

Rt Hon. PM Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, and the Rt. Hon. David Lammy
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Friday 30 May 2025

CC: The Rt. Hon. Lord Hermer KC, Attorney General

Dear Prime Minister, and David Lammy MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

We write as human rights, development, humanitarian and faith-based organisations deeply concerned that the UK government's 20 May response to the Israeli authorities' blockade of humanitarian aid, its continued attacks on Gaza, and the expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank, is gravely inadequate.

While suspending talks on a new trade deal with Israel is a welcome acknowledgment that economic relations must align with international law, this alone will not save Palestinian lives. Similarly, the expanded, but still very limited, sanctions on illegal settlements and associated individuals ignore that the Israeli Government has ramped up settlements expansion since after October 7th, as [reported](#) by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. These measures may appear decisive, but they will not materially deter Israel's atrocities in Gaza or address the state-sanctioned structural drivers of settlement activity.

The Israeli authorities continue to block the supply of aid into Gaza and nearly 71,000 children under five are expected to be acutely malnourished over the next 11 months. Last week, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [said](#) Israel's bombing and forced displacement of Palestinians amounts to ethnic cleansing. Yet despite acknowledging on 20 May that these actions must stop, the UK government has failed to take the steps that would meaningfully constrain Israel's war-making capacity.

We urge the government to take three immediate actions to save lives and prevent further atrocities:

1. Suspend all arms transfers to Israel

While the government has suspended some arms licenses to Israel which it says could be used in Gaza, the vast majority remain in place. The government has also refused to stop licensing the export of spare parts that could end up in Israeli F-35 fighter jets, even though the government has conceded that there is a clear risk of them being used in breaches of international humanitarian law. This is inconsistent with the UK's domestic and international legal obligations.

2. Suspend the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement (TPA)

The text of the UK-Israel TPA, which currently provides privileged trade terms between the countries, identifies "respect for human rights and democratic principles" as an "essential element" of the agreement. Given Israel's well-documented violations of international law, including but not limited to the ongoing aid blockade, and the Israeli authorities' consistent targeting of civilians, health care, food and water infrastructure - and which you mentioned in

your address - it is impossible to see how the foundations of this agreement can still hold. We note that on 21 May, the European Union, whose agreement with Israel contains an identical human right clause, announced it would review its own trade agreement with Israel on this basis. The UK must immediately suspend its trade deal with Israel conditional on Israel's full compliance with international law. If a review process is necessary to take this action, this should also begin urgently and be completed imminently.

3. Ban trade with and investment in Israel's illegal settlements

While the government's position is not to 'encourage' trade with or investment in Israel's illegal settlements on the West Bank, it has so far refused to ban such economic relations, even as they help to sustain Israel's settlement economy and entrench the forcible transfer of Palestinians from their homes. The International Court of Justice made clear in its July 2024 advisory opinion that all countries must not enter into "economic or trade dealings with Israel concerning the Occupied Palestinian Territory or parts thereof which may entrench its unlawful presence in the territory" and ensure they do not aid and assist Israel's illegal occupation. Not only would banning trade with and investment in Israel's illegal settlements be a necessary first step to bring the UK's trade relations in line with international law, it would also send a clear message that any ongoing or future violations of international law by Israel will be met with meaningful consequences.

As the Israeli military expands its attacks on Gaza and famine conditions spread, the UK government must immediately take these actions if it wants to have any chance of saving lives, preventing further atrocities, and complying with its legal obligations, including the obligation to prevent genocide, as triggered by the ICJ's issuing of provisional measures in relation to Palestinians in Gaza in January 2024. We further emphasise that these measures should be conditional not only on an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza, but on Israel's full compliance with international law across the occupied Palestinian territory.

Please could you also confirm the following regarding your stated review of the UK's 2030 Road Map:

- What is the timeline for the review?
- Will the review of the 2030 Road Map take account of violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory including those in but also beyond Gaza, including the findings of the ICJ's 19 July 2024 Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem?
- What thresholds will be used in the review to decide on a possible suspension given there is no 'human rights provision' in the 2030 Review, unlike the TPA?
- Will the review be published?

Your sincerely,

Christian Aid
ABCD Bethlehem
ActionAid UK

Amnesty International UK
Amos Trust
Action For Humanity
Council for Arab-British Understanding
Embrace the Middle East
Global Justice Now
Interpal
Muslim Aid
Sabeel-Kairos
SCIAF
Trade Justice Movement
Welfare Association