

# Journalism During a Genocide

A guide to holding the Prime  
Minister to account





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# About This Handbook

More than 61,000 people in Gaza have been killed by Israel since October 2023. One in twenty people have been injured. Two Israeli officials are now wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes and crimes against humanity.




Many of us have repeatedly made objections over Britain's continued military, economic and political cooperation with Israel, including the sale of weapons, the supply of intelligence and the use of Royal Air Force (RAF) bases in Cyprus.

Our questions have been met with evasion, obstruction and silence, leaving the public in the dark over the ways in which the responsibilities of government have been discharged.

Since the government was elected in July 2024, the Prime Minister has held numerous press conferences to mark a range of policy announcements, from increases in military spending to the development of a theme park. These press conferences are an opportunity for the British media to hold the Prime Minister to account over the government's role in Israel's military assault on Gaza.

Transparency and accountability are cornerstones of democracy – and the public deserves to know the full scale of the UK's complicity in crimes against humanity. To that end, we trust this handbook will assist you in establishing the truth and holding the British government to account.

## What You'll Find in This Handbook

-  **British complicity** Details of military, economic and political cooperation between Britain and Israel.
-  **Suggested questions** A list of questions that journalists may wish to ask the Prime Minister in light of an ongoing genocide.
-  **Further reading** Reports from human rights organisations.



# Why This Handbook Matters

- **Humanity** The death toll in Gaza has exceed 61,000 people. Many thousands more are injured, homeless and traumatised. As we speak, Palestinians are being starved by an illegal blockade.
- **Complicity** Britain has played a highly influential role in Israel's military operations, including the sale of weapons, the supply of intelligence and the use of Royal Air Force (RAF) bases in Cyprus.
- **Truth** For too long, this government has avoided real scrutiny over the full scale of its complicity in crimes against humanity. The media has a responsibility to hold the government to account and expose the truth.

## The Independent Alliance

We are proud to represent constituencies made up of people from all faiths and none.

We are committed to a foreign policy that prioritises peace, defends international law and treats all human life with equal worth. We believe in the rights of self-determination of all nations, free from foreign interference and oppression. We want to see an end to all wars: in Gaza, Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan, the DRC and beyond.

We want to see an end to our government's complicity in war crimes. That is why we have been campaigning for an end to all arms sales to Israel - and will continue to push for the only path to a just and lasting peace: an end to the occupation of Palestine.

### The Independent Alliance

*Adnan Hussain, Ayoub Khan, Iqbal Mohamed, Jeremy Corbyn, Shockat Adam*

# Suggested Questions

# F-35 parts

In September 2024, the government announced a partial arms embargo. Under this partial embargo, the government suspended the direct transfer of F-35 parts to Israel on the grounds that there was a clear risk their use would violate international humanitarian law.

At the same time, the government announced it would continue to allow the supply of F-35 components to the global pool, to which Israel has access. In their own words, “where it is not possible to disentangle components that might eventually end up in Israel, we have made a carve-out for the arms suspension.” This, in itself, is a significant admission from the government. In other words, it is knowingly and openly making an exception to its legal obligations.

This is bad enough. However, the government’s justification for this exception demands further scrutiny. The government claims that owing to the “international collaborative programme”, it is not possible to suspend these licences without undermining “the global F-35 supply chain that is vital for the security of the UK, or allies, and NATO”. This rests on the highly implausible claim that the UK has no ability to either track where F-35 jet parts go once they leave the country, nor ask for guarantees that F-35 jet parts will not be used by Israel in Gaza.

A High Court hearing is set for May to examine the UK government’s decision to continue exporting F-35 parts for Israeli fighter jets. The case will be the biggest legal test of UK exports to Israel to date.

## Suggested questions to the Prime Minister

- ◈ Are there are circumstances in which the supply of F-35 components would be suspended?
- ◈ The Foreign Secretary has publicly accepted that F-35 components “might be used to commit... a serious violation of International Humanitarian law.” How is the government’s decision to continue exporting F-35 components consistent with Britain’s legal obligations?
- ◈ Is it the government’s position that it cannot – or will not – bring the F-35 programme in line with the UK’s legal obligations?
- ◈ When will the government publish a full list of military shipments from the UK to Israel since October 2023?

# RAF bases

The government continues to avoid questions about the use of RAF Akrotiri and Dhekelia, two British bases situated in Cyprus.

When the Prime Minister visited RAF Akrotiri in December 2024, the Prime Minister was filmed telling troops: "The whole world and everyone back at home is relying on you." He added: "Quite a bit of what goes on here can't necessarily be talked about all of the time. We can't necessarily tell the world what you're doing."

Since October, military cargo has been airlifted from Akrotiri to Israel. This cargo has often travelled to Cyprus from US military bases in other parts of Europe. RAF shadow aircraft have also been conducting nightly surveillance flights over Gaza.

