



Palestinians in Gaza are facing an imminent existential threat, warn 15 organisations

9 October 2024

The UK is failing to stand up for international law, as Israeli forces are forcibly transferring civilians from northern Gaza to the south and relentlessly bombarding the area, making it uninhabitable and stripping away the essential conditions that sustain life. The Government must demand that Israel end its heinous attacks, and take action to oppose any annexation or shrinking of Gaza. Its current silence is tantamount to complicity.

Israel's actions in northern Gaza are having devastating implications for the long-term future of Palestinians, with hundreds of thousands of people trapped under constant bombardment and a ground offensive. The Israeli military is besieging civilians in Jabalia refugee camp and Beit Lahia, ordering them to leave large areas and move south - an act that resembles forcible transfer under international law. Yet, as people evacuate, they are targeted by Israeli forces, effectively cutting off their escape routes. The so-called designated "humanitarian zone" in the south, between Al-Mawasi and Deir Al-Balah, where one million people are already living in inhumane conditions, remains unsafe for both civilians and aid workers, as Israeli forces continue to target the area repeatedly. Nowhere in Gaza is safe. **Under international law, the forced relocation of civilians – without guarantees of safety or return, to areas that lack the necessary resources to sustain life – amounts to the crime of forcible transfer, and is prohibited under [Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention](#).**

Families in the north are trapped, unable to leave their homes to find food or water, subjecting them to starvation, and aid workers and trucks providing life-saving resources are prevented from doing so. The two main roads south, including Salah ad-Din have been destroyed and are reportedly impassable. Ambulances can no longer transport the wounded and critically ill from Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia to Al-Ahli Hospital for necessary surgeries, as tanks have cut off North Gaza from Gaza City. **Those who choose to remain in their homes are facing collective punishment: we must reiterate with urgency that civilians who remain in a besieged area do not lose their protected status under**

International Law, and must not be forced to flee to receive aid. Israel must stop blocking entry of much-needed humanitarian supplies, particularly into the north, as a matter of extreme urgency.

Additional [reports](#) suggest that Israel plans to expand the Netzarim corridor, “fortifying a strategic corridor that carves Gaza in two, building bases, taking over civilian structures and razing homes”. The expansion of the corridor and the isolation of the north will obstruct vital aid deliveries, while ongoing Israeli military operations continue to damage infrastructure and disrupt supply routes. This appears to be part of plans to carry out unlawful annexation in northern Gaza, which would be another atrocity under the guise of conflict. Israel must halt its assault on Palestinians in Gaza, cease displacing the population, facilitate the return of displaced people to their homes, and withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in line with the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) July 2024 [Advisory Opinion](#).

Gaza is being erased before our eyes, violence against Palestinians in the West Bank is worsening, and Israeli military attacks on Lebanon continue to escalate, causing untold civilian suffering and threatening to replicate the conditions in Gaza. A ceasefire must be enforced, not merely paid lip service to, and the UK must act with urgency to ensure there are consequences for such clearly illegal conduct. **We reiterate our calls on the UK to end its potential or actual complicity in violations of international law, and act urgently to:**

1. Unequivocally and publicly oppose Israel’s forcible transfer of Palestinians and annexation in northern Gaza, and ensure that civilians are protected and their urgent needs met.
2. Suspend all arms transfers - including the F-35 parts - as they continue to facilitate atrocities.
3. Take bold and concrete steps to ensure Israel complies with the [ICJ's orders to prevent genocide](#), and to implement the Court’s Advisory Opinion not to aid or assist Israel’s unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory, and to take measures to ensure it's rapid termination.

Signatories:

- Action For Humanity
- Amos Trust
- Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)
- Welfare Association
- Caabu
- Sabeel-Kairos UK
- Amnesty International UK
- Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)
- Islamic Relief UK
- Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)
- Trócaire
- War on Want
- Action Aid UK
- Global Justice Now
- Oxfam GB