

" As an aid worker in Gaza the current situation is deeply distressing. The feeling of helplessness and frustration is overwhelming. Our primary mission is to help those in need, but with the borders closed and no aid coming in, our hands are tied. We are acutely aware of the worsening conditions and the urgent needs of people, and it is heartbreaking to witness their suffering without being able to provide the necessary support."

On 24 May 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered additional provisional measures regarding Israel's alleged violations in Gaza of obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The court ordered that, in light of the worsening conditions in Rafah, Israel must immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah governorate, which may subject the Palestinian population in Gaza to conditions of life that may lead to their physical destruction, in whole or in part. The court described the conditions in Rafah as 'disastrous' and is 'not convinced that the evacuation efforts and related measures that Israel affirms to have undertaken to enhance the security of civilians in the Gaza Strip, and in particular those recently displaced from the Rafah Governorate, are sufficient to alleviate the immense risk to which the Palestinian population is exposed as a result of the military offensive in Rafah.'

The ICJ reaffirmed provisional measures indicated in its orders of 26 January 2024, and 28 March 2024, applicable throughout Gaza, including Rafah, and called for their immediate and effective implementation. This includes the unhindered provision at scale of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, and the maintained opening of land crossing points, particularly the Rafah crossing. The Court also ordered Israel to allow unhindered access for any commission of inquiry, fact-finding initiatives or other UN bodies to investigate allegations of genocide. It also reiterated calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Israel is required to submit a report one month from today, outlining all measures taken to comply with these orders.

The UK must unreservedly accept the findings and orders of the Court. As a signatory to the Genocide Convention and the UN Charter, the UK must ensure that the Court's decisions are respected and enacted, by way of public statements and concrete policy actions. Failure to do so not only risks further loss of civilian lives, it also risks unravelling the very foundations of the international rules-based system and international justice. The application of justice and accountability for international crimes can never be selective. Inconsistency enables impunity.

The situation in Gaza has deteriorated significantly, despite the ICJ's 26 January order that Israeli authorities must prevent and punish acts of genocide. Since 8 October, at least 35,000 Palestinians have been killed, with thousands trapped under the rubble, and nearly 80,000 have been injured. The population is being starved, with mass destruction of civilian infrastructure and little access to clean water, sanitation and healthcare under Israel's continued indiscriminate bombardment and deliberate and systematic deprivation of aid in Gaza.

The UK must now do everything in its power to ensure that Israel complies with its obligations under international law, including in respect of all of the measures ordered by the ICJ. The Israeli government has already failed to comply with the ICJ's orders, and the UK must urgently use every available lever to ensure its compliance, urgently halt Israel's assault on Rafah, and demand an immediate and lasting ceasefire. This includes suspending arms transfers to Israel for as long as there is a risk they may be used to violate international law. The UK must uphold its signatory obligations under the convention to prevent and punish the crime of genocide, and must ensure that it is in no way enabling, or otherwise complicit, in the commission of acts that the Court has found could plausibly be in violation of the Genocide Convention.

We urge the UK to immediately reverse its decision to pause UK funding to UNRWA, which came shortly after the issuance of the first set of provisional measures issued by the ICJ. We welcomed the

swift investigation by Catherine Colonna, which found that UNRWA has in place a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the Humanitarian Principle of neutrality, and by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The denial of funding to UNRWA will only lead to more deaths, at a time when the ICJ has underscored the need to prevent genocide and fulfil the dire humanitarian needs of Palestinians.

The ICJ is the highest court of the United Nations. His Majesty's Government must publicly and unreservedly acknowledge the findings of the ICJ and support implementation of the measures it has ordered. Failure to do so will risk the UK falling short of its own ethical and treaty obligations to prevent the crime of genocide, and its own stated policy to prevent all mass atrocity crimes.



- Action for Humanity
- Action Aid UK
- Amos Trust
- Caabu (Council for Arab-British Understanding)
- CAFOD
- Christian Aid
- Embrace the Middle East
- Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)
- Humanity First UK
- Interpal
- Lady Fatemah Charitable Trust
- Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights
- Oxfam
- Omega Research Foundation
- Plan International UK
- Protection Approaches
- Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)
- Quakers in Britain
- Sabeel-Kairos
- SCIAF
- SOS Children's Villages UK
- War Child
- War on Want
- Welfare Association