

## **Written evidence submitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee Inquiry: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict by ActionAid UK (IPC0101)**

### **1. About ActionAid**

- 1.1. ActionAid is an international charity, working to address the structural causes of poverty and injustice. Globally, we want to see a system that is fair and just for all, that starts from a foundation of human rights, peace and security, balanced with the rights of the natural world. We believe in the individual and collective power of women and girls to create a just and fair world. ActionAid has been operating in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) since 1993. Through our partnerships with local organisations, we provide essential support and protection to the most marginalised, with a particular emphasis on women and children facing the harsh realities of violence and rights violations. For more information, please contact Joanne O'Neill, Head of Advocacy, [joanne.oneill@actionaid.org](mailto:joanne.oneill@actionaid.org)

### **2. Summary of Evidence**

- 2.1. Former and current government policy is failing to support efforts to end the devastating violence and risks UK complicity in serious breaches of international law. The current UK government's actions, such as calling for an immediate ceasefire; resuming UNRWA funding, and withdrawing objections to ICC jurisdiction, are welcome but stronger action around diplomatic pressures and arms embargo is needed.
- 2.2. The UK must increase diplomatic pressure on the Israeli government to cease the violence; fully support relevant UN resolutions, and uphold judgements from international bodies to ensure accountability and justice for violations of international law.
- 2.3. Despite suspending a limited number of arms export licenses, the UK continues to issue arms licenses to the Israeli government, contradicting both domestic and international law and risking UK complicity in war crimes. The UK must revoke all arms export licenses to the Israeli government.
- 2.4. The UK must use all available diplomatic levers, including sanctions and asset freezes, to support efforts to end the Israeli government's blockade of Gaza; secure a ceasefire, and ensure humanitarian access. UK diplomatic efforts should also focus on the unconditional release of Israeli hostages, as well as Palestinians prisoners.
- 2.5. To ensure the resilience of efforts to bring about a lasting peace, the UK must integrate gendered context analysis into all humanitarian response planning and delivery. The UK must also prioritise the meaningful participation of women's rights organisations (WROs) in international peace and humanitarian discussions, recognising their leadership as essential for sustainable conflict resolution and peacebuilding negotiations. Increased funding for WROs is crucial in ensuring that the rights and needs of women and girls are central to long-term peace processes.

### **3. What can be learned from the record of UK Government policies to date?**

- 3.1. ActionAid is concerned that UK government policy has done little to support efforts to bring the devastating violence to an end and has placed the UK at risk of complicity in serious violations of international humanitarian law and of complicity in war crimes. Both the former and current UK governments have failed to fully acknowledge the root causes of the violence across Gaza and the West Bank but instead have continued to provide diplomatic support and arms licenses to the Israeli government, despite increasing evidence to suggest serious breaches of international law.

- 3.2. Specific violations of international humanitarian law include: (1) disproportionate use of force: reports indicate that Israel's military operations in Gaza have involved indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians, and hospitals, contravening international humanitarian law principles; and (2) collective punishment: the blockade of Gaza and restrictions on movement and access have been criticised as a form of collective punishment and limiting access to humanitarian assistance.
- 3.3. There has also been evidence of war crimes perpetrated by the Israeli government. The ICC has issued warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Chief Yoav Gallant, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The charges include using starvation as a method of warfare, murder, persecution, and inhumane acts against Gaza's civilian population. Their actions allegedly deprived civilians of essential supplies and involved intentional attacks on civilians.
- 3.4. Since July 2024 and the election of the current UK government, some positive steps have been taken - notably, the call for an immediate ceasefire; the resumption of funding for UNRWA, and the withdrawal of the UK's objection to the International Criminal Court (ICC)'s authority to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. However, these actions have not gone far enough in supporting efforts to end to the violence, and prevent UK complicity to plausible violations of international law.

