

The Ambassador's Office

Embassy of Israel
London



לשכת השגרירה
שגרירות ישראל
לונדון

Ms Sarah Champion MP,
Chairman, International Development Committee,
House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA

6th December 2024

Dear Ms Champion,

Thank you for your letter dated Monday 25th November 2024.

As I am unable to offer evidence in person on this occasion, I have put my initial response in writing below. If the committee has any further specific questions that they would like answering, please do let me know.

Firstly, I understand that the committee visited Jordan and the West Bank the week before last and I wish to express my disappointment that Israel was not included in the visit. In order to ascertain a comprehensive account of the situation, including the challenges that Israel faces and the efforts that we are making, a visit to Israel is a vital undertaking to attain a fully informed and balanced view of the situation in the region. It is regrettable, if not perplexing, that on this occasion it did not happen.

Furthermore, I want to take this opportunity to comment on an evidence session the committee conducted on Tuesday 12th November 2024 with Professor Nizam Mamode. On numerous occasions, Professor Mamode's testimonies recounted hearsay, relaying stories that he did not witness himself, such as Israeli quadcopters deliberately shooting civilians. The claim that the IDF carries out indiscriminate fire towards children or other uninvolved civilians, including using quadcopters, is completely baseless and such false claims are dangerous as they gain traction on social media where members of the public can be susceptible to believing such stories without supporting evidence or facts. We would like to emphasise that Israel remains fully committed to the observance of its international legal obligations and acts strictly in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law and the laws of armed conflict.

It is important to recall that Israel embarked upon a defensive and just war – one that it did not start and did not want – to eliminate the terrorist organisation Hamas and to secure the release of the hostages following the horrific attack against the citizens of Israel on 7th October 2023. In this context, Israel is acting in accordance with its right to defend its territory and its citizens, consistent with its moral and democratic values. These important facts do not take away from the clear and pressing challenges regarding the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The State of Israel and the IDF are unwaveringly committed to improving the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Despite the persistent and challenging war being waged against terrorist organisations in extremely difficult terrain, where Hamas terrorists repeatedly use civilians as human shields and deliberately use civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals for conducting their terrorist operations, Israel remains steadfast in its dedication to facilitating humanitarian relief, supporting local and international aid efforts, and ensuring the continuous flow of humanitarian assistance.

The Ambassador's Office

Embassy of Israel

London



לשכת השגרירה

שגרירות ישראל

לונדון

As of 3rd December 2024, 1,168,357 tons of aid have entered Gaza via 58,959 trucks, including food, shelter materials, fuel and gas for infrastructure, medical supplies, vaccines and more. Aid enters through five land crossings (Israel opened the Kissufim crossing into southern Gaza in early November 2024), as well as via airdrops, and through Ashdod Port. The challenges of aid collection and distribution inside Gaza are well known, particularly at the Kerem Shalom crossing. As of 5th December 2024, approximately 800 trucks worth of aid are accumulated at the Gaza side of the crossing.

Israel has also taken great steps to improve the humanitarian situation in northern Gaza. Over the last 60 days, close to 1,500 trucks of aid and at least 50,000 litres of fuel have entered northern Gaza, as well as medical supplies to medical facilities in northern Gaza, maintaining essential services. As of 3rd December 2024, over 100 litres per person per day are available in northern Gaza, from the northern waterline.

Israel has also taken strong preventative measures when it comes to the health of civilians in the Gaza Strip. The second campaign of polio vaccinations consisted of a total of 1,107,601 vaccinations for children across Gaza, with 211,170 in the north, 379,361 in central Gaza, and 517,070 in the south.

As we approach the colder months, Israel has put in place concrete, actionable steps to prepare for any associated humanitarian challenges that winter may bring, in addition to establishing a new field hospital - adding to the existing 13 operational field hospitals. These steps include:

- Facilitating a comprehensive medical response, which includes co-ordinating extensive vaccination campaigns for winter illnesses and establishing testing and sampling systems to map potential outbreaks ready for a swift and effective response. This also involves reinforcing medical and evacuation teams as needed, as well as clearing and maintaining key roads to ensure access to aid centres and essential infrastructure.
- Facilitating the relocation of infrastructure from flood-prone areas to alternative locations, along with developing plans for the immediate relocation of affected populations and infrastructure during flood events.
- Facilitating the protection of civil infrastructures through roofing, sealing and strengthening.
- Facilitating the transfer of heaters, appropriate clothing and shelter equipment.
- Allowing and facilitating the introduction of waste disposal trucks and sewage suction trucks to help with waste management, while addressing sanitation concerns that may worsen due to wintery conditions.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has been systematically infiltrated by Hamas. We cannot stay blind to the embedment of terrorism within a UN organisation. UNRWA is part of the problem and had been given 13 months to be part of the solution, but it regrettably denied that opportunity time after time.

Israel has raised concerns with the international community about this dangerous situation for many years, and more so after 7th October, as well as having provided information on this matter to UN officials and donor countries, and yet no significant action to deal with the issue occurred. In July 2024, Israel also provided UNRWA a partial list of over 100 Hamas operatives employed by UNRWA-Gaza; a copy of this list is enclosed. This list included the recently deceased Mohammad Abu Itiwi, who was a Nukhba commander (of Hamas's Central Camps Brigade) involved in the

The Ambassador's Office

Embassy of Israel

London



לשכת השגרירה

שגרירות ישראל

לונדון

abduction and murder of Israeli civilians on 7th October 2023, including the killing of dual Israeli-British national Aner Shapira. Moreover, attacks against Israel were conducted from many UNRWA facilities. The fact that the UN allows terrorist entities to exploit its facilities and status to such an extent is unprecedented.

Moreover, at least eighteen principals of UNRWA schools in Gaza have been found to be members of Hamas' military wing. Underneath two of those schools, tunnels were exposed in the past (in 2017 and 2022) yet were found to be operational when the IDF arrived and dismantled them during the current war. Hamas is deeply and systematically embedded in UNRWA and this is an outrageous breach of neutrality that reflects the real situation within UNRWA, yet UNRWA's management preferred once again to turn a blind eye.

It is important to highlight that since the beginning of the war in Gaza, approximately 83% of the humanitarian aid has been donated to the Gaza Strip by other UN agencies and organisations, other than UNRWA. UNRWA's part in the distribution process over the past couple of months has been decreasing. In this respect, Israel is working extensively and with full dedication with the UN and other international partners to ensure that aid reaches those in need.

I trust this information is helpful to the committee's work and goes some way to providing an accurate picture of the extensive efforts of the State of Israel in providing humanitarian relief to the Gaza Strip during this challenging but just war.

Yours sincerely,

Tzipi Hotovely

Tzipi Hotovely

Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St. James's