



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

UK Section Limited Company number 14007981

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Consultative
Status with
United Nations
ECOSOC,
UNCTAD and
UNESCO

Special
Consultative
Relations
with FAO,
ILO and
UNICEF

10 November 2023

Dear Prime Minister

Gaza: act NOW to prevent a genocide

In light of the current critical and desperate situation in Gaza, we, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom UK Section, call upon the Government of the United Kingdom to act urgently to prioritise the protection of civilians, prevent further loss of life and further commitment of war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Palestinian civilians in besieged Gaza, including 1,000,000 children, are trapped in dire conditions under almost constant bombing, where they have no access to safe shelter, food, water, electricity, or fuel. Bombing in Gaza contributes to global air pollution and widespread ecological damage, reducing biodiversity and harming land, water and other natural resources.

"Nowhere is safe in Gaza", has emphasised the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.¹ In addition to carpet-bombing Gaza, Israel has escalated its repression and collective punishment against the Palestinian people on both sides of the Green Line.

As citizens of the United Kingdom, we urge the Government of the United Kingdom to:

1. Implement its obligation to prevent and protect against the crime of genocide.
2. Urgently call and take measures for the implementation of an immediate ceasefire, including but not limited to a cessation of all attacks that target or indiscriminately affect civilians and civilian infrastructure. All attacks on health infrastructure and humanitarian actors must urgently end.
3. Demand that Israel allows urgent and unimpeded access to fuel and humanitarian aid to all areas in Gaza, including medical supplies, and the immediate restoration of access to food, water, electricity, health and medical supplies, and other essential needs, to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis. It is imperative under international humanitarian law that civilians are not deprived of objects indispensable to their survival, as the UN General Assembly stressed on 27 October 2023.²
4. Demand an immediate end to Israel's ongoing siege of the Gaza Strip, which constitutes collective punishment, which is a war crime.
5. Work through the UN General Assembly, and its regional and national systems, to end arms transfers to all parties to the conflict and to impose a comprehensive two-way arms embargo on Israel. The ATT (Arms Trade Treaty) states parties have a particular obligation to end their arms transfers under Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty.
6. Urge an immediate halt to the provision of any material, equipment or other commodity that may foreseeably be used in the commission of war crimes or otherwise contrary to international humanitarian law.
7. Urge immediate action by the UN Security Council to implement sanctions and other countermeasures, including a two-way arms embargo.
8. Ensure the protection of human rights defenders and peace activists in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, journalists and humanitarian workers.

The Government of the United Kingdom must also take decisive and concrete steps to address the root causes of violations and abuses and the ongoing Israeli military aggression, including reaffirming the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and return, and calling for an end to, and accountability for, Israeli occupation, apartheid, and settler colonialism.

UN human rights experts sounded the alarm on 19 October 2023,³ “There is an ongoing campaign by Israel resulting in crimes against humanity in Gaza. Considering statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies, accompanied by military action in Gaza and escalation of arrests and killing in the West Bank, there is also a risk of genocide against the Palestine people”, emphasising that “There are no justifications or exceptions for such crimes. We are appalled by the inaction of the international community in the face of belligerent warmongering.”

The British Government must act NOW to prevent a genocide in Gaza.

Yours in peace

Paula Shaw
National Secretary
for WILPF UK Executive Committee

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

¹ Press Briefing Notes, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Israel/OPT, Update, 27 October 2023. Access at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2023/10/israel-opt-update>

² Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations, 27 October 2023. Access at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4025240?in=en>

³ Gaza: UN experts decry bombing of hospitals and schools as crimes against humanity, call for prevention of genocide, 19 October 2023. Access at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/gaza-un-experts-decry-bombing-hospitals-and-schools-crimes-against-humanity>



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The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

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The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
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