



Manifesto for the Non-Recognition of the State of Israel

Legal, ethical and political grounds for a necessary rupture

This manifesto is written by one person alone.

I do not represent an organisation, a party, a movement. I am a European citizen who has travelled extensively for work and met people of every background — social, religious, political, geographical. I have Jewish friends, Muslim friends, Catholic friends, atheists. This diversity is not decorative backdrop to my life: it is how I learned to think.

On this conflict I have listened to everyone, starting with those closest to me. My Jewish friends put me to a hard test. I sought to understand their point of view, pursued it seriously, considered it. But in the end I found myself facing something I cannot call an argument: only justifications for acts that international law defines as unlawful. And I understood that continuing to stay silent — so as not to hurt a friendship, or not to appear what I am not — would have been dishonest. Towards them, before anyone else.

I believe in the norms of international law not as rhetorical convenience, but as the real foundation of civilised coexistence. I believe in Western morality in its oldest and most uncomfortable sense: the morality of people, not of politics and economics. On this issue, the moral bottom has been reached. The point at which silence ceases to be prudence and becomes complicity.

If you share this conviction, this manifesto is yours too.

To whom this manifesto is addressed

This manifesto is written for two categories of people whom dominant public discourse tends to artificially oppose, but who in fact share the same moral wager: that the law applies to everyone, without geopolitical exceptions.

It is addressed, first and foremost, to all those — of any nationality, culture or religious affiliation — who are not morally prepared to accept the abuses committed by the State of Israel against civilian populations in Gaza and Lebanon. To those who have seen images of white phosphorus falling on houses and have decided that silence is no longer a tenable position. To those who recognise that systematic and unanswered oppression generates violence — and that attributing that violence exclusively to the oppressed, ignoring the structural conditions that produce it, is an act of moral blindness before it is a political one.

It is addressed, in equal measure and with equal force, to every Israeli citizen and every Jew of the diaspora who is today discriminated against, ostracised or blamed for the actions of a government they did not choose, contest, or have openly fought against. They are not responsible for the military and political choices of their State. Identifying them with those choices is an error this manifesto rejects with the same clarity with which it rejects the conduct of the Israeli State. Their dissenting voice is not a marginal exception: it is proof that there exists, within Israeli society, a critical conscience that deserves respect and solidarity, not stigma.

These two groups are not in contradiction. They are two faces of a single question: is it possible for international law to be respected, and for no human being to pay for the wrongs they have not committed? This manifesto's answer is yes — and the condition for making it true is calling things by their name.

I. PREAMBLE

This manifesto arises from an act of rational conscience, not from emotional impulse. Those who sign this document have observed, with growing intellectual dismay, the evolution of a pattern of State conduct that can no longer be explained within the ordinary categories of the use of force in armed conflict. The point of no return was the systematic and documented use of white phosphorus over densely populated civilian areas — a

weapon whose indiscriminate and incendiary nature is unequivocally prohibited under customary and conventional international humanitarian law.

This declaration is not an act of antisemitism, nor a denial of the Jewish people's right to existence and security. It is an act of fidelity to international law — the same legal order the world built upon the ruins of the Second World War with the promise of "never again". A promise that signatory States have a legal and moral obligation to honour, even when that means withdrawing recognition from those who have repeatedly and structurally violated it.

II. THE TRIGGERING EVENT: THE USE OF WHITE PHOSPHORUS

2.1 Nature of the weapon

White phosphorus (WP) is a chemical substance that ignites spontaneously on contact with oxygen, burning at temperatures above 800°C. Once ignited, it continues to burn until it exhausts available oxygen or is completely consumed. When it comes into contact with human tissue, it penetrates deeply and continues to burn internally, causing extremely serious injuries — often lethal, and in any case permanent.

2.2 Documentation of use

Human Rights Watch documented, with photographic evidence, videos and direct testimonies, the use of white phosphorus munitions by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in densely populated areas of the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon from October 2023. In both contexts, its use occurred in civilian urban areas, in violation of the principle of distinction and the prohibition of weapons with indiscriminate effects.

"Israeli forces have used white phosphorus in military operations in Lebanon and Gaza, putting civilians at risk of serious and long-term injuries." — Human Rights Watch, 12 October 2023

Similar findings were made by the Airwaves organisation and investigative units of major international media (The New York Times Visual Investigations, BBC Verify). The use was implicitly acknowledged by Israeli military sources who defended its legality by invoking an alleged compliance with international law — a claim that the signatories of this manifesto consider legally unfounded.

