

More than 300 public figures sign letter demanding Starmer end UK complicity in Gaza genocide

Paul Bond
3 June 2025

More than 300 mainly British and Irish public figures have signed an open letter to Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer demanding he “end the UK’s complicity in the horrors in Gaza.”

Prominent media and arts personalities including Benedict Cumberbatch, Dua Lipa and Gary Lineker have joined academics, doctors, lawyers and Holocaust survivor Stephen Kapos in signing the letter calling out Starmer’s characterization of the genocide as “intolerable” while continuing to arm Israel.

The letter is the latest statement condemning the crimes committed by the fascist government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the collusion of the British government in them. It reflects growing anger at Starmer’s full-throated support for Israel, which has seen a ratcheting up of domestic repression against protesters and journalists exposing the crimes of the Zionist regime, the supply of parts for F-35 fighter jets and Royal Air Force reconnaissance flights over Gaza.

The letter tells Starmer, “You can’t call it ‘intolerable’ and keep sending arms... This complicity is not inevitable—it is a choice.”

Organised by the refugee charity Choose Love, it denounces the campaign of starvation being waged against the whole population of Gaza—“an entire people left to starve before the world’s eyes.” Children are starving, “while food and medicine sit just minutes away, blocked at the border. Words won’t feed Palestinian children—we need action.”

Those who survive starvation, the letter says, “wake up to bombs falling on them. Violence stamped with UK inaction—flown with parts shipped from British factories to Israel, could be obliterating families in

seconds.” Every arms shipment, it states, “makes our country directly complicit in their deaths.”

The letter calls for the immediate suspension of all UK arms sales and licences to Israel.

Its recognition of the weaponisation of aid comes just days after the launch of the US- and Israeli state organised fraud, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), set up to further the starvation and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

The letter calls for measures to ensure humanitarian access from “experienced aid organisations without military interference.”

The letter’s last demand is that Starmer “Make a commitment to the children of Gaza that you will broker an immediate and permanent ceasefire and stop the starvation.”

The more than 300 signatories include actors, performers and directors Steve Coogan, Brian Cox, Danny Boyle, Maxine Peake, Toby Jones, John Lithgow, Mark Ruffalo, Jessie Buckley, Chris O’Dowd, Annie Lennox, Jessie Ware and Massive Attack, comics Alexei Sayle and Amelia Dimoldenberg, writers Courttina Newland and Lee Hall as well as academics such as Professor Jacqueline Rose, lawyers including Jolyon Maugham KC (founder of the Good Law Project) and doctors.

The readiness of such prominent figures to speak out speaks for ever wider sections of the population who are sickened at the genocidal crimes of the Israeli government and the role played by the Starmer government in facilitating them.

Many of the signatories are Jewish, exploding the slanderous allegation of “antisemitism” levelled against those opposing the genocide in Gaza.

Gary Lineker has recently been forced to step down prematurely from his role presenting *Match of the Day*, the BBC's flagship football programme. This followed a long social media campaign witch-hunt against him that finally succeeded by exploiting his reposting a video on Instagram from the group Palestine Lobby on "Zionism explained in two minutes." The video featured an image of a rat, an historical antisemitic trope.

Lineker apologised promptly, saying, "I would never consciously repost anything antisemitic—it goes against everything I stand for." He has a long record of speaking out against injustices and opposing discrimination, and he has been unafraid to call out government policy.

Two years ago he was subject to another attempt by the BBC to remove him, after he called the Tories' immigration policy "immeasurably cruel... directed at the most vulnerable people in language that is not dissimilar to that used by Germany in the 30s."

This has made him a hate figure for the right, including in government. He previously said that anyone who remained silent on Israel's "depraved" campaign was "almost complicit" in it. He has described Israel's response to the October 7 attacks as "completely out of proportion."

The Choose Love letter recognises the urgency of the situation confronting the population of Gaza and what is fuelling it. What is happening is repugnant, with the letter speaking of this as a moment of "moral clarity... The world is watching and history will not forget."

But it is framed as an appeal to Starmer, asking him "what will you choose? Complicity in war crimes, or the courage to act?"

Starmer chose long ago and will not change his position. In opposition, shortly after Israel launched its attack on Gaza, he told an interviewer that "Israel must have that right, does have that right, to defend herself." When asked if that included cutting off power and water, he replied "I think that Israel does have that right."

Starmer's recent description of the "expansion" of Israel's military actions in Gaza as "intolerable," cited in the letter, was cheap handwringing designed to give himself an alibi while continuing to support Israel in every way. He and Foreign Secretary David Lammy have continued to deny genocide is taking place in

Gaza, including in court. Their government has continued licensing arms exports in the face of legal challenges.

It has actively escalated exports of controlled military goods to Israel, from less than £30,000 in the first quarter of 2024—when the Conservatives were in office—to £127.6 million in the final quarter, under Labour. Over half were for the defence industry and half for the military. Campaigners against the arms trade say that lack of transparency over shipment contents make it impossible to monitor government claims that these are not for use in Gaza.

At the same time, the Starmer government has ramped up the use of anti-terror legislation against anyone protesting the genocide. Liam Óg Ó hAinmádh (Liam O'Hanna) of the Irish hip hop trio Kneecap has been charged under the Terrorism Act for the group's vocal opposition to the genocide. The group's stance has won widespread popular support, with Massive Attack also issuing a strong statement in their defence.

The mounting popular hostility to the UK's support for genocide demands a turn to a political and class struggle against Starmer's war criminals, as outlined by the Socialist Equality Party.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact