
From: Office Mayor
Sent: Thursday, 30 May 2024 1:52 pm
To: Mataara Mai
Subject: RE: Rotorua Calls for an Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza NOW

Kia ora members of Mataara Mai

Thank you for your recent emails to Mayor Tania Tapsell.

Mayor Tapsell appreciates the importance of your correspondence and your strong advocacy for the people of Palestine. She will pass on your message to Government officials who have the ability to influence this situation.

Thank you again for getting in touch and for your strong advocacy on this very important issue.

Ngā mihi

Office of the Mayor

From: Mataara Mai <mataaramai@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 May 2024 7:33 pm
To: Tania Tapsell <Tania.Tapsell@rotorualc.nz>
Cc: Conan O'Brien <Conan.O'Brien@rotorualc.nz>; Don Paterson <Don.Paterson@rotorualc.nz>; Fisher Wang <Fisher.Wang@rotorualc.nz>; Gregg Brown <Gregg.Brown@rotorualc.nz>; Karen Barker <Karen.Barker@rotorualc.nz>; Lani Kereopa <Lani.Kereopa@rotorualc.nz>; Rawiri Waru <Rawiri.Waru@rotorualc.nz>; Robert Lee <Robert.Lee@rotorualc.nz>; Sandra Kai Fong <Sandra.KaiFong@rotorualc.nz>; Trevor Maxwell <Trevor.Maxwell@rotorualc.nz>
Subject: Rotorua Calls for an Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza NOW

Tēnā koe Tania me Te Kaunihera ō ngā Roto

I'm sure you're all aware of the atrocities happening in Palestine. For the past 8 months we, Mataara Mai, have ensured a presence of solidarity is maintained through weekly protests here in Rotorua. For 8 months we have received an abundance of support from our wider community which has lead us to this email to you, our Mayor.

You may have heard that the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor has applied for arrest warrants in the Situation of the State of Palestine.

The ICC prosecutor found reasonable grounds to believe that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, and Yoav Gallant, the Minister of Defence of Israel, bear criminal responsibility for the following war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of the State of Palestine (in the Gaza strip) from at least 8 October 2023:

- Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(b)(xxv) of the Statute;
- Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health contrary to article 8(2)(a)(iii), or cruel treatment as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i);
- Wilful killing contrary to article 8(2)(a)(i), or Murder as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i);

- Intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population as a war crime contrary to articles 8(2)(b)(i), or 8(2)(e)(i);
- Extermination and/or murder contrary to articles 7(1)(b) and 7(1)(a), including in the context of deaths caused by starvation, as a crime against humanity;
- Persecution as a crime against humanity contrary to article 7(1)(h);
- Other inhumane acts as crimes against humanity contrary to article 7(1)(k).

On 9 February 2024, the National-led Coalition Government designated the entirety of Hamas as a Terrorist entity yet have not once condemned Israel for their violations of international law.

Will the New Zealand Government continue to have diplomatic ties with war criminals?

It's time that we as a nation take a stronger stance and expel the Israeli ambassador and apply sanctions on Israel.

Over the past 8 months thousands of people across Aotearoa have been and continue to rally and protest. This is one of the largest organised movements since the Springboks tour. Students are taking part in encampments while others like William Alexander are now on their sixth day of a zero calorie hunger strike.

Williams zero calorie hunger strike is in protest of your political party's support of Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people. His demands are simple, he will not eat anything until the New Zealand government:

- Stops taking part in the bombing of Yemen and withdraws our troops from the Red Sea.
- Stops Rakon (a company in Auckland) producing crystal oscillators for weapons which are used in Israel's genocide
- Resumes and then doubles humanitarian aid funding to UNRWA

Williams has said that he has no intention of stopping this hunger strike until the New Zealand Government meets these demands.

You will also see that Whanganui District Council, Invercargill City Council, Waiheke Local Board and Ngāti Kahungunu iwi and the Far North District council have now called for a Ceasefire in Gaza

Our question for you today Tania Tapsell, Mayor of Rotorua District Council and Te Kaunihera ō ngā Roto:

Will you take on this brave action, be on the right side of history and call for an Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza?

We look forward to your reply,

Ngā mihi,
Mataara Mai

From: Office Mayor
Sent: Thursday, 25 July 2024 2:42 pm
To: Winston.Peters@parliament.govt.nz; enquiries@mfat.govt.nz
Subject: Referring message from Mataara Mai, Rotorua
Attachments: Mataara Mai letter to Mayor Tapsell.pdf; Letter to Mayor Tania - Rotorua Lakes Council.pdf

Kia ora Minister Peters and Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade,

Rotorua Mayor Tania Tapsell would like to share that herself, Councillors, and the Rotorua Lakes Council organisation have been contacted by members of the Mataara Mai group who are concerned for the welfare of the people of Palestine and are calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The group has also coordinated protests and put a petition to Council.