#### **4. Failure to align with UN positions and respond to plausible violations of international law**

- 4.1. Since the crisis began, the UK government has largely failed to align with the UN positions aimed at stopping the devastating violence in Gaza. Instead, the UK has appeared to favour political alignment with select international allies - namely the United States and the Israeli government - over compliance with international law and the commitments it has made under various UN treaties and resolutions.
- 4.2. ActionAid has witnessed first-hand the implications of this collective failure of the international community to respond decisively to the crisis. Since October 2023, it is estimated that 1,200 Israelis have been killed and 5,400 Israelis injured, while an estimated 101 hostages remain unaccounted for.<sup>1</sup> As of the end of 2024, over 45,500 Palestinians have been killed, nearly 70% of whom are women and children<sup>2</sup> and close to 105,500 Palestinians injured, of which 75% are estimated to be women and children.<sup>3</sup>
- 4.3. As of the end of 2024, approximately 1.9 million people in Gaza (90% of the total population) have been internally displaced, many of them multiple times.<sup>4</sup> An estimated 92% of houses in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged<sup>5</sup>, forcing 1.6 million people to live in makeshift shelters<sup>6</sup> that are overcrowded, in locations at risk of being flooded with sewage water.<sup>7</sup> Across all displacement camps, extremely poor hygiene conditions are contributing to the spread of hepatitis A and B, pediculosis, gastroenteritis, skin diseases and respiratory tract infections.<sup>8</sup> Women in particular have reported a significant loss of privacy and safety, often

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-31-december-2024>

<sup>2</sup> See: [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/there-must-be-due-reckoning-horrific-violations-possible-atrocity-crimes](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/there-must-be-due-reckoning-horrific-violations-possible-atrocity-crimes)

<sup>3</sup> See: [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts)

<sup>4</sup> See: [Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip \(3 December 2024\) | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-31-december-2024>

<sup>6</sup> [Humanitarian Situation Update #241 | Gaza Strip | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory](#)

<sup>7</sup> See: [More than 1.6m people without proper shelter in Gaza and Lebanon as temperatures drop below freezing in some places | ActionAid International](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Humanitarian Situation Update #241 | Gaza Strip | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory](#)

facing harassment and at heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This is coupled with a lack of access to safe spaces and support due to repeated forced displacements.<sup>9</sup>

- 4.4. At the same time, the risk of famine persists across the whole Gaza Strip and<sup>10</sup> acute malnutrition is at serious levels - ten times higher than before the escalation of hostilities.<sup>11</sup> The lack of sufficient food is having a particularly detrimental impact on women, who often eat less and last in emergency crisis, with 95% of pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza facing severe food poverty.<sup>12</sup> ActionAid staff and partners in Gaza have reported an increase in miscarriages as a result of malnutrition and stress of constant danger<sup>13</sup>, with one hospital in Gaza reporting having a 300% increase in miscarriage rate.<sup>14</sup> ActionAid's partner Hospital - Al-Awda Hospital in North Gaza – has further reported having to turn away potential blood donors, despite a huge demand for blood supplies to help the sick and injured, because volunteers are too weakened from malnutrition.<sup>15</sup>
- 4.5. As evidence of serious rights violations and plausible genocide in Gaza has increased, both the current and former UK governments have fallen short of the UK's ethical and treaty obligations to prevent the crime of genocide, and its own stated policy to prevent all mass atrocity crimes<sup>16</sup>; putting the UK at risk of complicity in violations of the Genocide Convention. When, for example, the ICJ's provisional judgement ruled that Israeli government practices in Gaza are plausibly genocidal, these were openly undermined by the former UK government, which responded that *"Israel's actions in Gaza cannot be described as a genocide"*.<sup>17</sup>
- 4.6. In May 2024, in response to the increasing violence and devastation, the ICC placed an application for the warrant of arrest for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and three Hamas leaders.<sup>18</sup> The former government openly opposed the ICC querying whether the court can exercise jurisdiction over Israeli nationals to issue arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant. This was a concerning opposition to international legal accountability measures to uphold the rule of law.
- 4.7. In resetting UK government policy, the current UK government's withdrawal of the UK's objection to the ICC's authority is a welcome step. However, when arrest warrants were issued by the ICC in November 2024, FCDO Minister Hamish Falconer MP, told the House of Commons: *"I would like to just be clear that what I have said this afternoon is not that the Government will uphold arrest warrants. What I have been clear about this afternoon is that due process will be followed."*<sup>19</sup> ActionAid is concerned by this apparent hesitation to support the ICC's ruling. Failure to robustly uphold the ICC's ruling undermines the international rules-based system, as well as casting doubt on the integrity of the international community's collective pursuit of justice. While the UK has openly condemned rights and international law

