



The Russell Tribunal on Palestine (RToP) is an International People's Tribunal created following the international community's failure to implement the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) 2004 Advisory Opinion on the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Resolution ES-10/15 confirming the ICJ Opinion, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 July 2004.

The Israeli offensive in Gaza (December 2008 – January 2009) and the continuing occupation and colonization of Palestine by Israel have since then confirmed the need for such an initiative that is imbued with the same spirit and espouses the same rigorous rules as those inherited from the Tribunal on Vietnam created by the eminent scholar and philosopher Bertrand Russell (1966-1967) and the Russell Tribunal II on Latin America (1974-1976) organized by the Lelio Basso International Foundation for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples.

In the case of this new Tribunal, the main objective is not to denounce the perpetrator of violations, since that has already been done for instance by numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations' Security Council and General Assembly. The RToP proceedings, which comprise a number of sessions, deal with different aspects of the complicity and responsibilities of States, international organisations and corporations in the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel and the perpetuation of the violations of international law committed by Israel.

Members of the International Support Committee of the RToP include Nobel Prize laureates, a former United Nations Secretary-General, two former Heads of State, other personalities who have held high political office and representatives of civil society, writers, journalists, poets, actors, film directors, scientists, professors, lawyers and judges ([see complete list](#)).

## The First International Session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine

On 1 -3 March 2010, the first international session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine was hosted and supported by the Barcelona National Support Committee and the Office of the Mayor of Barcelona, under the honorary presidency of Stéphane Hessel, Ambassador of France.

This session's objective was to consider the **complicities and responsibilities of the European Union and its Member States** in the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel and the perpetuation of the violations of international law by Israel, with complete impunity. For two days, twenty one experts and witnesses were heard by a jury composed of international personalities known for their actions and moral integrity:

- Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace laureate 1976, Northern Ireland
- Gisèle Halimi, lawyer, former Ambassador to UNESCO, France
- Ronald Kasrils writer and activist, South Africa
- Michael Mansfield, barrister, President of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, United Kingdom
- José Antonio Martín Pallín, emeritus judge, Chamber II, Supreme Court, Spain
- Cynthia McKinney, former member of the US Congress and 2008 presidential candidate, Green Party, USA
- Alberto San Juan, actor, Spain
- Aminata Traoré, author and former Minister of Culture of Mali

Testimony heard by the jury related to the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, the closure of the Gaza Strip and the operation "Cast Lead", the illegal settlements and the plundering of natural resources, the annexation of East Jerusalem, the Wall built in occupied Palestinian territory and the EU-Israel Association Agreement and military cooperation. After its deliberation, the jury issued its conclusions in an international press conference (full text of the conclusions is available [here](#)).

Thanks to a network of National Support Committees, the first session of this International People's Tribunal was a resounding success both for the impact it had on the audience and the media attention it received (see [here](#) for media coverage and [here](#) for pictures). The Tribunal's conclusions were a significant aspect of its success. These conclusions provide a legally grounded body of arguments, constituting an important tool to be used by those who seek to ensure respect for the rule of international law, and the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Barcelona session is followed up by presentations of its conclusions organised by the National Support Committees of the RToP<sup>1</sup>. These aim at raising awareness among a large audience, and at questioning different decision levels. The conclusions were sent to all the European heads of government and foreign affairs ministers, to the presidents of the European Union, Commission and Parliament, to the United Nations, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Arab League.

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<sup>1</sup>Committees have so far been set up in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and Italy

## **The second International Session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine**

The second international session of the RToP will take place in London, on the 20, 21 and 22 November 2010. It will examine International corporate complicity in Israel's Violations of International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, and War Crimes

After establishing the responsibilities and obligations of corporations under international law, this session will assess the conduct of a series of companies regarding different aspects of Israel's violations of the rights of the Palestinian People. The Tribunal will also seek to uncover the system that allows corporations to act in such unlawful ways, and to show in what ways States and international organisations could be held accountable for this.

During this session, the jury will be examining cases on:

- Corporations providing tangible services and infrastructure that support illegal Israeli settlements and the occupation of Palestinian territory in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.
- Foreign banks and other financial institutions providing financial services to illegal settlements and Israeli banks etc. trading abroad who provide financial services to illegal settlements.
- Foreign companies that manufacture products inside the settlements and industrial zones in the West Bank and Israeli companies that export agricultural and other products from the settlements and industrial zones in the West Bank,
- Foreign companies involved in the export of arms and the infrastructure of war, occupation, colonisation and repression in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israeli companies that export arms and repressive hardware/knowledge abroad

Just as in the Barcelona session, experts and witnesses will be invited to present these cases to the jury. Challenged corporations will also be invited to defend their position, before the jury presents its conclusions in an international press conference.

The following personalities have confirmed their participation as jury members:

- Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1976, Northern Ireland
- John Dugard, Professeur of International law, Former Special rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories, South Africa
- Ronald Kasrils, writer and activist, South Africa
- Michael Mansfield, barrister, President of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, United Kingdom
- José Antonio Martín Pallín, emeritus judge, Chamber II, Supreme Court, Spain
- Cynthia McKinney, former member of the US Congress and 2008 presidential candidate, Green Party, USA
- Aminata Traoré, author and former Minister of Culture of Mali
- Alice Walker, Poet and writer, USA.

Other International Sessions of the RToP are foreseen, such as in South Africa and in the U.S.A. in 2011.

The RToP is a citizen's initiative that is sustained by numerous contributions from individuals, associations, organisations and solidarity movements. Its independence relies on the material and financial help it receives from a great diversity of sources.

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