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The Rt Hon Lord Cameron
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Subject: Arms Sales to Israel

Via email

27th March 2024

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I write to you concerning a matter of grave urgency and moral responsibility: the ongoing crisis in the Israel-Gaza region and the role of the United Kingdom in perpetuating this dire situation through arms sales to Israel.

I trust that you are aware of the ruling delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 26 January 2024. The ICJ's findings, which suggest plausible breaches of the Genocide Convention by Israel in its actions against the Palestinian people in Gaza, are deeply troubling. The Court's provisional measures, including calls for an immediate ceasefire, the prevention of acts against Palestinians prohibited by the Genocide Convention, and the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza, demand urgent attention and action from the international community.

As a signatory to the Genocide Convention, the United Kingdom bears a duty to prevent genocide and ensure that the Convention is upheld. It is imperative that we do not shirk this responsibility. The ICJ's ruling requires not only our support but also our active intervention to ensure its enforcement. It is clear that without an immediate cessation of Israel's military assault on Gaza, the ICJ's orders cannot be fulfilled.

The loss of life in the Israel-Gaza conflict, the plight of hostages in Gaza, and the urgent need for humanitarian aid for innocent Palestinians are tragic and we must reaffirm the necessity of a political solution that guarantees security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

However, concerns extend beyond the immediate crisis. Reports from reputable international bodies such as the UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International highlight violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law by Israel, including possible war crimes. The use of UK-made military equipment and technology by Israel in its operations, including the recent bombardment of Gaza, is deeply alarming.

Under international and domestic law, the UK is obligated to prevent the transfer of military equipment where there is a clear risk of such exports being used to facilitate serious violations of international law. As affirmed by the Arms Trade Treaty and the UK's own Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, we have a legal and moral obligation to halt arms transfers to Israel.

Therefore, I urge the UK Government to take immediate action:



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1. Support the ICJ's provisional measures and demand an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict.
2. Suspend all arms exports to Israel until there is assurance that they will not be used to commit or facilitate violations of international humanitarian law.
3. Introduce a presumption of denial for arms exports to governments listed as human rights priorities in the FCDO's annual human rights report.
4. Suspend the issuing of new licenses for military equipment and technology exports to Israel.

We must stand on the right side of history and demonstrate its commitment to upholding international law and human rights. Failure to act decisively in this matter would be a betrayal of our moral obligations and a stain on our national conscience.

I look forward to your prompt response and action on this critical issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stewart McDonald".