

IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE

Dear Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary,

Until the UK Government calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and suspends its arms sales to Israel, it is complicit in the slaughter of innocent civilians taking place every day in Gaza.

Israel's military response to the 7 October attacks by Hamas and other armed groups which included atrocious killing of civilians and hostage-taking has killed more than 26,000 people in Gaza, the majority of whom are women and children. 1.9 million people have been forced from their homes.

While the horror continues and the deaths mount, your Government has continually abstained from UN votes for a ceasefire. Without a permanent ceasefire, there can be no comprehensive humanitarian response to the devastation in Gaza. While rightly condemning the unlawful attacks of Hamas you have failed to condemn Israel for the mass killing of civilians, its complete siege on Gaza in the opening weeks of the conflict, or its continuing restrictions on humanitarian access which is leading to the starvation of the population and a rapidly worsening health emergency. On top of this, we have grave concerns about the use of arms supplied by the UK to Israel, in a potential breach of international humanitarian law.

Emboldened, Prime Minister Netanyahu and his government continues to pursue what amounts to a policy of collective punishment against the people of Gaza and has now rejected the right to statehood for the Palestinian people, the stated policy of the UK government for decades.

The cycles of violence will not end, and innocent people on both sides will continue to pay, until Palestinians and Israelis are treated as equals and the illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank is ended.

The UK public have consistently and overwhelmingly supported a ceasefire, with more than 7 in 10 in favour according to recent polling, while fewer than 1 in 5 approve of the government's handling of the conflict.

We urge you to call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and halt arms to Israel and Palestinian armed groups while there is a risk they are used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law.

The UK Government must insist that Israel abides by the provisional measures indicated by the ICJ's ruling. A ceasefire was needed yesterday to stop the slaughter of civilians in Gaza.

The UK's complicity must end.

