

## My question is, to where does this lead?

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As the [FT notes](#) this morning:

*A UN-backed panel declared a famine in Gaza for the first time on Friday, in a damning assessment of the devastating conditions caused by Israel's 22-month-long offensive in the Palestinian enclave.*

*The report, which came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government signed off on plans to invade Gaza City, follows months of warnings from aid groups that the restrictions on food deliveries Israel has imposed during its war with Hamas were causing a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.*

As they noted, the report came from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which said the famine was “entirely man-made”.

As the FT added:

*In a statement alongside the findings — which marked only the fifth time the panel has declared a famine anywhere in the world — the UN's emergency relief co-ordinator, Tom Fletcher, said the catastrophic conditions “could have been prevented if we had been allowed”.*

Let me be clear, then, that this is not as such a famine - although its impact is the same as a famine. This is the deliberate starvation of a population as an act of war. It is genocide. It is an act of war. It is a crime against humanity. It is deliberate. It is an action for which many must be held to account.

Way back in October 2023, I agonised over whether to comment on what Israel was doing in Gaza and decided that I must.

I agonised because I knew how venomous were those who used the accusation of antisemitism against anyone who criticised Israel as if that state and being Jewish were synonymous. I knew that the two were not. I knew what antisemitism was. And I knew that the term was being abused, and had been abused for political advantage by some

who should most certainly have known better. What I also knew was the grief that being accused of being antisemitic gave rise to. I have been accused of being so for previous comments about Israel and its actions.

What I did, however, realise was that whatever Israel was embarking on in October 2023 was something quite different from what we had seen before. This was not the inappropriate, malicious, vindictive, and deadly racially motivated skirmishing intended to oppress and contain a population that we had seen before. This was, very obviously, on a different scale, and from the outset, the possibility that annihilation of the Palestinian population of Gaza was the agenda was clear, even if that idea was so abhorrent that there was a reluctance to accept that fact. As a result, I decided I had no choice but to make a comment and condemn the actions of Israel, which, from the outset, were clearly in contravention of international law.

The association between Israel and Judaism has absolutely nothing to do with that condemnation. There has not once been any association between my condemnation of Israel's actions and antisemitic thought. Those who suggest otherwise are wrong. What they are claiming is that Jews could not commit the sorts of crimes that we have seen, and therefore, we are wrong for suggesting that they might have committed them. As such, they are claiming that Jews are distinct and separate from other forms of humanity, which is itself, of course, a form of discrimination that can be described as antisemitic.

The reality is that Netanyahu and his government, and many in his own forces, have committed crimes as human beings against fellow human beings. That is what they might stand trial for. Amongst the evidence that should be brought against this table, published by the FT this morning, based upon the UN analysis:



All of these people are at risk of dying from starvation. For one third of the population of Gaza, that threat is imminent. For most of the rest, it is not going to be long delayed. And in the meantime, Israel is not facilitating aid but is instead increasing its tax on the

people of Gaza.

Meanwhile, the British government has still not recognised Palestine as a state.

Meanwhile, the countries of Europe have not combined to use their military to deliver aid to the beaches of Gaza, which they could have, but for their fear of upsetting the combined fascist alliance between Netanyahu and Trump.

In that case, let's not pretend that our countries are uninvolving observers of this genocide. Many of the political leaders of Europe are participants in this process, with some honourable exceptions who stood apart from the crowd, like Ireland, being noted. Those who have not acted have actively supported this genocide. Many, including the UK, have supplied some of the arms that Israel uses to undertake this activity. And they have stood by and refused to supply the aid that is needed in ways that are possible.

I do not think it is a coincidence that as the politics of countries like the UK move towards the far right, this silence about, and involvement in, a genocide has taken place. Israel has "othered" Palestinians, just as we are seeing migrants being "othered" in the USA, in the UK, in France, in Germany, and in very many other countries. Cruelty and the suffering of others are being normalised.

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