



David Cameron
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

16 February 2024

Dear David Cameron,

We are writing to you to urge you to immediately call for a full ceasefire in Gaza, reinstate UNRWA funding, and issue an arms embargo on Israel. Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) is part of Friends of the Earth International, the world's largest network of grassroots environmental organisations. We oppose all acts of violence.

We condemn the killings by Hamas of at least 900 civilians, primarily Israeli, on 7 October, the taking of civilian hostages and the indiscriminate rocket attacks into Israel. However, these violations of international law and war crimes do not and must not be used to justify collective punishment – in this case the collective punishment of the civilian population of Gaza and other serious breaches of international law being committed by Israel. Please see our [additional reflections](#) from last October.

As we are all aware, the current situation for civilians in Gaza is truly horrific; the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs has described it as [“carnage”](#). An already catastrophic situation can only get worse without a full ceasefire. Humanitarian pauses or sustainable ceasefires will not be enough to prevent further mass destruction and loss of life.

Despite the ruling given and orders issued from the International Court of Justice in January, the situation in Gaza has only worsened. The current death toll is reported to be over 28,000. Now Israel is launching an attack on Rafah, where over 1 million displaced and defenceless civilians are sheltering. As a country continuing to supply Israel with arms this puts the UK at clear risk of facilitating grave violations of international law, the devastating impacts of which [were illustrated](#) by leading humanitarian and human rights organisations last month.

Our sister group in Palestine is PENGON (The Palestinian Environmental NGO Network/Friends of the Earth Palestine). It is a network of well-respected grassroots environmental organisations active in both Gaza and the West Bank, many of which work on water and sanitation issues at a community level. Since the start of the Israeli assault on Gaza we know of at least 5 members of PENGON's network who have been

killed by Israeli airstrikes, while many others have lost their homes, 80% are displaced, and all the offices of member groups have been damaged.

As such, we are writing today to call on you in your capacity as Foreign Secretary to urgently call for a full ceasefire in Gaza, to strengthen calls to all parties to respect international law by condemning violations of international law, whoever the perpetrator, and to immediately issue an arms embargo on Israel to these ends.

We further call on you to reverse the government's decision to halt funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food [has recently said](#) that famine in Gaza is "imminent" and "inevitable". The decision by the UK government to halt UNRWA funding, which allows for the provision of food and vital support to millions in Gaza, is incredibly concerning and must be reversed now. While they must be investigated, the alleged activities of individual members of UNRWA should not jeopardise a crucial humanitarian operation.

We are also deeply concerned by ongoing violence in the West Bank, [where Amnesty International estimates at least 360 Palestinians have been killed](#). There has also been significant displacement and thousands of arrests. Members of our network in the West Bank are frequently unable to travel to their offices because of the violence, and settler violence is preventing or impeding access to the communities where they work.

By failing to robustly condemn violations of international law by all parties and issue an arms embargo, the UK Government is failing to use its voice and influence to prevent further civilian death and mass destruction in Gaza by Israeli forces.

We call on you to call urgently for a full ceasefire, reinstate UNRWA funding and issue an arms embargo on Israel.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sotez Chowdhury', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sotez Chowdhury
Director of Communities and Networks