

## **Joint Statement: Israel's Total Aid Blockade must be met with robust UK Sanctions**

*2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025*- Today marks two months since the Israeli government banned the entry of humanitarian aid and any other supplies via all land crossings into Gaza. This has been the longest such closure since October 2023. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says the blockade has 'crippled' relief efforts, and the World Food Programme announced last week that it has entirely run out of food stocks throughout the Strip.

Whilst Israel's blockade of aid has been absolute since 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2025, Israel's systematic and targeted disruption of aid infrastructure is longstanding. This includes the eighteen-month long aerial assault on Gaza's [bakeries and charity kitchens](#), the systematic [destruction of water reserves and desalination plants](#), and the targeted [killing of aid workers](#) and those [responsible for the safe distribution of aid](#). Throughout the genocide in Gaza, Israel's assault on sources of food security have been blatant. Israel has in fact imposed a blockade on Gaza since 2007, which constitutes the war crime of collective punishment.

For this very reason, the International Criminal Court's Pre-Trial Chamber issued arrest warrants against Israel's leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the war crime of starvation: but the now two-months-long deprivation of all food, water, and necessary supplies is an unparalleled feat of cruelty. The continued denial of access for medicines and medical supplies to Gaza's decimated healthcare system continues to exacerbate the mortality rate in Gaza, with Palestinians injured in Israeli strikes reportedly dying in their beds from treatable injuries – solely for lack of supplies.

### **Legal Context**

It is incumbent upon Israel to allow the unimpeded flow of aid into Gaza, as required by [Article 61 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War \(GCIV\)](#). Additional Protocol I provides a broader view of the obligations entailed in Article 61 of GCIV and extends it to cover the "rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief consignments, equipment, and personnel."

The obstruction of humanitarian aid is explicitly prohibited in [Article 18\(2\) of the 1977 Additional Protocol II](#) to the Geneva Conventions. Israel's duty to guarantee and facilitate aid into Gaza without its obstruction by Israelis is supported by the numerous legal provisions above.



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (“OCHA”) spokesperson Jens Laerke has reiterated these obligations, [stating](#) that Israeli authorities’ duties to ensure the access of aid extends beyond Israel’s borders until the aid reaches civilians in Gaza.

In March 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued Provisional Measures, including the following measure, stating that “The State of Israel shall take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”

Israel’s total blockade on aid clearly fails to follow the provisional orders of the ICJ issued in the proceedings brought under the genocide convention, fails to uphold international law obligations in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, and further demonstrates evidence of the war crime of starvation, which resulted in arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

### UK Recommendations

The UK should call on all parties to uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), condemn attacks on humanitarian and UN personnel, and demand full, independent investigations into all such incidents. The UK must not undermine its own reputation by allowing political alliances to take precedence over compliance with IHL, especially in the case of systematic violations of IHL by Israel.

Moreover, the UK is a State party to the Genocide Convention, and as such, the UK is required to prevent the commission of genocide by others using all means reasonably available to it. Continued alleged British military and surveillance support via RAF Akrotiri and the failure to suspend the majority of licenses to Israel indicates a failure by the UK to undertake these obligations.

This is especially significant in light of [conclusions published by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office \(FCDO\)](#) in September 2024, which highlighted Israel’s humanitarian aid as a consideration for suspension of arms licenses to Israel. In September, FCDO concluded that “Israel could reasonably do more to facilitate humanitarian access and distribution.” In light of the total blockade of aid since 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2025, this situation must be factored into future assessments on a further suspension of arms licenses.



Finally, the government must also press for unimpeded humanitarian access into Gaza and support accountability through international legal and economic mechanisms, including sanctions of senior Israeli government officials responsible for the blockade of aid.

**International Centre of Justice for Palestinians**  
**Campaign Against Arms Trade**  
**Global Justice Now**  
**Global Legal Action Network**  
**War on Want**