

Lift this inhumane blockade of Gaza NOW !

An open letter to the Prime Minister

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 0AA

3 June 2010

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned, are appalled at the unlawful killing of humanitarian workers on board Mavi Marmara by Israeli commandoes in international waters defying international law. The Gaza Freedom flotilla was an international humanitarian effort to bring aid to the besieged population of Gaza.

The Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Brian Cowen, has directly blamed the Gaza Blockade for the deaths. He is quoted in the London Evening Standard: "I believe that is in violation of international law. People are entitled to have humanitarian assistance." The UN also considers the blockade illegal. We commend the Foreign Secretary's statement calling for an end to the blockade of the Gaza Strip and now ask our government to pursue this course of action as a matter of urgency.

The blockade has heaped misery on Gaza's 1.5 million residents many of whom are refugees in their own country having been forcibly expelled from Israel. The UN humanitarian co-ordinator said last week that the formal economy in Gaza has "collapsed" and 60% of households are short of food. According to UN statistics, around 70% of Gazans live on less than \$1 a day, 75% rely on food aid and 60% have no daily access to water. A UN report last year said that on average it took 85 days to get shelter kits into Gaza, 68 days to deliver health and paediatric hygiene kits, and 39 days for household items such as bedding and kitchen utensils. It said that school textbooks and stationery had been delayed. A UN fact finding mission described the blockade as "collective punishment", illegal in international law.

We urge you in the name of humanity to provide leadership to end this siege; this state of affairs should not be allowed to continue for a day longer and the time has come for the newly elected British government to use all its resources to bring an end to the inhumane Gaza Blockade.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari – Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain

Joined by

Brendan Barber – General Secretary, Trades Union Congress
Professor Avi Shlaim – Professor of International Relations, Oxford University
Michael Mansfield QC – Human Rights Activist
Ken Livingstone – Former Mayor of London
Robert Lambert – Co-Director, European Muslim Research Centre
James O'Nions – Chair, War On Want
Maulana Sarfraz Madni – President, UK Islamic Mission
Rt. Hon Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas – Presiding Officer, National Assembly For Wales
Lord Ahmed of Rotherham
Tony Benn – President, Stop the War Coalition
John F Smith - General Secretary, British Musicians' Union
Brian Eno – Singer, musician, composer, record producer
Musleh Faradhi - Central President, Islamic Forum Europe
Andrew Murray – Chair, Stop the War Coalition
Oliver McTernan – Cofounder & Director Forward Thinking
William Sieghart – Chairman, Forward Thinking
Dr Jonathan Githens-Mazer – University of Exeter and Co-Director EMRC
John Griffiths AM - Minister of Children, Education, Government of Wales
Derek Simpson – Joint General Secretary, Unite the Union
Matloob Hussain – Chairman, Union of Muslim Organisations – Walsall
Saleem Kidwai – Secretary General, Muslim Council of Wales
Salah Beltagui – Convener, Muslim Council of Scotland
Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra – Chairman, Religions for Peace UK
Christine Blower – General Secretary, National Union of Teachers (NUT)
Dr Faisal Hanjara – President, Federation of Students Islamic Societies
Dave Prentis – General Secretary, Unison
Dr Mohamed Mukadam – Chairman, Association of Muslim Schools UK
Abdurrazagh Ezzeddin – Chair, Muslim Students Society UK & Eire
Ibrahim Hewitt – Chairman of the board of Trustees, INTERPAL
Jeremy Corbyn MP – Member of Parliament (Islington North)
Hywel Williams MP – Member of Parliament (Plaid Cymru, Arfon)
Irfan Mustafa – Vice President, Indian Muslim Federation (UK)
Toufik Kacimi – Director, Muslim Welfare House
Sheikh Qari M Ismail – Lead Imam, Central Mosque Birmingham
Ufuk Secgin - Islamic Community of Milli Gorus UK
Lindsey German – Convener, Stop the War Coalition
Young Muslims UK

Jews for Justice for Palestine
Asif Ahmed – Chairman, Scottish Islamic Foundation
Sandra White MSP – Member of Scottish Parliament (Glasgow)
Cllr Salma Yaqoob – Leader, Respect Party
Anas Takriti – The Cordoba Foundation
Dr Daud Abdullah – Middle East Monitor
Ahtsham Ali – President, Islamic Society of Britain
Bob Crow – General Secretary, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
Jeremy Dear – General Secretary, National Union of Journalists (NUJ)
Dr Ashraf Makadam – Chairman, Federation Of Muslim Organisations Leicestershire
Majed Al Zeer – Palestinian Return Centre
Muhammad Sawalha – British Muslim Initiative
Dr Ruth Blakeley – Lecturer in International Relations, University of Kent
Norman Finkelstein - Author
Dr Abdul Karim Khalil – Director, Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre Trust
Revd Gwynn ap Gwilym – Adviser to the Bench of Bishops, Church in Wales
Nia Griffiths MP – Assembly Member, National Assembly of Wales and MP of Llanelli
Leanne Wood AM – Assembly Member, National Assembly of Wales
Christine Chapman AM – Assembly Member, National Assembly of Wales
Bethan Jenkins AM – Assembly Member, National Assembly of Wales
Sayed Mohammed Musawi – Chair, World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League
Billy Hayes – General Secretary of the Communication Workers Union (CWU)
Sally Hunt – General Secretary of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU)
Matt Wrack – General Secretary, Fire Brigades' Union (FBU)
Mark Serwotka – General Secretary, Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)
Hugh Lanning – Chair, Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)
Chris Keates – General Secretary, NASUWT, The Teachers' Union
Dr Swee Ang – Senior Consultant, Barth's Hospital
Richard Newsom – Consultant Surgeon and Hon Senior Lecturer, Southampton University
Professor Ilan Pappé – Director of the European Centre for Palestine Studies, University of Exeter
Abbas M H Ismail – The World Federation of KSIMC
Gerry Doherty – General Secretary, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
Ifath Nawaz – President, Association of Muslim Lawyers UK
Steve Gillan – General Secretary, The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers
Haji Khadim Hussain – President Bradford Council for Mosques

Placed by the Muslim Council of Britain