

GAZA AID DISRUPTION AND UK CHARITY FUNDRAISING

Background

Israeli and international media outlets, including the BBC, have reported numerous instances of aid disruptions to Gaza, orchestrated by Israeli groups, such as Tzav 9.¹ A *Guardian* investigation uncovered Israeli police involvement in tipping off settler groups about the whereabouts of aid trucks heading to Gaza.² Witness interviews and footage have also shown Israeli police and military personnel standing by as aid trucks were attacked and aid was destroyed by Israelis and illegal settlers, particularly at the ‘Tarqumiya’ crossing extending into Hebron in the occupied Palestinian territory (“oPt”).³

As these Israeli groups enjoy complete impunity by Israeli police and military, fears within the community—including among aid truck drivers—have intensified, particularly as the settlers involved in disrupting the delivery of aid are often armed.⁴ These fears are exacerbated by the increasing violence of settlers and the Israeli military's plans to distribute additional firearms to settlers in the West Bank.⁵ Restriction of aid is exacerbating the ‘full-blown famine’ as declared by the UN World Food Programme (“WFP”) in May 2024.⁶

Legal Context

It is incumbent upon Israel to allow the unimpeded flow of aid into Gaza, as dictated by Article 61 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War (GCIV). Additional Protocol I provide a broader view of the obligations entailed in Article 61 of GCIV and extends it to cover the “rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief consignments, equipment, and personnel.”⁷ The obstruction of humanitarian aid is explicitly prohibited in Article 18(2) of the 1977 Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions.⁸ Israel’s duty to guarantee and facilitate aid into Gaza without its obstruction by Israelis is supported by the numerous legal provisions above. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (“OCHA”) spokesperson Jens Laerke has reiterated these obligations, stating that Israeli authorities’ duties to ensure the access of aid extends beyond Israel's borders until the aid reaches civilians in Gaza.⁹

Israel is in violation of its duties under international law by not bringing an end to the practices of Israeli organisations disrupting and destroying aid in addition to supplying settlers with weaponry to facilitate the blocking of aid, an act that can be seen as providing these organisations and settler a *carte blanche*.

UK Fundraising

The International Centre of Justice for Palestinians’ (ICJP) Investigations Unit found that groups involved in the disruption of aid are raising funds from UK taxpayer money facilitated through the UK Gift Aid program.¹⁰ A UK

¹ Times of Israel. (11th March 2024). JS. ‘[Right-wing activists block humanitarian aid headed to Gaza for three hours](#)’.

The New Arab. (27th January 2024). ‘[Tzav 9 Movement: Who are the Israeli extremists blocking aid to Gaza?](#)’

BBC. (14th May 2024). ‘[Israeli protesters block aid trucks destined for Gaza](#)’.

² The Guardian. (21st May 2024). ‘[Israeli soldiers and police tipping off groups that attack Gaza aid trucks](#)’.

³ The Guardian. (16th May 2024). ‘[“Barbaric”: Palestinian lorry drivers recount settlers’ attack on Gaza aid convoy](#)’.

⁴ The Guardian. (31st May 2024). ‘[“Solidarity over hatred”: the small band of Israelis stopping settlers obstructing aid trucks](#)’.

⁵ Anadolu Agency. (30th May 2024). ‘[Israeli Army to Give More Weapons to Illegal Settlers in the West Bank: Report](#)’.

⁶ AP. (6th May 2024). ‘[The UN says there’s ‘full-blown famine’ in northern Gaza. What does that mean?](#)’.

⁷ United Nations. (12th August 1949). Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in the Time of War. [\[Article 61\]](#).

⁸ United Nations (8th June 1977). Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. [\[Article 18\]](#).

⁹ United Nations. (31st May 2024). ‘[Gaza: Children are starving amid persistent aid access obstacles, warn UN agencies](#)’.

¹⁰ The International Centre of Justice for Palestinians. (29 May 2024). ‘[UK Charity facilitating donations and Gift Aid to fund destruction of humanitarian aid heading to Gaza: Charity Commission must investigate](#)’.

fundraising platform called UK Toremnet has allowed three groups *Im Tirtzu*, *Tzav 9* and *Torat Lechima* to use its services to raise funds.¹¹ These three groups have specifically fundraised, from UK donors and using UK Gift Aid, for the disruption of humanitarian aid for Gaza.

ICJP submitted a Complaint to the Charity Commission for England and Wales on the 29th May 2024, concerning UK Toremnet's activities. The Charity Commission is responsible for ensuring that all UK-registered charities abide by the law and guidelines set by the Charity Commission. As UK Toremnet is a UK-registered charity, it may be falling foul of Charity Commission guidelines and international law, through its facilitation of funding for *Im Tirtzu*, *Tzav 9* and *Torat Lechima*.

UK Policy on Violations

In February 2024, the UK announced sanctions on extremist Israeli settlers inducing violence against Palestinians.¹² However, settler violence persists and has expanded to disrupting aid while carrying military-supplied artillery. The current humanitarian situation, particularly the starvation of civilians in Gaza, is being investigated by the International Criminal Court ("ICC") as a method of warfare and a crime against humanity.¹³ Israel's permissive approach to obstructions leading to potential crimes against humanity also violates the International Court of Justice ("ICJ")'s order for provisional measures instructing Israel to ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian aid.¹⁴

In instances of non-compliance, the UK has a responsibility to ensure the application of international law and international humanitarian law by states, as instructed in Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions and Article 41(1) of the Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts.¹⁵ Furthermore, Article 2(5) of the UN Charter: "All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action."

Policy Recommendations

The current UK policy of sanctioning 'extremist' Israeli settlers is insufficient to address the root of the problem, which is embedded in Israeli governmental decisions and policies that condone settler aid obstructions.

This situation jeopardises the UK's reputation as a state committed to upholding international law and risks drawing the country into potential complicity investigations, as UK taxpayer money may be indirectly funding Israeli organisations obstructing aid. To mitigate these national and international risks, the UK must:

- Direct its sanctions at Israeli officials and government entities advocating for the arming of settlers.
- Impose direct sanctions on Israeli organisations and their officials involved in obstructing aid.
- Apply concrete diplomatic pressure on Israel to enforce a stricter stance against groups obstructing aid.
- Investigate UK-based organisations facilitating the transfer of taxpayer money to fund illicit actions that could plausibly lead to an investigation into UK as a complicit state in violation of international law.

¹¹ ICJP. (29th May 2024). [UK Charity facilitating donations and Gift Aid to fund destruction of humanitarian aid heading to Gaza: Charity Commission must investigate.](#)

¹² UK. (12th February 2024). '[UK sanctions extremist settlers in the West Bank](#)'.

¹³ Rome Statute [{Article 8\(2\)\(b\)}](#).

¹⁴ ICJ Provisional Measures. '[Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip \(South Africa v. Israel\)](#)'

¹⁵ The Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts. [{Article 41\(1\)}](#).

Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War [{Article 1}](#).