

**Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak**

**Copied to:**

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE  
Home Secretary, Suella Braverman MP  
Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly MP**

13 October 2023,

Dear Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak,

**Re: Anti-Arab hatred, Islamophobia, Pro-Palestinian protests and the Palestinian flag**

We are deeply concerned about the escalating violence and violations of international law taking place in Gaza. We also condemn the increased levels of horrific anti-Arab, Islamophobic and antisemitism that is taking place online.

We raise serious concerns with respect to the recent political rhetoric coming from both the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman MP<sup>1</sup> and the Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly MP.<sup>2</sup> We consider this to be an attempt to conflate what are peaceful pro-Palestinian protests and the recent actions of Hamas as being one and the same. The Palestinian flag is the flag of an occupied people, both Christian and Muslim Palestinians, who have no country to call their own and Hamas does not represent them.

We wish to be very clear that there are 4 million Muslims living in England and Wales and they and pro-Palestinian supporters have the right to freedom of assembly and the freedom to protest. Under current legislation, the Palestinian flag is not a proscribed terrorist flag and any decision by the Government or the Police to block pro-Palestinian protests or to prevent displaying the flag during protests will be met immediately with a notice of intent to issue judicial review and injunction proceedings.

Communities speaking against the massacre of Palestinians by Israel have experienced significant hate crime online. We demand that immediate action is taken against individuals perpetuating hatred against our communities and sharing false propaganda. We also ask our senior politicians to condemn such inflammatory and Islamophobic hate. We will not tolerate hatred against our communities and legal action will be taken wherever this is found.

We highlight the very one-sided political statements that have been coming from senior members of Government including you, the Prime Minister. In 2010, former Prime Minister, David Cameron likened the *'experience of Palestinians in the blockaded Gaza Strip to that of a prison camp'*,<sup>3</sup> yet your failure to

---

<sup>1</sup> [Flying Palestinian flag in UK 'may not be legitimate', says Suella Braverman \(msn.com\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Israel-Hamas war: Foreign Secretary James Cleverly calls on pro-Palestinian protesters to stay at home | Politics News | Sky News](#)

<sup>3</sup> [David Cameron: Israeli blockade has turned Gaza Strip into a 'prison camp' | David Cameron | The Guardian](#)

acknowledge the ‘catastrophic implications’ of the ongoing massacre of Palestinians in Gaza has been shameful.<sup>4</sup>

We expected the Government to call for both sides to seek an immediate ceasefire but this has not been the case. Astonishingly, you have gone one step further by providing military support to Israel during its murderous campaign on civilian areas **where 50% of its two million inhabitants are children.** They cannot leave. At the time of writing, Human Rights Watch confirmed Israel has used phosphorous in Gaza and Lebanon.

We set out below the some of the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinians over the past 20 years<sup>5</sup>:

- Netanyahu heads the most far right extremist government in Israel’s history. He was elected on a platform of proceeding with the effective annexation of the West Bank.<sup>6</sup> Palestinians in the West Bank have been subject to intensifying attacks by armed Israeli settlers, enabled, and encouraged by the Israeli military.
- From the beginning of 2023 up to the start of October 2023, Israeli forces had killed 240 Palestinians including 45 children.<sup>7</sup>
- Israel demolished 950 Palestinian homes in 2022 alone and issued 114 new settlement plans to build Israeli homes on Palestinian land.<sup>8</sup>
- In one week alone, this year, 17 Palestinian villages were attacked, homes set ablaze, civilians killed or severely maimed.<sup>9</sup>
- Since 2015 through to 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted 140 resolutions on Israel, largely due to its treatment of the Palestinians.<sup>10</sup>
- Israel forces regularly enter Al Aqsa during the holy month of Ramadhan where they have brutally used excessive force against worshippers. It is a regular feature of the persistent harassment and violence suffered by the Palestinians during the month of Ramadhan.<sup>11</sup>
- According to figures by the United Nations, 6,407 Palestinians have been killed and 115,000 injured between 2008 and September 2023.<sup>12</sup>
- Hamas, a non-state actor, was established in 1987 and was elected in Gaza in 2006. **No further elections have been held since.** The systematic killing, torture, imprisonment of children and the continuous building of settlements<sup>13</sup> has been carried out by Israel since 1948. We implore you to consider a recent map of the Gaza strip and the West Bank. The viability of a two-state solution is fast diminishing.

Recent reports show that 340,000 Palestinians have now been made homeless within Gaza. They cannot leave and the access to electricity, food and water have been withheld by the Israelis. Ursula von der Leyen stated on 19 October 2022: *“Russia’s attacks against civilian infrastructure, especially electricity, are war crimes. Cutting off men, women, children of water, electricity and heating with*

---

<sup>4</sup> [Israel-Hamas war live: Israeli military has told 1.1 million in Gaza to move further south in next 24 hours, UN says \(msn.com\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Israel's apartheid against Palestinians - Amnesty International](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Netanyahu vows to annex large parts of occupied West Bank | Israel | The Guardian](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Palestinian boy discovers undercover Israeli forces, they kill him: DCIP | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Report: Israel demolished 950 Palestinian homes in 2022 – Middle East Monitor](#)

<sup>9</sup> [PSC Statement on escalation of violence - Palestine Solidarity Campaign \(palestinecampaign.org\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [UN condemned Israel more than all other countries combined in 2022 -- monitor | The Times of Israel](#)

<sup>11</sup> [What’s behind the Ramadan raids at Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque? | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Chart: The Human Cost Of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict | Statista](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Israel to ramp up settlement expansion in occupied West Bank | Occupied West Bank News | Al Jazeera](#)

*winter coming - these are acts of pure terror. And we have to call it as such.*” Why is there is a difference in treatment? Do Arab lives not matter to you?

Peter Osborne, journalist and author stated yesterday *“I pray that I am wrong, but I fear that reckless statements by Sunak and Starmer have established a political foundation that may leave Britain complicit in massacres, indiscriminate bombing, and ethnic cleansing.”*

The UK should not be undermining international law with flagrant statements supporting the mass ethnic cleansing by Israel of 2 million Palestinians living in the Gaza strip. Your recent statements and those from members of your Cabinet in support of Israel’s right to self defence, can only be viewed as giving the green light to Israel to carry out mass war crimes against the Palestinian people. Israel is the fifth largest military in the world which is now carpet bombing the Palestinian people living in what Human Rights Watch referred to as the *“world’s largest open air prison.”*<sup>14</sup>

The Government’s Policy in supporting collective punishment of the Palestinians is abhorrent. This war cannot be resolved by military solution. We call upon the Government to demand an immediate ceasefire to the violence and support UNRWA’s call for the opening of the borders into Gaza to allow for urgent humanitarian aid.

Yours sincerely,

**Black Lives Matter Coalition**

**Muslim Voice for Peace**

**Association of Muslim Lawyers**

**London Muslim Community Forum**

**Sri Lankan Diaspora UK**

**Muslim Public Affairs Committee**

**Muslim Association of Britain**

**UK-Palestine Mental Health Network**

**Convivencia Alliance**

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**

---

<sup>14</sup> [Gaza: Israel’s ‘Open-Air Prison’ at 15 | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](#)