2.3 Legal characterisation

The use of white phosphorus in civilian urban areas constitutes a violation of Protocol III to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW, Geneva 1980), which governs incendiary weapons. In particular, this Protocol expressly prohibits the use of air-delivered or artillery-launched incendiary weapons against concentrations of civilians, regardless of the stated military intent.

Although white phosphorus is not formally classified as a chemical weapon under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC, 1993) when used as a smoke screen or marker, its deliberate use as an incendiary agent against civilian populations constitutes a war crime under Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

III. INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK VIOLATED

3.1 Customary International Humanitarian Law

Customary international humanitarian law, codified in the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), establishes binding principles erga omnes regardless of the ratification of specific conventions. Among them:

- Principle of distinction (ICRC Rule 1): parties to a conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives.
- Principle of proportionality (ICRC Rule 14): it is prohibited to launch an attack which may be expected to cause incidental civilian losses excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.
- Principle of precaution (ICRC Rule 15): all feasible precautions must be taken to avoid or minimise civilian casualties.
- Prohibition of indiscriminate weapons (ICRC Rule 71): weapons that by nature are incapable of distinguishing between civilians and combatants are prohibited.

The body of documentation produced by international organisations, independent observers and UN bodies attests to the structural and systematic violation of each of these principles in the context of Israeli military operations in Gaza and Lebanon.

3.2 Genocide Convention (1948)

The Republic of South Africa filed, on 29 December 2023, a case against the State of Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the 1948 Genocide Convention. The ICJ, by order of 26 January 2024, found the allegations plausible and issued provisional measures, ordering Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent acts that could fall within the scope of the Genocide Convention.

"The Court considers that at least some of the rights claimed by South Africa and for which it is seeking protection are plausible." — ICJ, Order of 26 January 2024, § 54

The fact that the highest international judicial authority did not dismiss the South African application, but instead found the genocide allegations plausible, represents a legally relevant datum of extraordinary gravity that no State can ignore.

3.3 Rome Statute and International Criminal Court

The ICC Prosecutor, Karim Khan, requested on 21 May 2024 the issuance of arrest warrants against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC issued those warrants on 21 November 2024. This is the first case in the Court's history in which arrest warrants have been issued against the leadership of a Western government or its strategic ally.

3.4 UN Resolutions

The United Nations General Assembly adopted, on 18 October 2023, Resolution ES-10/21 with 120 votes in favour, calling for an immediate humanitarian truce and respect for international law. The Security Council has been systematically paralysed by the United States' exercise of its veto power, blocking every binding ceasefire resolution.

This structural paralysis of the Security Council does not exempt Member States from their obligations under the UN Charter and customary international law. On the contrary, it requires States committed to upholding the international order to act through the legal instruments at their disposal — including sanctions, arms embargoes, suspensions from international bodies, and the refusal to recognise the violating conduct as lawful.

IV. LEGAL BASIS: CLARITY ON CATEGORIES

4.1 What "non-recognition" means in this manifesto

Precision is required, because precision is the condition of credibility. Positive international law draws a sharp distinction between two categories that public discourse tends to conflate: the existence of a State as a legal entity and the legitimacy of its conduct. Israel has existed as a State since 1948 and has been a member of the United Nations since 1949. No rule of current international law provides for the cancellation of a UN member State on account of violations committed by its organs. Those who sign this manifesto are aware of this, and do not intend to argue otherwise.

The "non-recognition" invoked in this document has a precise and legally grounded object: the refusal to recognise as lawful, as conforming to international law, the conduct of the State of Israel in its military operations in Gaza and Lebanon. This is precisely what the Articles on State Responsibility for Internationally Wrongful Acts (ARSIWA, ILC/UN 2001) require of other States in the face of serious violations of peremptory norms:

- Article 40: serious breaches of obligations arising under peremptory norms of general international law (*jus cogens*) — including the prohibition of genocide, international humanitarian law, and the prohibition of crimes against humanity.
 - Article 41: obligation of other States not to recognise as lawful the situation created by the serious breach, and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining it.
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The title of this manifesto — "non-recognition of the State of Israel" — is to be read in this light: not as an ontological denial of statehood, but as a political and moral refusal to confer legitimacy on conduct that systematically violates peremptory law. It is a deliberately sharp formula, chosen for its opening force and the clarity of the political signal it sends. The concrete legal content is that described in Section V.

