

# Joint Statement against Government Repression of Civil Rights

**We, as advocates for human rights and justice, unite in this joint statement to express our support for both the right to demonstrate and the growing movement for Palestinian liberation from Israeli oppression, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing. With a genocide unfolding before our eyes in which the Netherlands is complicit, the protection of peaceful protest is more important than ever.**

On Tuesday, March 26, a hastily drafted statement was published, signed by a large number of political parties. The statement purported to condemn antisemitism but unmistakably targeted demonstrators. The majority of political parties in the Dutch House of Representatives apparently believe that peaceful protests, fully operating within the confines of the law, can nevertheless be banned.

While we have deep concerns about the rise of antisemitism and Islamophobia in our society, exacerbated by the shift of the political spectrum towards the far right, we condemn the actual content of this statement. We disagree with this smear campaign to equate legitimate protest and Palestinian solidarity actions with antisemitism. This includes the protest referenced in the statement: the disruption of a concert by Lenny Kuhr, which was aimed at Kuhr's explicit political support for the Israeli occupation and genocide in Palestine. The protest had nothing to do with her Jewish identity. However, this claim was uncritically adopted across the board by the media and politics.

We see a disturbing trend where criticism of Israel's gross human rights violations and occupation practices is dismissed as antisemitism. Apart from the fact that Israel is not synonymous with Judaism, nor does it speak or act on behalf of Jewish people, the misuse of the term undermines the seriousness of antisemitism. The 'antisemitism' smear is increasingly being used as a weapon to serve Israel's interests, and now seems to be redefined as a tool to enforce political censorship around Palestine. This censorship not only enables the ongoing slaughter of Palestinians but also hollows out the concept of antisemitism. This increasingly endangers Jewish people and also denies the existence of an anti-Zionist Jewish community, who stand alongside Palestinian activists and all those in solidarity in the struggle for justice and decolonisation.

We condemn the selective outrage and the lack of recognition of the Palestinian cause by our government. With their statement, the Dutch House of Representatives has de facto given more support to one Dutch singer than to all Palestinian victims of the genocide, including over 33,000 deaths, half of whom are children.

Therefore, we call on the parties that signed the March 26 statement to reconsider their position, and emphasise the importance of protecting the right to peaceful protest and freedom of speech for all citizens, especially those advocating for the equal rights of marginalised groups. The suppression of critical voices and the restriction of the right to demonstrate threaten the democratic values on which our society is built.

Especially now, it is crucial that we dare to hold our government accountable when it violates international and national laws, and that we remain in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for freedom, decolonisation, and justice.

**At time of publication, signed by:**

Workers for Palestine NL, XR Justice Now!, BIJ1, Erev Rav, een Ander Joods Geluid, Platform Stop Racisme & Fascisme, Plant een Olijfboom, MiGreat, Internationale Socialisten, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, Stichting Stem op een Vrouw, FNV Palestina Werkgroep, Haagse Stadspartij, Leiden Scholars for Palestine, Palestijnse Gemeenschap NL, Utrecht in Solidarity with Palestine, Groningen voor Palestina, New Neighbours Utrecht, Pal Action NL, Palestijns Netwerk Nederland, Lijst Ahmadi Veldhuyzen, Nijmegen for Palestine, Zaankanters voor Palestina, Rotterdam Palestina Coalitie, Stichting Kifaia, Sit-in 4 Palestine NL, Breda Solidair, Revolutionair Verbond, De Socialisten, NCPN, Kairos-Sabeel Nederland, The Hague Peace Projects, Amersfoort4Palestine, Eindhoven4Palestine, Almere voor Palestina, Alkmaar voor Palestina, Gouda4palestine, Zwolle.4Palestine, Friesland for Palestine, The Road To Free Palestine, Friends of Handala, Platform Stop racisme en facisme Arnhem-Nijmegen