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Rt Hon David Lammy
By email

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Dear Foreign Secretary

Proper assessment of breaches in international law

I recognise the profound ongoing efforts being taken by the Government to support a ceasefire and work towards a lasting peace in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. Alongside many parliamentary colleagues I have written in support of the recognition of a Palestinian state at next week's UN Conference.

Nonetheless as a doctor, I am compelled to ask what our government is doing to investigate the deeply disturbing violations of international law widely understood to be being committed by the State of Israel.

The repeated and documented targeting of humanitarian aid, food supplies, healthcare infrastructure and maternity services constitute not only a humanitarian catastrophe but a grave breach of international law.

Hospitals, clinics, ambulances and maternity wards are facilities that are explicitly protected yet have been bombed, come under fire or rendered inoperable. Aid convoys and medical personnel, including those from internationally recognised organisations, have been directly attacked or prevented from delivering life-saving assistance. The obstruction of food distribution systems has pushed an already devastated population to the brink of starvation. As you will know, Save the Children now report that more than 93% of children in Gaza are at risk of famine.

I would also like to highlight findings from the United Nations and humanitarian agencies that document a systematic pattern of violence against Palestinian women and girls. According to UN reports, women and children comprise nearly 70% of those killed by Israeli forces since October 2023. There are also reports of a dramatic increase in miscarriages—estimated at 300%—amid a total collapse of maternal healthcare services. An estimated 150,000 pregnant and lactating women are currently without access to essential care, including nutrition, prenatal services, and safe childbirth options. Additionally, UN human rights experts have raised grave concerns over credible and rising reports of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based abuse committed during military operations and detention.

Such actions violate the basic principles of distinction, proportionality, and humanity under the laws of war and may well amount to war crimes. Alongside all efforts to protect aid and secure lasting peace, we must act to ensure Israel upholds its obligations under international law and demand accountability for violations.

Yours sincerely,

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