

UK Faces Pressure Over Gaza Humanitarian Crisis

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The humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to escalate with over 59,000 Palestinians reported killed since the conflict began in October 2023, and widespread severe food insecurity affecting more than one in three people (: 59,000+ deaths). According to the Gaza Health Ministry, at least 80 children have died from starvation since hostilities began, and adult deaths have also been recorded, as malnutrition surges amid collapsing access to food and medical supplies. The UN Human Rights Office reports that since late May 2025,

over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed while attempting to access food, most deaths occurring near aid centres run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Although these figures are disputed by Israel and other agencies, global condemnation has mounted.

Israeli military operations remain active; on 21 July 2025, UN officials condemned a raid on a WHO guesthouse in Deir al-Balah, described as having been struck three times before Israeli forces entered and separated staff and forcibly evacuated women and children. Independent estimates indicate that around 90 per cent of homes in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed amid heavy bombardment, compounding displacement and infrastructure collapse.

IPC data from April–May 2025 shows approximately 244,000 people in Gaza were in Phase 5 (catastrophic food insecurity), with an additional 924,000 in Phase 4 (emergency) and nearly 1.94 million at crisis level or worse. Goods critical to survival are either depleted or will soon run out.

While many world leaders have issued statements of concern, practical action remains limited. A letter from 38 former EU ambassadors accused Israel of taking “calculated steps towards ethnic cleansing” and criticised the EU’s failure to act decisively. In November 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, citing reasonable grounds that starvation has been used as a method of warfare in Gaza.

The UK government imposed sanctions on far-right Israeli ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, citing alleged incitement of violence and settlement-based radicalisation. However, campaigners argue this is insufficient. Pressure is mounting on the UK to formally recognise Palestinian statehood, in line with approximately 147 UN member states that already do so.

Several governments, including Spain, Italy and Canada, have announced suspensions or reviews of arms exports to Israel, though the UK has not implemented a full embargo and continues to provide limited military support. UK officials, while maintaining support for a two-state solution, have yet to implement a full embargo.

As Israel’s largest trading partner, the EU also holds potential leverage. In June, the EU declared Israel in breach of human rights commitments under the EU-Israel Association

Agreement. Though options such as suspending trade or academic cooperation have been discussed, concrete steps are lacking.

With famine worsening and international appeals mounting, pressure is rising on Israel's allies to move beyond rhetoric and implement meaningful action to address the crisis.