charge Israeli generals and politicians with war crimes; levy proceedings against Israel in the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice; and file charges against corporations conducting business with Israel.
55. **London is a hub for such 'lawfare'**²⁶ – In the UK, Holland, Spain, Belgium, and Norway, a network of lawyers has been formed with the purpose of compiling a list of IDF officers that should be charged with war crimes. According to reports, the lawyers receive information from pro-Palestinian activists that track invitations extended by pro-Israeli organizations to IDF officials and Israeli politicians.²⁷
56. **Several attempts have been made to arrest Israeli officials in the UK,** such as an arrest warrant issued by a British court against Tzipi Livni for alleged war crimes she conducted as Israel's foreign minister during Operation Cast Lead, and an arrest warrant issued against Major General Doron Almog, who avoided arrest by remaining on an El Al airplane after landing in London. Recently, Israel's Intelligence and Atomic Energy Minister Dan Meridor canceled a scheduled trip to England for fear that he would be arrested upon arrival.²⁸
57. **Hamas' role in 'lawfare'** – [The Intelligence & Information Center](#) (MALAM) cited the role that a Hamas “ministry of justice” committee called Al-Tawthiq (Documentation) claimed to have played in orchestrating the British arrest warrant

²⁶ Lawfare is defined as "the use of the law as a weapon of war, or, more specifically, the abuse of the law and judicial systems to achieve strategic military or political ends." Furthermore, 'lawfare' "consists of the *negative* manipulation of international and national human rights laws to accomplish purposes other than, or contrary to, those for which they were originally enacted." See: [The Lawfare Project](#)

²⁷ UK Foreign Secretary William Hague has committed the government to amending the law in question as a resolution to this manifestation of 'lawfare'. [Haaretz](#), 10/27/10. However, venues in which London-based groups can assault Israel in the judicial arena abound. See [Free Gaza Movement](#).

²⁸ See The [Guardian](#) 12/14/09, [BBC News](#) 09/12/05 and [Ynet](#) 11/1/10

against Tzipi Livni. The report concludes that "the broad scope of the committee's activities clearly indicates the magnitude of the resources the de-facto Hamas administration has invested in its efforts to slander Israel after Operation Cast Lead and exploit the findings of the Goldstone Report."²⁹

Academia / campus

58. **Recent years have seen a changing climate within British universities in terms of sentiment directed both at Israel and at Jewish students.**³⁰
59. **Islamist influence in British universities has increased** through large donations by Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other Islamic sources that have set up university chairs and centers of academic study in British universities, such as in LSE, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Durham, Exeter, and others.³¹ Moreover, a Quilliam Foundation study demonstrates how a small group of extremist students can take over a university Islamic Society and transform it into a vehicle through which to exert their ideological agenda.³²
60. The resulting trend can be linked to the **parallel strengthening of the campaign to assault the legitimacy of Israel on UK campuses**. On many campuses, literature demonizing Israel is ubiquitous, and in some, Jewish students have been physically attacked and abused.³³
61. **Campus delegitimization activities primarily manifest in conducting Israel Apartheid week;**³⁴ **twinning British and Palestinian universities,**³⁵ **in some**

²⁹ See: [The Intelligence & Information Center](#), 12/17/09; [NRG](#), 20/12/09 (Hebrew).

³⁰ See an example in the Quilliam foundation's [report](#). In addition, several people we spoke to discussed this trend.

³¹ Simcox R, "[A Degree of Influence: The Funding of Strategically Important Subjects in UK Universities](#)", [The Centre for Social Cohesion](#) 2009.

³² Quilliam report op cited.

³³ Pro-Israeli speakers are frequently disrupted on campuses, such as a mob assault on then Deputy Ambassador to the UK Talya Lador-Fresher in Manchester (see [Robin Shepherd's blog](#)), while speakers opposed to Israel's existence such as Azzam Tamimi are welcomed. See this [youtube clip](#) and the [Intelligence and Information Center](#).

