

Written evidence for parliamentary select committee submitted by Dr Mubashir Cheema (IPC0076)

Q: WHAT CAN – AND SHOULD – THE UK DO, IN COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, TO HELP BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE?

para 1

First, stop fueling the fire. More than 90% of UK's declared material arms export licences are still in place. This is something a willing UK government should be able to do suspend immediately. This will help UK be a regional and an international leader to help other countries make the same decision. Remember that actions speak louder than words.

para 2

Second, fulfill obligations to international institutions. The oft-quoted restoration of UNRWA funding is in fact UK's ongoing obligation to the United Nations. UK also has obligations to United Nations, WHO, UNICEF, International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice. Clear assessments have been put forward by International Committee of the Red Cross, Doctors without borders (MSF), Save the Children, Oxfam, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. These must be acknowledged and their assessments respected.

para 3

Allow professional institutions to make up their mind about the issue. Stop pressuring UK medical institutions to speak up about destruction of medical facilities in Gaza. Rid the public funded broadcaster (BBC) of individuals with blatant conflict of interest (Robbie Gibb and Raffi Berg at least) as they have not proven trustworthy and impartial.

para 4

In parity with response given to Russian aggression (in Crimea /Ukraine) and to apartheid South Africa, the UK and our regional/international partners must disengage and divest from the belligerent side. That includes removal from UEFA, FIFA, Eurovision, ending medical, educational, commercial and military engagement until the Israeli government agrees to work within international rules of engagement (actual rules and not its semantic contortions based on political convenience please).

Q: WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE RECORD OF UK GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO DATE?

para 5

One, that UK created this problem by promising a supposedly Jewish homeland in a place where Jews, Muslims and Christians of various denominations had already lived together in harmony for a thousand years. This was done in a situation when UK (or the British Empire) did not own that land- this area was a British Mandate, and not British territory. Then successive governments have doubled down to provide diplomatic, financial and military support to Israel (and also for a rather long time to the erstwhile apartheid South Africa) presumably considering them as the last bastions of colonialism, a thoroughly outdated concept.

para 6

Both the Tory and current Labour governments have taken money away from the British people through taxes, helped worsen the cost of living crisis, but have subsidised arms sales to foreign governments. Externally we have cheer led and paid towards the invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya- spent resources and credibility- lost our lads and lasses, probably for the promise of delivering democracy and receiving cheap oil. But still we have had to defund public services, have stagnated economic growth and failed the veterans.

para 7

Recently, both the UK's major parties have stalled progress and international pressure on Israel several times, by claiming (or implying) that a breakthrough was near, only for Israel to commit yet another escalation. That is shameful.

para 8

There is no parity in the quality and quantity of support offered by UK to the two parties- Palestinians and Israelis. The new UK prime minister this year declined to meet the Muslim Association of Britain amongst a baseless smear campaign, only to go ahead and make a keynote appearance at the annual Labour Friends of Israel whose past chair is the literal official spokesperson for the Israeli government right now.

Q: 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?

para 9

Stop being the equivalent of a drug dealer feigning empathy with the victims. Prioritise British public, respect international institutions and improve our credibility as a nation. Promising £3billion per year in perpetuity to Ukraine while the British pensioners freeze this winter, is a remarkably short sighted method of kissing the american back side.

para 10

There has to be a better way of distributing our international development funds too. For example, if the UK wants to benefit from the vast gas reserves off Gaza coast- surely supporting the Palestinians to build it is the better way to secure competitive contracts for British companies. (Instead of the current apparent strategy of first paying for destroying Gaza, then paying for the clean up, and then possibly paying sectarian factions like in Iraq, Libya, Syria).

para 11

Please understand that if someone thinks that they can, or should, build a nirvana over the bones of women and children, they genuinely need to have their heads examined. That asserting the rules of middle ages to decimate a population for its resources will not bring back the glory of the British Empire. Please dont listen to the people who, in living memory, swore blind that Iraq possessed innumerable weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and that no amount of personal wealth or post-retirement book deals will solve any politician or a general's erectile dysfunction.

You are very welcome.

31st December 2024