As a recent report from the British Palestine Committee reads, the UK government is, "engaged in military actions without being subject to parliamentary scrutiny, and that these actions implicate its institutions and officials in the gravest breaches of international law."

## Suggested questions to the Prime Minister

- ◈ Is RAF Akrotiri being used as a route for weapons to be deployed in Gaza?
- ◈ How many US Air Force flights have flown from RAF Akrotiri to Israel since 7 October 2023?
- ◈ Has the government sought legal advice over the continued use of RAF Akrotiri to support Israeli military operations?
- ◈ Will you release video footage from RAF spy planes that have flown over Gaza? How many hours of footage do you have from the war zone?
- ◈ Have Israeli F-35 jets been stored and/or repaired at RAF bases?



# Genocide

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, the Prime Minister stated that: “I’m well aware of the definition of genocide, and that is why I’ve never referred to it as genocide.” Before that, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, the Foreign Secretary claimed that using terminology like “genocide” when referring to Gaza was “not appropriate” and that: “Those terms were largely used when millions of people lost their lives... The way that people are now using those terms undermines their seriousness.”

It was in response to these denials that we wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to publish any legal advice he had received regarding the definition of genocide and its relation to Gaza.

In a government reply, we were told that “it is the UK Government’s long-standing policy that any determination that genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent national or international court, and not for governments or non-judicial bodies. This approach ensures that any determination is above politics, lobbying and individual or national interest. The UK respects the independence of the International Court of Justice and awaits their decision. We cannot comment on ongoing legal proceedings and do not believe it helpful to speculate on the outcome.”

If this is the case, then both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have contradicted this supposedly long-standing government policy. Both have made statements denying the existence of genocide in Gaza, contradicting the claim that it is for the courts, not governments, to make that determination.

## Suggested questions to the Prime Minister

- ◀ When will the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary be returning to the House to retract their statements, denying the genocide in Gaza?
- ◀ Have you received any advice on the definition of genocide and its applicability to the situation in Gaza? If so, are their comments in line with your advice?
- ◀ When will any advice be made public? If you have not offered any such advice, why not?

# Inquiry

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Jeremy Corbyn called for a full, public, independent inquiry into the UK's involvement in Israel's military assault in Gaza.

As stated in a letter to the Prime Minister, this inquiry should establish exactly what decisions have been taken, how these decisions have been made, and what consequences they have had. Any meaningful inquiry would require the full co-operation from government ministers involved in decision-making processes since October 2023.

Since Jeremy Corbyn's initial letter, the call has gained the support of 40 Parliamentarians from Labour, the SNP, Plaid Cymru, the Greens, Sinn Féin, and several Independent MPs.

It has been two months since the initial call was made. The government is yet to respond.

## Suggested questions to the Prime Minister

- ◉ Will you block an independent inquiry into the UK's involvement in Israel's military assault on Gaza?
- ◉ Why have you ignored the demand for an independent inquiry?
- ◉ Will you agree to pass all findings of any inquiry onto the ICC?

# Other

There are a number of outstanding questions that the Prime Minister must answer.

- ◀ What was the purpose of the “private” meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister meeting, Gideon Sa’ar, and the British Foreign Secretary? Was the Foreign Secretary aware of the application for an arrest warrant by humanitarian groups?
- ◀ Will you be hosting any more visits from representatives of the Israeli government?
- ◀ Given the Government has imposed widespread sanctions on Russia for breaches of international law, why won't it do the same for Israel?
- ◀ In the eyes of Palestinians, what do you think your legacy will be?
- ◀ Do you agree that Israel’s continued blockade is a breach of international law? Why was it important for the Foreign Secretary to retract his statement that Israel had broken international law?

Exposing the truth comes at a cost.

In Gaza, journalists have paid with their lives.

Here in Britain, journalists may damage personal relationships or hamper their professional ambitions. In an ongoing genocide, these risks are surely worth taking.

## Further reading

Below is a list of reports from which journalists could devise urgent questions to the Prime Minister.

- Al-Haq - New review of F35 exports reveals no red lines for UK government in context of atrocities in Gaza - <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/25814.html>
- Al Jazeera - How UK-US military airlifts have supported Israel's war on Gaza - <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/10/24/how-us-and-uk-military-airlifts-have-supported-israels-war-on-gaza>
- Amnesty International - Genocide in Gaza - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>
- British Palestinian Committee - British Military Cooperation Report - <https://britpalcommittee.co.uk/uk-israel-military-collaboration>
- CAAT - Arming Genocide - <https://caat.org.uk/publications/the-uk-governments-partial-suspension-of-arms-export-licences-to-israel-and-the-f-35-exemption/>
- Global Legal Action Network - UK Weapons Sales to Israel - <https://www.glanlaw.org/israel-weapons-sales>