As the Government Officials best placed to influence this situation, Mayor Tapsell wishes to pass on their attached correspondence seeking declaration and action that supports a ceasefire to you for consideration.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Ngā mihi



Tania Togatama

Tiheru Manukura | Executive to the Mayor

P: +64 7 351 8326

M: +64 22 094 8208

E: tania.togatama@rotorualc.nz

A: Civic Centre, 1061 Haupapa St, Private Bag 3029, Rotorua 3046, New Zealand

W: rotorualakescouncil.nz



ATT: Tania Tapsell

Rotorua District Council
1061 Haupapa Street, Rotorua 3010

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It's time that we as a nation take a stronger stance and expel the Israeli ambassador and apply sanctions on Israel.

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You will also see that Whanganui District Council, Invercargill City Council, Waiheke Local Board and Ngāti Kahungunu iwi have all called for a Ceasefire and that just today Far North Mayor Moko Tepania will be calling for a Ceasefire in their hui this morning.

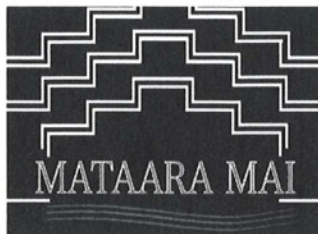
Our question for you today Tania Tapsell, Mayor of Rotorua District Council:

Will you take on this brave action, be on the right side of history and call for an Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza?

We look forward to your reply,

Ngā mihi,

Mataara Mai



Tēnā koe Mayor Tania,

I'm sure you're aware of the atrocities happening in Palestine for the past 8 months. We, Mataara Mai, have ensured a presence of solidarity is maintained through weekly protests here in Rotorua. For 8 months we have received an abundance of support from our wider community which has led us to this email to you, our Mayor.

You may have also heard about our Thursday 30th May activation at Council.

We began with a karakia and proceeded to walk to the Rotorua Lakes Council reception to deliver a hard-copy letter. Accompanied by a couple of pakeke, the letter was delivered by a number of beautiful, passionate tamariki who all decided that they wanted to take part in it.

Firstly, we were extremely disappointed to see the reaction of the Rotorua Lakes Council. Once we exited the building, we saw a staff member lock the doors and then a number of security guards come out to assess the potential threat.

We are a group of local Rotorua residents, tamariki, parents, grandparents, Māori, Muslim, Tauīwi, who are extremely concerned for the lives of the innocent people (citizens, tamariki, parents, grandparents) of Palestine, in particular Gaza, and who are absolutely appalled by the Genocidal actions of Occupied Palestine, otherwise known as Israel.

We are of no threat. We come to our kaupapa with aroha, with manaaki, with a space for our grieving community members to feel safe, to feel tau.

Secondly, although we appreciated the email response from your office, an offer to simply pass on our message to Government officials is not near good enough. Our Government is severely failing us on both a National and International front. Now is the time for our local Councils and communities to lead the way and put REAL pressure on our Government officials to STOP THE GENOCIDE.

We are so proud of the Whanganui District Council, Invercargill City Council, Waiheke Local Board, Ngāti Kahungunu and most recently, the Far North District Council. We would hope that next on the list of brave communities to be included is the Rotorua Lakes Council.

As you are aware, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor has applied for arrest warrants in the Situation of the State of Palestine.

The ICC prosecutor found reasonable grounds to believe that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, and Yoav Gallant, the Minister of Defence of Israel, bear criminal responsibility for the following war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of the State of Palestine (in the Gaza strip) from at least 8 October 2023:

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On 9 February 2024, the National-led Coalition Government designated the entirety of Hamas as a Terrorist entity yet have not once condemned Israel for their violations of international law.

For 8 months, yourself and the Rotorua Lakes Council have remained silent on the Genocide taking place in Occupied Palestine and that is unacceptable. Your silence does not constitute a neutral stance, it constitutes complacency and acceptance for the Genocide to continue.

Aotearoa has made a stand against this type of international tyranny before. In 1981 the people of this nation made a stand against the racist, white supremacist apartheid nation of South Africa when their rugby team toured here in Aotearoa. It took brave people from all walks of life to stand up for what was right and as a nation today, we look back at that time and to all those people as heroes and with great pride. It also shows that as a small nation halfway across the world, we can have an impact.

So with that, all we are asking of you and all our Rotorua council representatives, is to be someone your mokopuna will be proud of.

Declare Rotorua as a town that is against Genocide and that stands with humanity and the people of Palestine. Make that part of your legacy. We know the people of Rotorua will support you in this.

If you are unwilling we will know where you stand. Again to not speak against such atrocities is to support them.

Will you take on this brave action, be on the right side of history and call for an Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza?

We look forward to your reply,

Ngā mihi,
Mataara Mai

From: Winston Peters (MIN) <W.Peters@ministers.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 29 August 2024 9:16 am
To: mataaramai@gmail.com
Cc: Office Mayor
Subject: Response from Rt Hon Winston Peters, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Attachments: 403-2024 Mataara Mai.pdf

Dear Members of Mataara Mai Group

Please find attached a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs following receipt of your two letters to Rotorua Mayor Tania Tapsell, Councillors, and the Rotorua Lakes Council.

