

The Rt. Hon. Lord David Cameron
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

26th January 2024

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the British Palestinian Committee, an independent group of British Palestinian academics, lawyers, human rights defenders, analysts and others advocating for Palestinian rights by ensuring that British-Palestinian voices are integral to public discourse and policymaking on Palestine. We write in light of today's decision by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to convey the alarm and horror of British Palestinians - and the broader British public - at the government's response to Israel's relentless assault on Gaza and the urgent need for remedy.

Today, the ICJ upheld South Africa's claim that Palestinians are at risk of genocide as a result of Israel's military campaign and ordered provisional measures that require an immediate end to Israeli actions in order to prevent genocide. This ruling is a stark warning to third party states, including the UK, that active support of Israel's military assault risks aiding and abetting genocidal acts against the Palestinian people.

In January 2023, we wrote to your predecessor to express our deep concerns about the government's response following the deadliest year for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank in decades and the formation of Israel's most extremist government to date - and how this might further threaten the safety of millions of Palestinian women, men and children living under imposed Israeli rule.

Today, Israel is in the midst of carrying out a devastating assault on Gaza, unprecedented in the level of death and destruction it is causing. For more than three months, human rights defenders, UN officials, and legal experts have been warning of the genocidal nature of Israel's actions, citing both acts committed relating to the physical destruction of Palestinians as well as dozens of statements by the President of Israel, Prime Minister, and other senior officials demonstrating genocidal intent. Today's landmark ruling from the highest international court adds significant weight to this assessment.

We note the UK's recent detailed declaration of intervention regarding Myanmar and statements welcoming the ICJ decision in that case, emphasising the legally binding nature of the provisional measures. We similarly expect the government to uphold its legal duties

to act to prevent genocide and apply this consistently in the UK's approach to the ethnic cleansing currently being enacted against the Palestinian people.

In light of today's ruling and the catastrophic situation facing Palestinians in Gaza, we call on the government to take urgent steps to:

- **Uphold the UK's *erga omnes* duties** to "take measures to prevent" and also "to punish the crime of genocide", including through the application of universal jurisdiction.
- **Call for an immediate ceasefire and the lifting of the siege**, in order to ensure compliance with the provisional measures indicated by the ICJ's ruling, bearing in mind that the UN Secretary General said that it is impossible to provide and distribute essential aid without a ceasefire.
- **Investigate all arms exports** and any other form of military support since the beginning of Israel's military assault and examine whether these arms may have been utilised in acts of genocide.
- **Investigate whether and to what extent British military facilities** used by other states, including facilities in Cyprus, have been used to facilitate the transport of weapons that may have been utilised in acts of genocide
- **Ensure the UK government is not in breach of the Genocide Convention and not complicit in internationally wrongful acts** through its military, diplomatic or other ties to the State of Israel.
- **Support and uphold the integrity of international bodies and mechanisms** to carry out their roles, including the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and other relevant UN bodies.

We would also welcome a meeting at the earliest opportunity to convey the deep concerns of British Palestinians and the wider British public.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



On behalf of the British Palestinian Committee
Dr. Sara Hussein
Director