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<sup>9</sup> See: [New ActionAid report highlights harrowing impact of war and violence on Palestinian women and girls, and calls for vital role of women-led organisations to be recognised | ActionAid International](#)

<sup>10</sup> See: [Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - October 2024 and Projection for November 2024 - April 2025 | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#)

<sup>11</sup> See: [Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - October 2024 and Projection for November 2024 - April 2025 | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#)

<sup>12</sup> See: [Sitrep 50b](#)

<sup>13</sup> See: [Gaza doctors report rise in miscarriages | ActionAid UK](#)

<sup>14</sup> See: [The long shadow of starvation in Gaza - CARE](#)

<sup>15</sup> See: [Gaza Residents Too Malnourished to Donate Blood at Overwhelmed Hospitals | ActionAid UK](#)

<sup>16</sup> See: [UK INGOs call for UK to accept and respect International Court of Justice ruling on Israel and Gaza | Bond](#)

<sup>17</sup> See: [International Court of Justice interim ruling on South Africa vs Israel: FCDO statement - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>18</sup> See: [Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC: Applications for arrest warrants in the situation in the State of Palestine | International Criminal Court](#)

<sup>19</sup> HC Deb, 25 November 2024, c517.

violations in other contexts, it risks appearing inconsistent in its respect for international rules.

- 4.8. Similarly, the UK must also support the landmark ICJ ruling which declared that the Israeli government's 57-year occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip is in breach of international law. Under the ICJ's advisory opinion, all States are under an obligation not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation. The current UK government's commitment to recognise Palestinian Statehood and press for a two-state solution is welcome.<sup>20</sup> However, with continuing exports of arms to the Israeli government, the UK is not complying with the ICJ's advisory opinion (see below).

## **5. Continuing arms licences and exports of military goods to the Israeli government**

- 5.1. The current UK government has suspended approximately 30 arms export licences to the Israeli government. This is a welcome step and a recognition of the clear risk of UK arms being used in serious violations of international law. However, given that recognition, it is clearly incoherent and insufficient that the government has failed to end all 350 arms licenses and arms transfers to the Israeli government.
- 5.2. According to international law, all states, including the UK, must 'ensure respect' for international humanitarian law by parties to an armed conflict, as required by 1949 Geneva Conventions and customary international law. States must accordingly refrain from transferring any weapon or ammunition – or parts for them – if it is expected, given the facts or past patterns of behaviour, that they would be used to violate international law. According to UN experts, any transfer of weapons or ammunition to the Israeli military that would be used in Gaza is likely to violate international law<sup>21</sup> and must cease immediately – human rights organisations have been raising alarm consistently of the ongoing potential violations of international law.<sup>22</sup> Such transfers are prohibited even if the exporting State does not intend the arms to be used in violation of the law – or does not know with certainty that they would be used in such a way – as long as there is a clear risk.
- 5.3. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a legally binding international agreement that regulates the global arms trade, ensuring that transfers of conventional weapons do not contribute to human rights abuses, which the UK ratified in 2014. The ATT also integrates international law by requiring state parties to assess the risk of exported arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence (GBV), including explicit commitments to prevent arms exports that may be used to commit or facilitate acts of GBV.<sup>23</sup> At this stage, UN experts report credible allegations of severe human rights violations and serious acts of<sup>24</sup> against Palestinian women and girls by the Israeli military, which would oblige signatories of the ATT to consider the gendered impacts of their arms exports and assess how arms exports are being used in serious acts of GBV. Reports included those of sexual assaults, including women being stripped and searched by male officers, rape, and threats of sexual violence. On the 6 May in detailing the violence against women and children in Gaza, UN experts reported their dismay at<sup>25</sup> continued reports of sexual assault and violence against women and girls, including against those detained by Israeli occupation forces. Under the ATT, the UK has both a legal and moral obligation to ensure that its arms exports do not contribute to violations of international humanitarian law, or facilitate acts of GBV, and

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<sup>20</sup> See: HC Deb, 19 July 2024, c300.

