1. The Middle East is experiencing a moment of truth. And so are we. Our governments, our political parties, our civic organisations, and indeed each of us as members of global society, must now choose whether to be part of the solution or part of the problem. Our actions, and the choices we make, are being recorded for posterity. History will – and should – judge us accordingly.
2. Last month, here in Den Haag, the world’s highest court, the International Court of Justice, determined that the Republic of South Africa presented a plausible case that Israel is engaging in genocide against the Palestinian people. Let that sink in.
3. Unfortunately, the Government of The Netherlands has chosen to respond to this ruling with business as usual. On the one hand, constant repetition that Israel has the right to defend itself, as if a plausibly genocidal military campaign can conceivably be considered legitimate self-defense.
4. On the other, statements that this war must be conducted in accordance with international law. As if it is possible to slaughter more than 10,000 children, systematically target hospitals, and engineer a famine in accordance with international law. Yet, despite these admonitions the Dutch government has yet to identify a single Israeli violation of international law, or take a single action in response to Israel’s war crimes and crimes against humanity.
5. Rather, the Dutch Government has chosen to continue the supply of spare parts for Israeli bombers that are systematically razing the Gaza Strip to the ground. Because ensuring its reputation as a reliable supplier is a vital national interest. Its obligations under the Genocide Convention are apparently as meaningless in Gaza as in Srebrenica.
6. The Government of The Netherlands lost no time responding to unsubstantiated and already partially disproven Israeli allegations that 12 of UNRWA’s 30,000 employees were involved in the attacks of 7 October. Funding to the agency was immediately halted, and according to Minister Van Leeuwen will not be resumed “even in response to new requests because of the situation in Gaza”. Imagine if similar standards of liability were applied to this parliament. It would cease to exist.
7. By contrast, Dutch citizens are permitted to participate in Israel’s plausibly genocidal war against the Gaza Strip as members of its armed forces, and to contribute to, and profit from, the illegal colonisation of occupied Palestinian territory. All with literally zero consequences. This government may claim it has an “ontmoedigingsbelied”, but it is in fact practicing an “aanmoedigingsbeleid”.

[NB: The Dutch government claims it has a policy of discouraging Dutch commercial activities in the OPT (“ontmoedigingsbelied”). Documentary evidence indicates it is in fact encouraging such activities (“aanmoedigingsbeleid”)].

1. The fundamental problem separating Israelis and Palestinians from peace is not the violence inflicted upon each other. Rather, it is Israel’s impunity. And specifically the refusal of its enablers, including the Dutch Government, to hold it accountable for its crimes in any manner whatsoever. Both here in Den Haag and multilaterally in Brussels. To put it bluntly, Europe’s reputation lies buried in the rubble of Gaza.
2. In conclusion I would like to note that there is now renewed talk of diplomacy and a resolution of the Question of Palestine. We’ve heard it all before. Repeatedly so in fact. As you well know, talk is cheap, but actions matter. And it is the choices you will make about reality in Gaza today, not your stated aspirations about the future, that will be recorded for posterity. Simply stated, the Netherlands cannot be the capital of global justice while itself maintaining double standards in the application of international law. I very much hope you will choose to be part of the solution and no longer part of the problem.

ENDS