

Greens call for urgent government peace initiative to end Israel-Gaza war



Green Party

11 January 2024

The Green Party has urged the government to launch an urgent international peace effort to end the Israel Gaza war.

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“The horrific loss of Israeli civilian lives on October 7 has been compounded by months of devastation for the people of Gaza and the Occupied West Bank, leading to over 23,000 deaths and the escalating risk of wars spreading through the region.

“Now is the time to search for new peace initiatives that can break this cycle of pain and create the conditions for a lasting peace in the region.

“We need the UK government to work to restore trust in the international institutions designed to protect people and that offer peaceful, legal and diplomatic avenues to end conflicts.

“Of course, it is for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to agree the long-term solutions that will offer each security and peace.

“However, the UK government can do much more now to encourage that process to begin. That is why the Green Party is today urging the UK government to:

- Unequivocally back an immediate ceasefire to allow the free flow of humanitarian aid, free the hostages and create space for dialogue
- Support the UN General Assembly in its overwhelming backing for a ceasefire and use its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to vote for rather than abstain on ceasefire votes
- Support the role of the International Criminal Court in its investigation of war crimes, including the use of sexual violence by Hamas and disproportionate use of force by the Israeli government
- Support South Africa in its decision to ask the International Court of Justice to rule on whether Israel is carrying out genocide in Gaza.

- Help reduce military action by suspending arms sales to Israel

“By supporting international institutions and encouraging peaceful solutions, the UK government can act as a partner for peace rather than a proponent for further pain and suffering for the people of the region.

“It will take courage and determination to change course and recognise that UK foreign policy is failing to bring this conflict to an end, but a change of course now, can help chart a new path to peace.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Unequivocally back an immediate ceasefire to allow the free flow of humanitarian aid, free the hostages and create space for dialogue

Hostages should be released unconditionally, and aid should be able to reach those in need, even without a ceasefire. However, a ceasefire would undoubtedly assist both to happen and would create space for a peaceful, diplomatic dialogue about the future to begin.

1. Support the UN General Assembly in its overwhelming backing for a ceasefire and use its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to vote for rather than abstain on ceasefire votes

The UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly for a ceasefire in mid-December, with the US voting against and the UK abstaining (153 in favour, 10 against, 23 abstained).

All permanent members of the UN Security Council – bar the US and the UK – have backed a ceasefire. The US used has used its veto to block the resolution, while the UK has abstained.

1. Support the role of the International Criminal Court in its investigation of war crimes, including the use of sexual violence by Hamas and disproportionate use of force by the Israeli government

In March 2021, the International Criminal Court’s chief prosecutor opened a formal investigation into alleged war crimes in the Palestinian territories. Fatou Bensouda said the probe would cover events in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip since June 2014.

Following the October 7 atrocities, ICC Prosecutor Karim A. A. Khan KC visited Israel and Palestine. He said: “My visit to Israel was conducted at the request of family members and friends of Israeli citizens who were either killed or taken hostage by Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups on 7 October 2023. We must show that the law is there, on the front lines, and that it is capable of protecting all”.

1. Support South Africa in its decision to ask the International Court of Justice to rule on whether Israeli is carrying out genocide in Gaza.

On December 29, South Africa filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations

under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

1. Help reduce military action by suspending arms sales to Israel

In December, Palestinian human rights organisation Al-Haq and the UK-based Global Legal Action Network applied for a judicial review of the government's export licences for the sale of British weapons capable of being used in Israel's action in Gaza.

In recent years, sales have included components for military radars and targeting equipment, components for military support, combat aircraft, naval vessels and more.

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