

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on UK Cooperation for Ceasefire and Peace in Palestine

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1. Introduction

I am submitting this evidence as a British citizen who feels shocked and distressed about what my government is doing to perpetuate war crimes.

2. Response to the Questions

2.1 The UK's Role in Action

The UK occupies a unique and significant position to drive efforts toward a ceasefire in Palestine, underpinned by its historical ties, strategic influence, and diplomatic weight.

- **Historical Ties:** The UK's historical relationship with Palestine, including its role in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and its mandate over Palestine prior to 1948, continues to shape the geopolitical landscape today. This history imposes a moral and political responsibility to help resolve the ongoing conflict and to correct historical wrongs.
- **UN Security Council Membership:** As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the UK has the capacity to push for binding resolutions to cease hostilities, pressure Israel to halt violations of international law, and call for international investigations into possible war crimes.
- **Global Partnerships:** The UK's influence within Western powers and its partnerships with Middle Eastern nations provide an avenue to engage in multilateral diplomatic efforts and coordinate international responses.

2.2 Immediate Ceasefire and Accountability

Given the catastrophic humanitarian crisis, the UK must urgently advocate for and facilitate an immediate, unconditional ceasefire. The scale of violence against Palestinians since October 7th—resulting in the deaths of over 200,000 Palestinians—demands a swift and unequivocal response. The UK must prioritize human rights and support calls for a ceasefire, acknowledging its role in enabling these atrocities.

2.3 Disarmament and Suspension of Arms Trade

The UK must immediately halt its arms trade with Israel, given the overwhelming evidence of Israel's violations of international law. The UK's continued supply of weapons and military technology to Israel—despite clear evidence of war crimes, including the targeting of civilians and destruction of critical infrastructure—has exacerbated the suffering of the Palestinian population. The UK must take responsibility for its complicity by suspending arms transfers and halting military support until the violence stops.

2.4 Military Intervention to Protect Civilians

While a diplomatic ceasefire is the priority, the UK should consider options for direct intervention to protect Palestinian civilians, such as:

- **Imposing No-Fly Zones:** To prevent Israeli airstrikes and protect civilian lives.
 - **Deploying Peacekeeping Forces:** An international peacekeeping mission could be established to monitor the ceasefire, protect civilian areas, and provide security for humanitarian aid.
 - **Establishing Humanitarian Safe Zones:** These zones would provide a sanctuary for civilians and ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, including food, medicine, and essential supplies.
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3. What can be learned from the record of UK Government policies to date?

3.1 Historical Analysis

The UK has long espoused support for a two-state solution and a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, its actions have often contradicted these principles. Despite vocal support for peace, the UK has consistently failed to pressure Israel to halt its military operations and respect international law. The UK's arms sales to Israel and its diplomatic backing of Israeli actions in Gaza, the West Bank, and beyond have played a significant role in prolonging the violence.

3.2 Lessons Learned

The UK must reckon with its role in enabling Israeli military actions that have resulted in the deaths of thousands of Palestinian civilians. It must cease prioritizing its strategic alliances and economic interests over the rights and lives of the Palestinian people. The UK must learn to support justice, accountability, and human rights above all, ensuring that its future policies no longer perpetuate violence or enable genocidal actions.

4. 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?

4.1 Ensuring Consistency and Accountability

The UK must adopt a consistent, principled approach in its foreign policy, irrespective of changes in global leadership or external conflicts. It must confront its past mistakes, hold Israel accountable for its actions, and ensure that the Palestinian cause remains a central tenet of UK foreign policy. The UK must demonstrate unwavering support for the rights of Palestinians and work to end the violence and human suffering.

4.2 International Cooperation and Legal Action

The UK must lead the call for international legal accountability. This includes:

- **Independent Inquiry:** The UK should demand an independent, international investigation into Israel's actions, specifically focusing on the war crimes and genocide committed against Palestinians.
- **Support for the International Court of Justice (ICJ):** The UK must support ICJ rulings on Israel's crimes, including apartheid, racial segregation, and violations of international law, and advocate for reparations for Palestinians.

- **Enforcing Sanctions:** The UK should advocate for international sanctions against Israel, including a comprehensive arms embargo and travel restrictions on Israeli officials implicated in war crimes.
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5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Key Points

- The UK's complicity in the ongoing violence stems from its arms trade and diplomatic support for Israel, enabling the atrocities committed against Palestinians.
- Over 200,000 Palestinians have died since October 7th, underscoring the urgent need for action to halt the genocide.
- The UK must take responsibility for its role and suspend all arms sales to Israel immediately until the violence ceases.
- The UK should push for an independent inquiry into its complicity and hold Israel accountable for its war crimes.
- International cooperation, including peacekeeping forces and sanctions, must be pursued to ensure lasting peace.

5.2 Recommendations

- **Immediate Suspension of Arms Sales:** The UK should halt all military aid and arms sales to Israel until the genocide stops and international law is respected.
- **Launch an Independent Inquiry:** A thorough investigation into the UK's role in enabling Israeli violations should be launched, with a view to holding individuals and entities accountable.
- **Advocate for International Sanctions:** The UK should push for an arms embargo on Israel and advocate for travel bans and other sanctions on key Israeli officials responsible for the violence.
- **Establish Humanitarian Protection Mission:** An international peacekeeping force should be deployed to protect civilians and enforce a ceasefire, particularly in Gaza.
- **Support Reparations:** The UK should call for reparations for Palestinians, as recommended by the ICJ, for the systemic violations of their rights, including apartheid and racial segregation.

6. Proposal for a UK Council of Ethics

In light of the UK's role in this ongoing crisis, I propose the establishment of a UK Council of Ethics, which would operate with the following remit to guide government actions in relation to international conflicts, human rights, and arms trade:

6.1 Decision-Making on Arms Trade

- **Shift Authority to an Ethics Minister:** The responsibility for decisions regarding arms sales should be moved from the Ministry of Trade to a newly created position of Ethics Minister. This minister would have the authority to assess the moral, legal, and humanitarian consequences of arms sales and military support, rather than allowing these decisions to be made based on economic or strategic interests alone.
- **Ethical Review:** The Council would be tasked with conducting thorough ethical reviews of all arms sales and military support, with the explicit aim of preventing complicity in violations of international law, human rights abuses, and genocide.

6.2 Recognizing Palestine's Sovereignty

- The Council would play a central role in advocating for Palestinian state recognition, ensuring that UK policy aligns with international law and human rights. The UK must immediately recognize Palestine as an independent sovereign state, as it was in 1948 before the Nakba and the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. The UK should formally acknowledge Palestine's right to exist within the borders that existed at the time of its declaration of independence, in accordance with international law and UN resolutions.

31st December 2024