



# ICAHD UK

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions  
הוועד הישראלי נגד הריסת בתים  
الحركة الإسرائيلية ضد هدم البيوت

## Submission to the Shami Chakrabarti Inquiry into Anti-Semitism in the Labour Party

from

ICAHD UK

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

ICAHD UK is pleased to present this submission in light of our work supporting the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICAHD) that is based in Jerusalem. Our membership is composed of Jews, Christians, Muslims and people of no faith who work for peace with justice for all in Israel/Palestine.

ICAHD is a human rights and peace organization established in 1997 to end Israel's Occupation over the Palestinians. Its main focus, its vehicle for resistance, has been the demolition of Palestinian homes in the Occupied Palestine Territory and within Israel proper. Over the years ICAHD has rebuilt 189 homes, done as non-violent political acts of resistance that have brought Israelis and Palestinians together to demonstrate that they refuse to be enemies and that there are partners for peace. The goal of ICAHD and its chapters abroad is the achievement of a just and sustainable solution for both people groups based on international law and universal human rights.

We have around 250 members in this country, many of whom, including our Director, are also members of the Labour Party. Our members in Jerusalem often brief visiting Labour MPs about the situation on the ground.

### The situation in the Labour Party

As in any large organisation there will be occasions when individuals lapse below expected standards, which we believe the Party has procedures for dealing with. In this context, however, ICAHD UK is very concerned that the recent allegations of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party seem to be part of a concerted campaign to denigrate those who criticise Israel and Zionism. This denigration often takes the form of equating any such criticism as anti-Semitic, and taking any allegation of anti-Semitism as proved. If this campaign succeeds, then the space for legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism will be greatly reduced, and support for the call from Palestinian civil society for non-violent BDS – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions – will be dismissed as anti-Semitic.

### Recommendations

ICAHD UK would like to make three recommendations to the Inquiry.

**First**, any new definition of anti-Semitism must not include any of the following:

1. support for a one state solution in Israel/Palestine with equal rights for both peoples;
2. naming Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories as apartheid or using the term



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ethnic cleansing in this connection or in reference to 1948.

3. advocating for BDS, whose aims are based on international law;

4. distinguishing between Judaism and Zionism (with all due respects to Rabbi Mirvis who holds a contrary opinion).

**Second**, we are deeply concerned by the proposal that training in anti-Semitism in the Labour Party be undertaken by the Jewish Labour Movement. Under its earlier name of Poale Zion this has been part of the Labour Party since 1916, and its members are fully entitled to advocate for Israel. But their politically committed position clearly disqualifies them from adjudicating on what constitutes anti-Semitism in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict. No doubt they would be equally unhappy about a pro-Palestinian Jewish organisation, such as Jews for Justice for Palestinians, having this role.

The question of who can provide objective training on what constitutes anti-Semitism, and whether this should be treated together with or separately from other forms of racism, requires attention. We would strongly suggest referring this issue to Professor David Feldman who is an expert in the field and vice-chair of the present Inquiry.

**Third**, we believe that, in the highly contested situation relating to Israel/Palestine, a misapplication of the “Macpherson principle” to conclude that any incident that is perceived to be anti-Semitic by the victim or any other person is in fact anti-Semitic would have a chilling effect on free speech. We do not believe that this is a safe or sensible interpretation of what Macpherson intended.

The principle, surely, should be that an incident which is claimed by one of the participants to be racist (including anti-Semitic) must be investigated as such, not that the result of the investigation should be prejudged.

The submission to the Inquiry by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, which we have seen, has a particularly clear section on the misuse of Macpherson and we would fully endorse their comments.

We hope these recommendations are helpful in assisting the Inquiry to reach a fair and balanced conclusion based on respect for justice and human rights.

- 10 June 2016.