

Palestinian Family Turns to High Court to Secure Escape from Gaza

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A Palestinian family of six, granted permission to join a British relative, has brought their case to the High Court in London after the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO – the UK government department responsible for foreign affairs and consular support) refused to assist them in leaving Gaza. Lawyers argue the family is at immediate risk and that consular support is both lawful and feasible.

The family comprising a father, mother and four children was approved for entry into the UK following a decision by an immigration tribunal. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has criticised the ruling, claiming it misapplied a scheme originally intended for Ukrainian refugees. The family's relocation depends on submitting biometric data at a visa application centre, something currently impossible to complete from within Gaza without direct FCDO involvement. Legal representative Tim Owen KC told the court that while Israel permits such consular evacuations, the UK has failed to request one.

The family's legal team also told the court that three of the four children were recently shot at while attempting to reach an aid distribution site, and one child was wounded by shrapnel, resulting in a serious injury.

Representing the FCDO, Julian Milford KC argued that evacuating individuals from Gaza requires significant "political and diplomatic capital" which the government is not prepared to expend. He confirmed there are currently ten people in Gaza who have been granted unconditional leave to enter the UK, with a further 28 applicants awaiting biometric clearance.

Justice Chamberlain acknowledged the political sensitivity of the case but also expressed concern for the family's safety. The court has postponed judgment to further assess whether the FCDO's refusal constitutes a legal breach.