<sup>21</sup> [Arms exports to Israel must stop immediately: UN experts | OHCHR](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Joint Statement on Conflict-Induced Hunger in Gaza - occupied Palestinian territory | ReliefWeb](#)

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/TheArmsTradeTreaty1/TheArmsTradeTreaty.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20240409051724/https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts>

ultimately stop selling arms to the Israeli government due to the above reports and risk of severe human rights violations and GBV against Palestinian women and girls. A clear assessment and evaluation of the UK arm sales should be conducted as the minimum, as required by Article 7 of the ATT. Failure to act in such cases undermines the UK's commitments to the ATT and international law and highlights a risk in undermining the UK Government's credibility as a global advocate for human rights and gender equality more broadly.

- 5.4. Notwithstanding the partial embargo, the UK continues to 'arm' the Israeli government, exporting key components for F-35 jets reportedly used in Gaza airstrikes<sup>26</sup>. Given the clear risk that the military equipment in question may be used to violate human rights or international law, revoking all the licenses is required to comply with both domestic and international law. By continuing to permit these licenses, the UK risks complicity in potential war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank, and serious violations of international law. It is worth noting that the UK has previously suspended and revoked licences due to end use violations and breaking of international law, including in 2019 when the UK Government was forced to suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia following a ruling from the Court of Appeal that due to the use of arms by Saudi Arabia in violations of international law in Yemen.

## 6. Focus on humanitarian access

- 6.1. The UK government has demonstrated a strong commitment to humanitarian aid, emphasising it as a key element of its approach through recent funding pledges, including resuming funding to UNRWA with a £21 million pledge for 2024. However, in ActionAid's experience, access constraints continue to severely undermine the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance across Gaza, including the delivery of food, medical care, fuel, protection and shelter support, and water, sanitation and hygiene services to hundreds of thousands of people. In addition, since October 2024, the Israeli military has been conducting a ground offensive in North Gaza, restricting access to humanitarian assistance for nearly two months. Our team in the region found that even when they have funds to purchase supplies and arrange for delivery, the Israeli state has prevented any distribution of aid and humanitarian necessities. They have been doing this through road blockages, check points, refusals at border crossings, restrictions on fuel and through direct attacks to trucks carrying aid. As a result, thousands in North Gaza have been left without basic necessities, while mass casualty events continue to unfold.<sup>27</sup>
- 6.2. The impact of this has been devastating, leading to near-famine and the spread of diseases. By the end of 2024, 90% of the population of Gaza were internally displaced and do not have access to basic amenities including food, fuel and fresh water. Access to healthcare is also under attack by the Israeli military, with hospitals regularly forcibly evacuated, medical staff arrested and restrictions on staff movement<sup>28</sup>. As the Israeli government is actively preventing humanitarian supplies to enter Gaza, medical supplies required for this crucial care has been There is currently only one partially functioning hospital in northern Gaza, Al-Awda Hospital which is run by ActionAid partners, and the attack on this and other hospitals are a clear violation of international humanitarian law.
- 6.3. Gaza has become the most dangerous place to be an aid worker<sup>29</sup>. The UN has reported the continued violations of international humanitarian law including the detaining and targeted attacks on humanitarian aid workers<sup>30</sup>. ActionAid's partners in Gaza have seen the same

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24837504.labour-refuse-block-israel-access-f-35-jets-despite-gaza-bombing/>

<sup>27</sup> See: [Humanitarian Situation Update #243 | Gaza Strip | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory](#)

<sup>28</sup> <https://actionaid.org.uk/latest-news/actionaid-partner-hospital-northern-gaza-ordered-evacuate>

<sup>29</sup> See: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/israel-has-made-gaza-deadliest-place-aid-workers-enar>

<sup>30</sup> See: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/flash-appeal-occupied-palestinian-territory-2025>

types of attacks on their staff, including instances where aid workers and civilians have faced targeted military action and been killed during food distribution activities.