4.2 The South Africa precedent: what holds and what does not

The South African precedent is often cited imprecisely. It must be clarified: the international community never "did not recognise" the State of South Africa as a legal entity. South Africa remained a UN member even during apartheid. What the international community did — and this is the relevant precedent — was to declare the regime's conduct illegitimate, suspend South Africa from specialised agencies, impose a mandatory arms embargo (Resolution 418, 1977) and progressively isolate the government until the

apartheid system collapsed in 1990. This is precisely the model this manifesto proposes to apply.

4.3 The question of selectivity

A legitimate criticism the signatories do not intend to evade: if the criterion were the use of incendiary weapons in urban areas or violations of international humanitarian law, the catalogue of States to which analogous measures should apply would be long — the United States in Vietnam, Iraq and Yemen; Russia in Chechnya, Syria and Ukraine; France in Algeria; Turkey against the Kurdish population. The signatories acknowledge this asymmetry and declare it explicitly: it is not proof of antisemitism, but it is certainly proof of the selectivity with which international law is applied. The correct response to this asymmetry is not paralysis or silence: it is the affirmation that the same standard must apply to all, and that beginning to apply it — even in one case — is more honest than never applying it at all.

V. CONCRETE MEASURES

If the "non-recognition of conduct" is the moral and political framework of this manifesto, the measures listed here are its concrete legal content. They are not symbolic proposals: they are instruments already provided for in international law, already applied in historical precedents, and already called for by UN experts, special rapporteurs and human rights organisations.

5.1 United Nations

The UN Charter, Article 6, provides for the expulsion of a member that has persistently violated the principles contained therein. Where the permanent veto makes that procedure impossible, Article 5 — suspension of rights and privileges — is to be applied through the General Assembly acting under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution (Resolution 377, 1950).

5.2 Specialised agencies and international bodies

Suspension of Israel's membership in UN specialised agencies (UNESCO, WHO, FAO, UNHRC) and bodies such as the OECD and the Council of Europe is demanded, until the cessation of operations in violation of international humanitarian law and full cooperation with the ICC.

5.3 Economic sanctions and arms embargo

A mandatory embargo on arms supplies, ammunition and dual-use military technologies to the State of Israel is demanded, analogous to that adopted against South Africa in 1977. Targeted economic sanctions are also demanded, with international verification mechanisms for their effective implementation.

VI. A NECESSARY DISTINCTION: STATE, GOVERNMENT, PEOPLE

The signatories wish to reaffirm forcefully a distinction they consider essential both legally and morally: this manifesto is not directed against the Israeli people, against Jewish citizens of Israel or the diaspora, nor against Jewish culture, history or tradition.

It is directed against the governmental choices and military conduct of a State that, through its organs, has repeatedly violated international law. The distinction between State and people is not a rhetorical nicety: it is a fundamental category of international law, enshrined in State responsibility as an entity distinct from the individual criminal responsibility of its rulers.

We recognise and support the voices of those Israeli citizens — that dissenting minority — who take to the streets, document and denounce their government's violations. Non-recognition of the State is not their silencing: it is, paradoxically, one of the strongest acts of support for their cause.

VII. FINAL DECLARATION

We, the undersigned, by virtue of our commitment to the principles of international law, the UN Charter, the 1948 Genocide Convention and the Rome Statute, declare:

1. We do not recognise the legitimacy of the current conduct of the State of Israel as conforming to the rules of international humanitarian law and the fundamental principles of the international order.
 2. We demand the immediate suspension of military operations in violation of international law, full cooperation with the International Criminal Court, and full implementation of the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice.
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3. We call upon States and international organisations to adopt the measures of suspension, exclusion and sanction described in this manifesto, until the restoration of State conduct in conformity with international law.
4. We affirm that respect for international law is non-negotiable, admits no geopolitical exceptions, and that any distinction between States that violate it based on their strategic positioning itself constitutes a violation of the principle of sovereign equality of States.

The white phosphorus burning over Gaza and Lebanon also burns the legitimacy of an international system that looks away. We do not look away.

LEGAL REFERENCES

Protocol III CCW — Geneva 1980 | Genocide Convention — 1948

Rome Statute Art. 8 — 1998 | ARSIWA Arts. 40-41 — ILC/UN 2001

ICJ — South Africa v. Israel — 26 January 2024 | ICC — Netanyahu & Gallant — 21 November 2024

HRW — White Phosphorus — 12 October 2023 | UNGA ES-10/21 — 27 October 2023

ICRC — Customary IHL Study (Henckaerts & Doswald-Beck, 2005)

UNSC Resolution 418 (1977) — South Africa Arms Embargo | UNGA 377(V) — Uniting for Peace — 1950