Kind regards

Foreign Affairs Private Secretary



Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing |

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz

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Rt Hon Winston Peters



Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister for Racing

28 August 2024

Members of Mataara Mai Group

ROTORUA

mataaramai@gmail.com

cc: Office.Mayor@rotorualc.nz

Dear Members of Mataara Mai Group

Thank you for your two letters to Rotorua Mayor Tania Tapsell, Councillors, and the Rotorua Lakes Council. These were referred to me for a response on 25 July.

The situation in Gaza and the West Bank remains complex, uncertain, and difficult from every angle. As the conflict enters its tenth month, civilian populations continue to endure an unacceptable humanitarian crisis. The resulting trauma experienced by all civilians is horrific and harrowing. The situation is distressing for communities across the world to witness.

International law

New Zealand's response to the Israel-Hamas conflict, has, since 7 October 2023, been consistently grounded in the upholding of international law, including international humanitarian law, alongside New Zealand's broader foreign policy.

New Zealand has raised this on numerous occasions. We raised the importance of compliance with international law with the Israeli Foreign Minister on 7 December 2023. On 12 February 2024, we reiterated this position to the Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand and raised with him the importance of ensuring the protection of Palestinian civilians.

Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade officials have repeatedly raised the importance of compliance with international humanitarian law with Israeli counterparts. This includes through regular engagement by senior Ministry officials raising this issue with Israel's Ambassador in Wellington, as well as New Zealand's Ambassador to Israel (based in Ankara) speaking directly with officials in Israel.

Senior MFAT officials have also engaged with their counterparts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) about their international law obligations. Officials have raised specific concerns about the IDF's compliance with international humanitarian law and reports of Israeli strikes on United Nations (UN) and humanitarian facilities in Gaza.

Calling for a ceasefire

Since October 2023, the Government has consistently called for Israel and Hamas to implement a ceasefire. We have called on Hamas to release hostages, and for both parties to allow for the safe, rapid and unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid. The Government has also called on all parties of the conflict to abide by their obligations under international law, including provisional measures orders by the International Court of Justice.

The New Zealand Parliament passed a motion on 7 December 2023 setting out the Government's position on the conflict. Numerous statements and speeches have reinforced this position since October 2023.

A full list of national statements, including votes at the UN can be found here: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/middle-east/israel-hamas-conflict/>).

Diplomatic relations with Israel

The New Zealand Government has long used open dialogue with other states as a core feature of advancing New Zealand's foreign policy. Maintaining diplomatic channels of communication with Israel, including via Israel's Ambassador and other Embassy officials in Wellington, is important as it affords the opportunity to convey New Zealand's positions and to engage with Israel directly and frankly. New Zealand Government senior officials have met with the Ambassador of Israel to New Zealand numerous times since October 2023, including to register our position and concerns on the current conflict in Gaza and the West Bank, and the situation in the region.

Expulsion of an Ambassador and closure of any embassy would be counter-productive to the aim of diplomatic engagement. The Government does not agree that we should only deal with countries that are aligned with our positions, even when those disagreements are severe and go to issues of human rights and international law violations. Effective engagement is a vital part of our response to events in Gaza and the region more broadly.

Allegations of genocide

New Zealand is a long-standing supporter of the international legal system. We support the work of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to settle legal disputes between states, including disputes concerning the Genocide Convention.

The current ICJ case between South Africa and Israel is a two-stage case. On 26 January, 28 March and 24 May the Court's provisional measures orders responded to the first element, where South Africa asked the ICJ to order Israel to immediately suspend its military operations in and against Gaza.

The second part is on the substance of the very serious claims of genocide. The gravity of such allegations means the Court is likely to take time to consider the facts. It is important the ICJ undertakes its work impartially as it makes complex findings of fact and law. Just as officials do not comment on matters before domestic courts, we will not comment on the genocide allegations currently being considered by the ICJ.

This should not be interpreted as New Zealand being "silent". It would be inappropriate for New Zealand to pre-judge the decision of the Court, including on very serious allegations such as genocide.

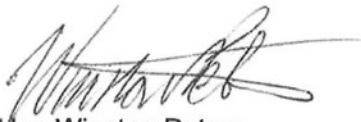
Sanctions

New Zealand is not under a legal obligation to impose sanctions on Israel. New Zealand can only impose sanctions in two ways: through the domestic implementation of sanctions as mandated by resolution of the United Nations Security Council; or targeted sanctions under the Russia Sanctions Act in response to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

To date, New Zealand has regulations to implement UN sanctions on 13 countries: Iran, North Korea, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Congo, the Central African Republic, Somalia, South Sudan, Libya, Lebanon, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau. There are also regulations implementing UN sanctions for designated terrorist groups (ISIL, Al-Qaida and the Taliban) and regarding "conflict diamonds" under the Kimberley Process.

These UN sanctions regimes are long-standing. In the current international climate, it can be challenging for existing UN sanctions to be amended or additional sanctions imposed in response to new developments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Winston Peters', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs