

# UK leaders issue cynical protests over Israeli assassination of British aid workers in Gaza

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Among the seven World Central Kitchen aid workers killed by Israel Tuesday were three men from the United Kingdom, the most-represented nationality. James Henderson, John Chapman and James Kirby were all former soldiers working as part of the aid convoy's security team.

The killings have dominated the online news sites in Britain and were front-page news Wednesday morning. All of which has underscored the extreme restraint showed by British officials in their criticisms of the Israeli government and armed forces.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary David Cameron have professed themselves “appalled” by the “completely unacceptable killing of aid workers”, but only through a four-paragraph press release in Sunak's case, and via a single tweet in Cameron's.

The sole concrete action “demanded” of Israel by Sunak was a “thorough and transparent independent investigation into what happened”, a request reiterated by foreign office minister Andrew Mitchell in a meeting with the summoned Israeli ambassador.

These cynical demands—echoed internationally by leaders in the United States, Canada, Australia and Poland, whose citizens were also among the aid workers killed—are part of the cover up of Israel's war crime.

It is already clear “what happened”. Israeli forces struck each of the three armoured vehicles in the aid convoy in succession, the second—into which injured passengers of the first had been transferred—800 metres down the road from the first, and the third car nearly a mile down the road from the second.

World Central Kitchen's logo was clearly displayed on the vehicles roofs and the charity had confirmed the route of its convoy with the Israeli military ahead of

time. According to World Central Kitchen, before being obliterated the convoy had dropped off more than 100 tonnes of food supplies at a warehouse in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza.

The attack was part of a pattern of crimes, including attacks on hospitals, bakeries, UN warehouses and schools and other essential infrastructure, which have seen 200 humanitarian workers killed in Gaza in the last six months, nearly three times as many as recorded in any other single conflict in a whole year.

Tuesday's assassination has already begun to have the intended effect of deterring the few humanitarian relief efforts still underway in the devastated province. Ships on the way from Cyprus carrying 240 tonnes of aid turned back on Tuesday. World Central Kitchen, which was playing a key role in over-sea aid deliveries, has suspended operations, as have fellow charities Anera and Project Hope.

It is equally clear that Israel will carry out no investigation which does not have as its predetermined conclusion that the “unintended strike” was a “tragic” error, “grave mistake” and the result of “misidentification”.

Cameron fell over himself to endorse this whitewash on Wednesday, telling reporters at the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels, “I welcome what the Israeli foreign minister said yesterday to me about a full, urgent and transparent inquiry into how this dreadful event was allowed to happen... I also welcome the fact that he spoke about much more aid getting into Gaza”.

The British ruling class's real attitude to the investigation of war crimes is well documented in its persecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, whose pioneering journalism exposed countless such acts carried out by American and allied forces in

Afghanistan and Iraq.

Assange is coming up on his fifth year in London's Belmarsh maximum security prison, where he has been subjected to serious abuse. He is just weeks away from possible extradition to the United States to face charges under the Espionage Act which carry a de facto life sentence.

It is only thanks to the similarly heroic work of journalists in the Gaza Strip that events like Tuesday's attack are known about and examined in detail, something Israel has tried to prevent with the killing of more than 120 media workers in the region—far exceeding the toll of other conflicts.

In recognition of the enormous popular outrage over the genocide in Gaza which the strike on the aid convoy has put a sharp point to, Sunak's statement on the attack also included the lines: "far too many aid workers and ordinary civilians have lost their lives in Gaza and the situation is increasingly intolerable. The UK expects to see immediate action by Israel to end restrictions on humanitarian aid, deconflict with the UN and aid agencies, protect civilians and repair vital infrastructure like hospitals and water networks."

What revolting hypocrisy. More than any other imperialist power, the UK has supported the *carte blanche* provided to Israel by the US—backing which has allowed it to carry out an unrestrained war on "aid workers", "ordinary civilians" and "infrastructure like hospitals and water networks." British officials have not found the killing of more than 12,000 children, maiming of more than 75,000 people and displacement of close to 2 million "intolerable" enough to stop supplying the soldiers responsible with military hardware.

The UK has also lined up with Israel's "conflict with the UN and aid agencies", cutting funds to the United Nations' Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA on January 27, thereby participating directly in the deliberate starving of the Palestinians.

These policies are decisively opposed by the British population, with YouGov polls published Wednesday finding 56 percent versus 17 percent in favour of a ban on arms and parts to Israel, and 59 percent versus 12 percent believing Israel is violating human rights in Gaza.

The government, however, has no intention of changing course. Sunak's statement concludes with a

reference to "Israel's rightful aim of defeating Hamas", the banner under which all its atrocities have been carried out, and behind which the ground invasion of Rafah is being prepared.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, under more pressure to make some show of opposition to the genocidal war being waged by Israel, declared in his response to Tuesday's events that "This war must stop now," issuing a call for "an immediate ceasefire, the immediate release of all hostages and full humanitarian access into Gaza."

His position carefully mirrors that taken by US President Joe Biden, also up for election this year, with no consequences whatsoever for Israel's conduct of the war.

When Starmer now acknowledges that "it is not the first time aid workers have come under fire in Israel's campaign", he condemns himself and his own record of steadfast backing for Israel, whose criminal campaign has claimed tens of thousands more lives that Starmer never felt similarly moved to condemn as "outrageous and unacceptable".



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