- 6.4. There was a tragic death of a staff member of ActionAid's partner organization MA'AN Development Center in Gaza following missile attack on a World Food Program (WFP) warehouse operated by MA'AN in Deir Al-Balah during January 2025 . The staff member and two other staff members were seriously injured in the attack, suffering shrapnel wounds, according to MA'AN. They were treated in one of the few still-functioning hospitals, but the doctors were unable to save one of them.
- 6.5. While the UK government's support for humanitarian assistance is, therefore, vital, there is an urgent need to uphold international law and exert effective political pressure to address the root causes of the crisis and underlying challenges impeding an effective humanitarian response. Until there is a ceasefire and an immediate opening of access for humanitarian aid into Gaza, the UK's support is weakened. This has been highlighted by the ICJ's provisional measures ordering the Israeli government to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance, and its obligations under international law as an Occupying Power to meet the basic needs of civilians. The UK and the international community must urgently ensure the opening of humanitarian land routes and challenge the Israeli government's practice of linking humanitarian assistance to its political and military objectives.

## **7. Inconsistency with existing UK commitments on gender equality**

- 7.1. As in all crises, GBV in the oPt has been exacerbated, with increased reports of rape, forced marriage, exploitation.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the complete collapse of Gaza's legal system has left a legal vacuum, with women unable to obtain justice or secure their legal rights. In the West Bank, Palestinian women are confronted with significant protection challenges, including punitive and arbitrary home demolitions, physical and psychological violence perpetrated by Israeli soldiers and settlers.<sup>32</sup> Sexual violence in conflict, wherever it occurs, is a war crime. All reports of sexual violence in conflict must be addressed through independent, impartial investigation. All perpetrators should be held accountable, and all survivors should receive immediate medical and psychosocial support to rebuild their lives.
- 7.2. Women in Gaza are giving birth in dire conditions—often in overcrowded shelters, in their homes, on streets amid rubble, or in overwhelmed and unsanitary healthcare facilities where the risk of infection and medical complications is escalating. The critical fuel shortage has further impacted life-saving medical equipment needed for maternal care.<sup>33</sup> Over 180 women are giving birth in Gaza every day, with women undergoing caesarean sections without anaesthesia, as anaesthetics remain one of the prohibited medical supplies for entry into Gaza.<sup>34</sup>
- 7.3. The crisis in Gaza has severely disrupted menstrual health for an estimated 690,000 women and girls, leaving them without access to sanitary products, clean water, or private facilities in overcrowded shelters and camps.<sup>35</sup> These conditions increase the risk of infections, psychological distress, and unhygienic practices, with reports of women resorting to using makeshift materials like pieces of tents in place of sanitary product.<sup>36</sup> The overwhelmed humanitarian system has been unable to meet these critical needs, highlighting the broader health and dignity challenges women and girls endure in Gaza.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> ActionAid. *Agents of Change: The Role of Palestine's Women-Led Organisations in Crisis*. Sept. 2024, [Women Policy Brief Gaza.pdf](#)

<sup>32</sup> ActionAid. *Agents of Change: The Role of Palestine's Women-Led Organisations in Crisis*. Sept. 2024, [Women Policy Brief Gaza.pdf](#)

<sup>33</sup> See: [Fuel shortages push Gaza's hospitals to the brink of collapse | ActionAid UK](#)

<sup>34</sup> See: [Al-Awda Hospital resumes life-saving work | ActionAid UK](#)

<sup>35</sup> See: [Newsroom | UNRWA](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Women in Gaza using scraps of tent in place of period products | ActionAid UK](#)

