

Funding the Future

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Jeremy Corbyn [asked this question](#) of Angela Rayner, in her role as Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday:

Yesterday 86 people were killed in Gaza by Israeli forces. A further 56 were shot dead while queuing for food to try to sustain themselves under the occupation of the Israeli forces. Israel stands condemned for acts of genocide, for war crimes, for its occupation of Gaza and for its activities in the west bank. Let me ask the Deputy Prime Minister two questions. Why does Britain still supply parts for the F-35 jets that have been used to take so much life in Gaza, and how has this country got to a situation in which we stand on the wrong side of international law where war crimes and genocide are concerned? Will the Deputy Prime Minister support my private Member's Bill, calling for an independent inquiry into how our policies evolved into this parlous situation?

She replied:

Israel's recent action is appalling and counterproductive, and we strongly oppose the expansion of military operations, settler violence and the blocking of humanitarian aid. We have suspended free trade agreement talks and sanctioned extremists supporting settler expansion in the west bank. It is a long-standing principle that genocide is determined by competent international courts and not by Governments, and we do not sell arms directly to the Israel Defence Forces when that might breach international humanitarian law.

The italics were added by me.

Think about what Rayner said for a moment. According to her, genocide cannot have taken place until an international criminal court says it has. But that makes no sense at all. Someone has to think it has, and bring a case suggesting that is the case, before any court can decide whether that is true or not. So, it is quite impossible to claim, as Rayner and the UK government are, that genocide has not taken place because a court has not decided it has, because one of the competent authorities capable of asking an international court to decide on this issue might be the UK government. In other words, it can decide if it thinks genocide has taken place before an international court confirms that it is the case. Indeed, it might be obliged to do so. In other words, she talked total

nonsense. Of course it is possible to suggest genocide has taken place before an international court decides that is the case, and even if it never does so.

What Rayner said was nonsense promoted to defend Israel's actions, with which the government of which she is a part is complicit. Anyone who can talk total nonsense about genocide in this way is not fit to be prime minister.