

Scottish National Party Ministers Criticised Over Motion to Label Israel's IDF a Terrorist Group

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A group of ministers from the Scottish National Party (SNP) is facing strong criticism after supporting a motion in the Scottish Parliament calling for the United Kingdom (UK) Government to designate the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) as a terrorist organisation. The move has prompted

concern from Jewish community leaders and deepened divisions within the party.

The motion, introduced by SNP Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) James Dornan, urged the UK Government to proscribe the IDF, alongside groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Wagner Group. Dornan and several SNP colleagues, including former ministers, claimed the motion was in response to recent UK legislation banning the protest group Palestine Action. Supporters of the motion framed it as a condemnation of what they describe as genocide in Gaza. However, the proposal has been met with serious objections, particularly regarding the implications for international diplomacy and community relations.

Michael Wegier, Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, called the motion antisemitic and offensive. He argued that the IDF is an essential part of Israel's defence, and equating it with known terrorist groups is both irresponsible and dangerous. Wegier called on the SNP leadership to affirm that Jewish people in Scotland are valued, respected, and safe.

The controversy adds to growing tension within the SNP over its handling of the Israel-Gaza conflict. When the UK Parliament voted to ban Palestine Action, SNP Members of Parliament (MPs) abstained, citing concerns that the legislation grouped a non-violent protest organisation with far-right extremist groups. SNP MP Brendan O'Hara stated that the party would have opposed the motion had it not also included neo-Nazi organisations.

The SNP Friends of Palestine group publicly criticised the abstention, calling it a failure to show moral leadership. Several SNP MSPs defended

their support for the IDF motion as a response to what they see as the UK's failure to address human rights violations in the region.

First Minister John Swinney and former First Minister Humza Yousaf have reiterated the SNP's official position, which includes calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, humanitarian aid access, a halt to UK arms exports to Israel, and recognition of a Palestinian state as part of a long-term two-state solution.

The situation has raised broader concerns about antisemitism, internal party unity, and the SNP's stance on international human rights issues.