

UK Government's Response to Gaza Famine Under Scrutiny

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The UK Government is facing growing criticism over its handling of the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, as international agencies warn of famine conditions and potential violations of international law.

Human rights experts and aid organisations say the situation in Gaza has moved beyond an emergency, with the United Nations describing it as the “worst-case scenario of famine” in

progress. Reports suggest that restrictions on food, water, medical supplies, and fuel have been implemented in a way that could constitute the deliberate use of starvation as a method of warfare, a practice prohibited under international law.

Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron has acknowledged evidence of systematic obstruction of humanitarian aid to Gaza by Israeli authorities. According to diplomatic sources, Cameron was briefed on documented delays, rejections, and restrictions imposed on relief convoys and shipments. Despite these reports, the UK has not taken concrete diplomatic or legal action against those responsible.

Critics argue that this lack of action risks placing the UK in breach of its obligations under international humanitarian law. The Geneva Conventions and related treaties require signatories, including the United Kingdom, to take measures to prevent or punish the use of starvation as a weapon in armed conflict.

Two United States government departments have separately concluded that Israel has obstructed humanitarian relief efforts to Gaza. These findings, if substantiated, would require the suspension of military assistance under US law. However, the US administration has overridden these conclusions.

The UK has historically aligned itself closely with US policy in the region, and campaign groups have urged the Government to reconsider arms export licences, military cooperation, and diplomatic support where there is evidence of serious violations of humanitarian law.

Humanitarian agencies report that Gaza's food supply systems have been severely degraded. Figures from international observers indicate that over 70 per cent of agricultural land has been rendered unusable, fishing operations are under threat of attack, and key infrastructure such as the main port has been destroyed.

The cost of basic staples, including flour, has risen dramatically, up to 30 times normal prices, making them inaccessible to most residents. Health officials inside Gaza have recorded dozens of deaths attributed to malnutrition and dehydration in recent weeks.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which has historically managed large-scale food and aid distribution, has been banned from operating in certain areas. In its

place, alternative distribution systems have been established, which humanitarian groups claim are unsafe and insufficient.

Under the UK's Export Control Order 2008, arms sales and military assistance must not be authorised where there is a clear risk they might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law. Parliamentary committees have previously examined the UK's obligations in conflict zones, stressing the need for strict compliance.

Legal experts have suggested that if the UK continues to provide arms or logistical support to a party engaged in conduct amounting to the use of starvation as a weapon, it could be subject to judicial review or international legal action.

A cross-party group of MPs has urged the Government to support a fully independent investigation into the situation in Gaza, to determine whether war crimes or crimes against humanity have been committed. Humanitarian groups say such an investigation should include the UK's role, particularly regarding aid policy and arms export controls.

Foreign Office officials maintain that the UK is "deeply concerned" about the humanitarian situation and has provided funding to support relief efforts through international agencies. However, aid organisations argue that without political pressure to end restrictions, humanitarian assistance will remain inadequate.

Public demonstrations in London and other UK cities have called for the Government to take a stronger stance on the crisis. Internationally, pressure is also increasing, with the International Criminal Court issuing warrants in related cases and the UN warning of a potential collapse of Gaza's population health within months if conditions persist.

The UK faces a growing challenge in balancing its longstanding foreign policy alliances with its stated commitment to uphold international law and protect human rights. As the crisis continues, campaigners say that meaningful action, not just statements of concern, will be the true measure of Britain's position on the weaponisation of hunger.