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Rt Hon Mr David Lammy MP
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Delivered via email

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UK action for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza

Dear Secretary of State,

On 28th November, GMB will be joining other unions and the TUC to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and to end UK arms exports to Israel, as part of a day of action called for by Palestinian workers.

In summer, GMB's annual Congress made this call unequivocally and Labour was elected to Government on a Manifesto committing to an immediate ceasefire and "a robust arms export regime committed to upholding international law".

Yet in spite of UN calls, your Office has stopped only 30 of the 350 total arms export licenses that the UK holds with Israel. Licences that form part of the supply chain for Israeli weapons which are still causing civilian deaths in Gaza remain in place. We urge your Office to stop all arms export licences to Israel immediately.

Over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed under Israel's use of its weaponry, with 70% of verified deaths being women and children. UK policy is to contribute to the international supply chain of this weaponry for defensive purposes only, and not if they risk use in violations of international law. Gaza is unliveable as nearly two million Palestinians have been forcibly displaced and many on brink of famine, their livelihoods destroyed as have their schools, hospitals and trade union offices.

Enabled by these weapons, the actions of Israeli forces have been ruled by international courts as plausibly carrying out a genocide in Gaza and have presented enough evidence of war crimes to warrant Prime Minister Netanyahu's arrest. Palestinians are now being forcibly displaced from the north of Gaza once again just weeks after Netanyahu's Ministers called for building illegal settlements.

These actions are not self-defence, they deny Palestinians the rights and dignity that they are entitled to. Brave Israeli citizens have been arrested and attacked for peacefully protesting the Netanyahu government to stop these actions and secure a ceasefire with warring parties to bring Israeli hostages home.

The UK government must therefore do more to uphold international law and pressure the Israeli government to respect Palestinian human rights. This must include a ban on trade in goods from Israel's illegal settlements. The International Court of Justice has called on states not to aid or assist Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and has ruled the treatment of Palestinians by Israeli authorities as violating the prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid.

Labour's Manifesto states that "Labour values international law because of the security it brings". Yet Palestinian, Israeli and Lebanese civilians continue to live without that security while the Israeli government refuses to agree a ceasefire and a peaceful, two-state solution to the conflict that upholds the rights and security of Israelis and Palestinians. Labour's Manifesto states that recognising a Palestinian state is crucial to Israel's security, and we urge the UK government to immediately recognise the State of Palestine as have Ireland, Norway and Spain.

Among the thousands of civilians killed in this conflict are health workers, schools workers and UK nationals delivering aid. Our members have watched how conflict abroad has spread hate at home and how global insecurity has far reaching repercussions on their working lives.

We believe the UK government shares our view that workers' rights, decent jobs and rebuilding of public services that we rightly defend here at home must be essential pillars of any peace settlement in the Middle East. We know these will only be possible with the security that international law brings, but international law will only be upheld if it is applied consistently by those who can.

Yours sincerely,



Gary Smith

General Secretary



Barbara Plant

National President