

My name is Dr. Shir Hever. I speak in my capacity as the coordinator for the military embargo campaign of the Palestinian BDS movement, which is a campaign for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel, founded, steered, and representing Palestinian civil society.

As an Israeli-born Jew, I speak Hebrew and follow the Israeli media closely. The sources which I'm following leave no room for doubt that the Israeli military forces are intentionally targeting civilians with their weapons and are using unguided ammunition in unprecedented quantities. Thousands of bombs, artillery shells and tank shells are fired indiscriminately at densely populated areas of the Gaza Strip since October 8th last year for an unrelenting destructive campaign of 138 days. The Israeli military has admitted that they do not have sufficient ammunition reserves to maintain this rate of fire for more than three days.

Only continued shipments of ammunition make it possible to continue the bombing campaign. Respecting the military embargo will mean that the ammunition shipments will stop and the Israeli government will be forced to agree to a ceasefire. The military embargo is necessary more than ever to save lives. There are three arguments for the military embargo which must be addressed. The moral, the legal and the practical. I'll start with the moral because it is the most important. Regardless of the legal obligations of states, as human beings, we must not stand aside as genocide is being committed. Most of my family was murdered in the Holocaust, and I can understand why Jewish activists in the US and in Europe are in the front line of demonstrations and in sit-ins trying to stop the weapon shipments so they can look themselves in the mirror later and say, when a genocide was committed in our name, we did not remain silent.

If I may make a personal comment, I also want to be demonstrating right now, getting arrested in front of a German arms factory. And the reason that I'm not going to demonstrate is that I can be here and speak with you. The legal argument is of course important as well. The military embargo is often misunderstood as a matter of choice, as if it can be imposed or not. The ATT is very clear. When a state is suspected of committing genocide, The suspicion alone is sufficient to create third state obligation to respect the military embargo, which is now in effect. The military embargo has three components, a ban on selling weapons to the offending state, on buying weapons from the offending state, and on transiting weapons to the offending state.

Certain signatories of the ATT, such as the United States, Germany, Spain, and India, have violated all of these three bans. Even after the ICJ interim ruling from January

26th, which establishes the probability for the crime of genocide being committed, agreed to begin proceedings to investigate the crime and also ordered the State of Israel to cease actions under Article 2 of the Convention for the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. Israel is in clear violation of this court order, and delivering weapons to Israel is an act of complicity with the crime of genocide. The obligation rests not merely on the shoulders of states, but on everyone. Dock workers are obligated to refuse to load or fuel ships carrying weapons to Israel. Take a moment to think what would happen if a ship carrying weapons from, say, Germany, is stopped in a port in Belgium or in Spain, searched, and weapons smuggled to Israel are found on board.

The question you should be asking yourself, is the profit from arms deals with Israel worth the risk of facing criminal charges? And this leads me to the practical considerations. Any expectation that Israel will honor its contractual obligations in the framework of arms deals is rooted in the belief that Israel will be able to escape accountability for its crimes, an unrealistic expectation. Any expectation that Israeli weapons which were developed specifically as tools of repression against civilians will also be effective for defensive purposes are based on uncritical susceptibility to Israel's marketing tactics. Any expectation that Israel will return to normality after committing genocide as opposed to the Milosevic regime in Serbia, the Hutu regime in Rwanda, or the Bashir regime in Sudan is based on a failure to learn from history.

Thank you very much.