

Since 7 October 2023, more than 65,000 Palestinians have been confirmed killed. The majority are civilians, including tens of thousands of women and children. Entire families have been wiped out, whole neighbourhoods reduced to rubble, and famine is spreading under conditions of siege and deliberate obstruction of humanitarian assistance. Gaza is enduring one of the most devastating humanitarian crises in our time.

As UK civil society networks, we cannot be silent in the face of such destruction. The UK has legal and moral responsibilities. Its response must be guided by humanitarian principles and values, not political calculations. Yet despite mounting evidence of genocide, as found by the UN Commission of Inquiry, the UK continues to fall short of its obligations under international law.

We call on the UK government to demand immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to end the famine now threatening the Gazan population. The UK must stand fully behind the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, and do all within its power to ensure that Israel complies with the Court, take steps to prevent genocide and hold Israel to account for violations of international law.

It must end all arms sales and transfers to Israel, recognising that these weapons are being used in attacks that have devastated civilian life, and suspend all preferential trade arrangements and end economic cooperation that supports violations of international law. The UK should sanction officials and entities responsible for atrocities and adopt comprehensive measures to prevent UK businesses from contributing to violations of international law in Gaza and the West Bank, including issuing binding guidance, introducing mandatory human rights due diligence for supply chains, and imposing targeted sanctions.

Leadership is urgently needed. Countries like Spain, Ireland and Sweden have already shown what is possible, going further than current UK measures by implementing a legally codified arms embargo, banning entry for individuals involved in alleged war crimes, properly prohibiting and monitoring settlement imports, and significantly increasing humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

Ahead of the UN General Assembly's high-level week, the UK should follow these examples and recognise a Palestinian state as a pathway to peace, proving that British foreign policy can be guided by justice, accountability, and humanity.

1. Amber Shotton, Chair of Trustees, Small International Development Charities Network (SIDCN)
2. Catherine Klirodotakou, Interim Co-Director, GADN
3. Catherine Pettengell, Executive Director, Climate Action Network UK (CAN-UK)
4. Dominique Muller, Director, Corporate Justice Coalition
5. Fadi Itani, CEO, Muslim Charities Forum

6. Frances Guy, Chief Executive Officer, Scotland's International Development Alliance (SIDA)
7. Hannah Stevenson Doornbos, Executive Director, South West International Development Network
8. Hayley Morgan, Chief Executive, Welsh Centre for International Affairs
9. Jean McLean, Director of Engagement, Green Economy Coalition
10. Julian Rosser, Head, Hub Cymru Africa
11. Katie Hesselby, Network Director, Action for Global Health
12. Leckhna Paras Chajed, National Director, Students for Global Health UK
13. Mark Galloway, Executive Director, International Broadcasting Trust
14. Mike Podmore, Chief Executive Officer, STOPAIDS
15. Peter Heaney, Head, CADA NI
16. Romilly Greenhill, CEO, Bond
17. Tom Wills, Director, Trade Justice Movement