³⁴ **Israel Apartheid Week** is an annual event organized by anti-Zionist groups primarily in university campuses around the world with the aim of creating a link between Israel and the former apartheid regime in South Africa and ultimately to promote an international boycott. Israel Apartheid Week began in Toronto in 2005 and then spread to other places around the globe, including Britain. It takes place in a variety of UK universities, including LSE, UCL, and Oxford. See the [Jerusalem Post](#).

³⁵ In recent years, a number of universities – including the University of Manchester, East London University, Exeter University, University of London, Leeds University, and Liverpool University – have initiated twinning activities with Palestinian campuses. In some cases, these universities

cases Universities in Gaza who are affiliated with Hamas; and mobilizing 'Occupation Sit-Ins' to demand divestment from Israel.³⁶

The churches

62. **The Methodist Church takes critical position against Israel** – In June-July 2010, the UK Methodist Annual Conference overwhelmingly passed a policy recommending boycotting goods produced in Israeli settlements and ending the “Siege of Gaza.”³⁷ Additionally, in a report condemned by Jewish communal organizations as “unbalanced, factually and historically flawed,” the Methodists blamed Israel almost exclusively for obstructing Middle East peace. While the above may not qualify as delegitimization, the call to review whether Zionism was compatible with Methodist beliefs is an explicit experimentation with delegitimization. The church body announced it would encourage Methodists across the UK to follow suit.³⁸
63. **PSC involvement in the motion** – Members of the working party that formulated the recommendations and the accompanying 54-page document included chairman of the York branch of the PSC.³⁹ Among main sources of the documents were activists on record for supporting full boycotts of Israel, such as Israeli-born academics Ilan Pappé and Avi Shlaim, and Jeff Halper from the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions.⁴⁰
64. **The radicalization of churches towards Israel** may also be related to the activity of several organizations that promote an anti-Israel agenda, such as Sabeel, Pax Christi, and the Amos Trust.⁴¹
65. **Another important benchmark in this process has been the adoption by several British churches of the Kairos Document**, which urges a boycott of

twinned with Palestinian universities affiliated with Hamas. See the [Reut Blog](#), [Ynet](#), 3/19/07 and [Twinning with Palestine](#).

³⁶ **Sit-ins** involve pro-Palestinian activists taking over a campus facility and refusing to leave until the university accedes to a list of demands, primarily focused on divestment. During Operation Cast Lead, there were 21 ‘Occupations’ across the UK ranging from 50-200 participants. They involved groups such as Stop the War Coalition, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), Socialist Workers Student Society (SWSP), the PSC, and Action Palestine

³⁷ See: [Harry's Place](#)

³⁸ See [The Jewish Chronicle](#) and the [Jerusalem Post](#).

³⁹ The [Jewish Chronicle](#) *ibid*.

⁴⁰ The [Jerusalem Post](#)

⁴¹ On Sabeel, see: [Jerusalem Post](#); on Pax Christi, see: [NGO Monitor](#); on Amos Trust, see: [Harry's Place](#).

Israel and has provided a rallying point for those wishing to promote Israel's delegitimization.⁴²

66. **The following chapters focus on a specific arena – the trade unions – and specific catalysts – the PSC and Organizations who find common cause with Hamas – in order to shed light on prevalent strategies and modes of operation.**

⁴² The document condones an 'option B' of “armed resistance” as carried out by “some political parties,” and labels armed attacks on Israelis as “legal resistance.” See: [Harry's Place](#).

In addition to the Methodist Church, the Kairos Document has also been referred by the Church of England General Synod to one of its standing committees. Its ethical investments advisory group described the Kairos document as "an important and fresh theological resource," which should be studied by Church groups with "care and prayerful attention." See [The Jewish Chronicle](#) and the [Daily Telegraph](#). Knowledgeable sources also suggest it is likely to be raised at the next Baptist Assembly.