<sup>37</sup> ActionAid. *Agents of Change: The Role of Palestine's Women-Led Organisations in Crisis*. Sept. 2024, [Women Policy Brief Gaza.pdf](#)

7.4. ActionAid partners Wefaq Society for Women and Child Care (WEFAQ) shared the specific ways in which this crisis are impacting women beyond the bombardment itself: *“Women [have been] majorly affected by the war as they are subjected to violence in different shapes and forms. Violence on women and girls [has been] increasing as the war [has] progressed, whether it [is] domestic violence or violence coming from the Israeli forces. We’ve noticed an increase in [mental health] problems, and domestic violence. A lack of privacy in shelters can lead to verbal and sexual harassment, [even] from the service providers themselves. These incidents are increasing. This has been recorded throughout our work during visits to displacement shelters and camps for women. My team and I are part of the displaced women of the community, so we are faced with trauma and ongoing issues on a daily basis. Despite all that, we power through to help other women who live in the same conditions as us.”*<sup>38</sup>

7.5. The UK government's policy towards the Israeli government and the oPt appears inconsistent with its stated commitments to atrocity prevention, conflict prevention, and the protection of civilians (as outlined in the UK’s Integrated Review and the International Development White Paper); as well as its broader principles under initiatives such as Children in Armed Conflict (CAAC) and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). While the oPt was not named as a focus country in the UK’s WPS National Action Plan (NAP) 2023–2027, the NAP explicitly states that non-focus countries can and should be considered. The failure to implement the WPS NAP in the oPt—namely the commitments under Strategic Objective 3 to implement gender-responsive humanitarian assistance that ensures the active participation and leadership of women and girls in response efforts—risks exacerbating the suffering of Palestinian women and girls, underscoring the urgent need for its inclusion in the UK’s WPS framework.

## **8. What can, and should, the UK do, in cooperation with regional and international partners, to help bring about a ceasefire and ensure resilience of efforts to bring about lasting peace?**

8.1. The UK government must urgently work with international allies and use all diplomatic means to ensure a sustainable ceasefire, de-escalate the violence, and protect civilians, particularly women and children who are uniquely impacted. To that end the UK must:

8.1.1. **Leverage all diplomatic means to secure an immediate ceasefire in order to stop the violence and facilitate the release of remaining hostages and Palestinians prisoners who have been reportedly subjected to inhumane treatment in violation of international law.** This includes using diplomatic dialogue, targeted sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes on Israeli government officials, as necessary.

8.1.2. **Revoke all arms licenses that enable UK companies to export military goods to the Israeli government.** In addition to complying with both domestic and international law, revoking of arms licences to Israel is a fundamental step in gaining a ceasefire. The continued supply of arms to the Israeli government while aiming to achieve a ceasefire are incoherent.

8.1.3. **Use political leverage to compel the Israeli government to immediately lift its long-term blockade and current siege of Gaza and ensure robust protection of and unfettered access for humanitarian assistance in line with its obligations under international law.** In line with the Genocide Convention and international law, the UK government must demand that the Israeli government facilitates a principled humanitarian response in Gaza, allowing sufficient food, fuel, medical aid, protection services, temporary shelters, unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance and other essential items to reach those in need.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/latest-news/rise-violence-against-women-and-girls-reported-gaza>

