

Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

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I am deeply concerned about the aspects of this proposed Bill that will not only impact on free speech and our democratic right to criticise the acts of governments, countries and states that are not meeting international human rights and obligations and, indeed, breaking international laws including the most gravest offences of crimes against humanity genocide. In the case of Israel, these allegations have been made by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the International Court of Justice for genocide, the United Nations, and multiple Human Rights Organisations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Those protesting these crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, apartheid, forced starvation, forced displacement and collective punishment, do so with the backing of these international bodies.

They are peaceful protests involving people of many faiths, chief among them are Jewish, Christian and Muslim.

The chant, "From the River to the Sea" is a call for freedom and equal rights for all people who live in the region. How is this call for equal rights offensive? Would it be preferable to say "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will remain oppressed and living under an apartheid regime?" It is never acceptable to say the "safety" of one people can only be maintained by the oppression of another.

The term "intifada" is Arabic for "shake off". To make that term illegal is also unfair and unjust given its use is to reflect shaking off oppression - the oppressions clearly documented, before International Courts and raised by International Human Rights organisations.

If these terms are made illegal, it will result in people of all ages, young parents with children in strollers, retired doctors, healthcare workers, lawyers, academics, writers, artists, being arrested and charged for simply standing up for humanity. I recently met a retired lawyer and former university professor at a protest. Intelligent, thoughtful and caring people. I have marched with young families, pushing children in strollers. I have joined multi-faith prayer vigils, I have listened to Jewish speakers condemn the actions of Israel and say loudly that the political ideology of Zionism is the most dangerous thing for the safety of Jewish people and they say "not in my name".

My first novel was "The Diary of Anne Frank". When I read that book, I decided at that very young age that I would never be silent when others are being persecuted as a result of bigotry, racism, genocide and ethnic cleansing. That is why I am part of the free Palestine movement. I abhor all forms of discrimination and say never again means never again for anyone.