

INTRODUCTION

Written submission from The CMA Welfare Trust (IPC0048)

CHEADLE MASJID

The CMA Welfare Trust

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1. My name is Nasar Malik, I am a chartered civil engineer, employed as a director with an international firm of Consulting Engineers. I am writing on behalf of Cheadle Masjid, which is my local Mosque and where I sit as a trustee and board member. Cheadle Masjid was established in 2003 and serves a thriving and active Muslim community within the borough of Stockport.
2. As a mosque, we have visited Jerusalem and the Occupied West Bank in September 2023 seeing and hearing first-hand the apartheid nature of the control Israel exercises over the Palestinians, including the apartheid wall and check points, the different coloured car number plates and roads for Israelis and Palestinians and the intimidation and violence by the heavily armed Police around the Al-Aqsa Mosque, including their regular trespass into the Mosque.
3. We submit this evidence on behalf of the community we serve. We have been appalled by the utter brutality of the Israeli military's actions in Gaza: through indiscriminate bombing destroying whole towns and cities, bombing refugee camps in declared safe-zones, snipers directly shooting children in the head, forced starvation of the entire population etc. It makes it even more regrettable therefore that our successive governments have remained not only silent having witnessed such actions, but they have continued to offer support to Israel, politically, financially and militarily. This needs to stop if the UK is to regain its position as a respected and fair actor on the world stage.

Question One: What can – and should- the UK do, in cooperation with regional and international partners to help bring about a ceasefire?

Answer:

4. Firstly, there is an absolute need for an immediate ceasefire. The head of the UN aid coordination office in Gaza, Georgios Petropoulos, recently issued a harrowing update on the dire situation in the enclave, describing it as "the most dangerous place on earth right now." "Dying hungry and in pain" is an increasingly likely outcome for children, mothers, aid workers, and teachers alike, he has said.

ACTION: *Calling openly for one is simply not enough.* Israel have ignored all such calls from the United Nations, the international community and worldwide charities. **A ceasefire has to be enforced, all aid needs to be allowed into Gaza and the West bank unhindered.**

The UK needs to call for, and support a UN-led peacekeeping force to be sent to Gaza and the West Bank to **enforce** a ceasefire within the next 30 days.

5. The UK needs to apply similar pressure on its American and European partners to equally support **enforcing** a ceasefire.

ACTION: The UK Government and its allies need to make clear to Israel that their calls for a ceasefire shall no longer go ignored.

6. The Foreign Secretary David Lammy has suggested "trusted" Arab states may take a security role in Gaza. This negates the Palestinians' fundamental right to select their own government and allows other countries to decide which states may take a role in Gaza.

ACTION: The UK must support and include the Palestinians in being part of a peacekeeping force within Gaza and the West Bank.

Question Two: What can be learned from the record of UK Government policies to date?

Answer:

7. The most important lesson to be learned is that successive UK Governments have wilfully ignored their own foreign policy and commitment; namely **the recognition of 2 sovereign states, Israel and Palestine, coexisting within borders based on those of pre-June 1967** remains both British and EU policy, backed by the UN Security Council. It is the right policy for both Israelis and Palestinians, and for the Middle East.

8. The gov.uk website states “We work to improve the United Kingdom’s security and prosperity through a just peace between a stable, democratic Palestinian State and Israel, based on 1967 borders, ending the occupation by agreement. Our aim is to improve the ties of friendship between the Palestinian and British peoples”.

ACTION: For the UK Government to publicly call for all both Palestine and Israel to respect and observe the 1967 borders.

To further call for the international community to enforce such borders such either party refuse to do so.

9. The Labour Manifesto 2024 described Palestinian statehood as the “inalienable right of the Palestinian people”. The UK government has remained silent on this issue since being elected.

ACTION: The UK Government must respect and honour this pledge; that a Palestinian state be immediately recognised by the UK.

10. The Government has kept from disclosing the legal advice it has received in relation to its ongoing support, and weapons supply to Israel.

ACTION: This advice must be published in full without delay, so the UK public can be assured that our government is acting fully within international law.

11. The UK needs to distance itself from Israel both politically and economically until the allegations of **genocide** made by the ICC as well as many reputable charities such as Oxfam and Amnesty international are thoroughly and fully investigated.

**ACTION: The UK government must end ALL arms sales to Israel, and to urge other international partners, including Germany and the USA to do so as well; this would reduce the weapons supply and thus incentivise moves towards a ceasefire
The UK also needs to cease any financial aid it sends to Israel.**

12. The UK needs to be seen to be actively supporting and upholding international law. This includes supporting the International Criminal Court in seeking the arrest of Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, a former minister in the Israeli government called Yoav Gallant, and a Hamas leader, Mohammed Deif.

ACTION: The UK government must repeatedly and publicly call for these individuals to be arrested and brought to justice before the ICC.

13. The UK must resist and oppose calls for a “preferred” Palestinian government. The Palestinians must be given right of self-determination, and they must be allowed to choose their representatives as they see fit

ACTION: The UK Government should endorse whoever the Palestinian’s select as their next Government.

Question Three: How can the UK assure the resilience of efforts to bring about a lasting peace at a time of uncertainty caused by conflicts elsewhere and changes in leadership in the international community?

Answer:

14. Firstly, the UK needs to recognise that the conflict is not being caused, created or prolonged by external influences or governments. It is being caused by Israel's continuing *occupation of the Palestine lands*. There is nothing uncertain about this.

ACTION: The UK needs to publicly recognise and condemn the ongoing occupation of all post-1967 Palestinian land. It should further condemn all settler initiatives in the occupied territories.

15. The UK needs to ensure it is being fair and equal to both parties if it wishes to be a part of any long-lasting peace effort. If the UK wishes to publicly show it is standing "shoulder-to shoulder" with Israeli people, it needs to equally do the same with the Palestinian people.

ACTION: The UK Government must be seen to publicly showing support with senior Palestinian representatives, including the current Palestinian Ambassador to the UK. Similarly, any future initiatives to commemorate the 7th October attacks must include equal recognition of the suffering on both sides of the conflict.

16. The ICC has stated it is to investigate allegations of war crimes by both Israel and HAMAS. For there to be a true and lasting peace, justice needs to be served *and seen to be served*.

ACTION: The UK needs to support an international coalition to **investigate** all allegations made on both sides, to document all war crimes, and to call for justice to be served against those held responsible. This must include free and unfettered access to international journalists to all areas of Gaza and the West Bank.

17. The cost of rebuilding Gaza yet remains unknown but will run into tens of billions of pounds.

ACTION: The UK needs to encourage international partners to end financial aid to Israel, and instead redirect the funds to helping rebuild Gaza and regions of Lebanon affected by Israel's actions. This would pressure Israel to seek a ceasefire and will lessen the impact on innocent civilians and begin the process of rebuilding a functioning society.

Furthermore, Israel must be held financially responsible for all the destruction it has caused in Gaza and the West Bank and must be held to account to make the financial reparations required in the rebuilding of Gaza and the West Bank.

CONCLUSIONS

18. These actions must begin, pre-ceasefire and must continue post-ceasefire. The UK must show true leadership by remaining neutral and impartial in its support for humanity and be an active partner in bringing lasting peace to the region.
19. These are all actions the United Kingdom can undertake, to reach a sufficient and long-lasting ceasefire deal that will lead to long term peace within the region. Given our history with Palestine and Israel, the UK government has a moral duty to encourage regional and international partners to take these same actions, to end the pain and suffering of innocent civilians, caused by Israel's ongoing brutalisation and occupation of the Palestinian lands and people.

END

31st December 2024