- 8.1.4. **Prioritise humanitarian funding to local civil society actors, including women’s rights organisations (WROs) and ensure that all humanitarian efforts prioritise the most marginalised groups.** The UK government must allocate specific, flexible and long-term funds to support WROs and initiatives focused on the protection of Palestinian women. WROs are leading the way in responding to crises by integrating peacebuilding, humanitarian and development efforts.<sup>39</sup> Whether advocating for policy change at the national level or challenging societal attitudes towards women’s rights within communities, WROs take long-term approaches by engaging with various institutions and stakeholders.
- 8.1.5. **Ensure the meaningful participation of, and access to, women’s rights organisations (WROs) in international conversations.** Women are uniquely positioned to understand the root causes of the challenges they face and the specific needs and realities of women and girls, thanks to long-established and trusted relationships within their communities. Without their involvement, it would be impossible to identify and provide the essential services that women, girls, and other marginalised groups require in times of crisis and to advocate for their rights. Research has shown how women’s rights actors in conflict settings actively work towards sustainable conflict resolution and recovery, promoting broader societal transformations that can lead to positive sustainable peace; demonstrating that peace processes are more likely to be successful and durable when women are involved.<sup>40</sup> Recognising the critical leadership of women in humanitarian efforts not only aligns and utilises commitments made in the UK’s WPS NAP but is imperative for achieving a more effective and comprehensive crisis response. Reconstruction efforts more broadly must be rapid, large scale and involve removing all restrictions on aid.
- 8.1.6. **Integrate gendered context analysis into all humanitarian programme design and delivery.** Undertaking comprehensive gender analysis is essential in order to understand and respond to the intersectional needs of women and girls working in crises and addresses the needs of the community as a whole. Understanding the context in which a crisis unfolds is crucial for identifying the root causes of exclusion and discrimination, as well as for preventing their escalation or recurrence.<sup>41</sup> Through partnering with WROs, joint gender-sensitive conflict analysis serves as a vital foundation for crafting responses that address gender norms and inequalities. This approach enhances alignment between humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives, effectively reducing risks and further marginalisation while also reinforcing efforts to prevent future crises.<sup>42</sup>
- 8.1.7. **Support the ICJ conclusion that the Israeli government’s ongoing occupation of Palestinian territory is illegal and must be brought to an end.** We note the UK government’s commitment to recognise Palestinian Statehood, however, by failing to back the UNGA resolution that sought to implement the ICJ’s recommendations, the UK missed an opportunity to join international efforts aimed at collectively ending the illegal settlement expansion and settler violence. While the UK government cannot reverse its vote, the government must take decisive action to ensure the implementation of this resolution. As demanded by the ICJ, the UK must ensure that they do not recognise as lawful, nor aid or assist, the situation created by the Israeli government.
- 8.1.8. **Increase diplomatic engagement and multilateral cooperation to address violations of international law in the oPt, including by supporting all relevant resolutions and initiatives at UN forums and uphold the ICJ’s and ICC’s ruling.** Amid the actions of international leaders that risk exacerbating instability in the region<sup>43</sup>, the UK must increase active cooperation with international institutions and must condemn all violations of international law. There is an urgent need for accountability mechanisms to address the full

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<sup>39</sup> ActionAid UK. *Leading the Way: The Nexus through a Feminist Lens*. 2022, [ActionAid Leading the Way The Nexus through a Feminist Lens.pdf](#)

<sup>40</sup> OXFAM. *Feminist Aid and Foreign Policy Series*. 2018, [a-feminist-approach-to-localization.pdf](#)

<sup>41</sup> ActionAid UK. *Leading the Way: The Nexus through a Feminist Lens*. 2022, [ActionAid Leading the Way The Nexus through a Feminist Lens.pdf](#)

<sup>42</sup> ActionAid UK. *Leading the Way: The Nexus through a Feminist Lens*. 2022, [ActionAid Leading the Way The Nexus through a Feminist Lens.pdf](#)

<sup>43</sup> See: [Trump's Middle East envoy warns of consequences if Gaza hostages not released soon | Reuters](#)



extent of alleged violations of international laws in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel. Ending entrenched impunity is essential for breaking the cycle of violence and ensuring reliance in bringing about lasting peace. Cooperation with international institutions, is vital to ensure justice and accountability. Aligning with UN positions and the majority of the international community will create the opportunity to reset relationships with partners and allies around the world. This involves aiding the ICC's ability to conduct an independent investigation into the situation in oPt without interference and taking proactive measures to prevent genocide, protect populations at risk, and hold accountable those who attempt to incite or commit acts of genocide. This includes providing the ICC with any evidence the UK may have collected, and offer diplomatic support in the face of efforts by actors seeking to undermine the Court.

***13<sup>th</sup> January 2025***