

Gaza

Israel condemned by 28 countries for 'drip feeding of aid' in Gaza

UK, EU nations and others including Japan demand an immediate end to the war against Hamas



Palestinians mourn over the bodies of people shot dead at a food distribution point in Gaza City on Sunday © Haitham Imad/EPA/Shutterstock

James Shotter in Jerusalem and **David Sheppard** in London

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Twenty-eight countries, including the UK, Canada, Japan and more than a dozen EU nations, have condemned the “drip feeding of aid” and “inhumane killing of civilians” in Gaza, as they demanded an immediate end to Israel’s war with Hamas in the shattered Palestinian enclave.

In one of the largest co-ordinated denunciations of Israel’s actions in Gaza, the countries on Monday warned that the suffering of Gazan civilians had reached “new depths” and branded a controversial, privately run aid distribution scheme introduced by [Israel](#) in the enclave as “dangerous”.

They also lambasted the repeated killings of Palestinians — including children — trying to collect aid, a day after [Hamas](#) accused Israeli forces of being responsible for the deaths of more than 60 people as they waited for a food convoy in north Gaza.

“It is horrifying that over 800 Palestinians have been killed while seeking aid,” the 28

countries said. “The Israeli government’s denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable. Israel must comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law.”

The Israeli foreign ministry said the joint statement — whose signatories also included France, Spain and Italy, but not the US or Germany — was “disconnected from reality and sends the wrong message to Hamas”, blaming the Palestinian militant group for the current impasse in ceasefire negotiations.



A group of Palestinians carry food collected from a humanitarian aid distribution point in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza, on Sunday © Ahmad Salem/Bloomberg

The Israeli military has acknowledged that its troops have opened fire on multiple occasions in incidents involving Palestinians trying to reach aid sites, but has claimed they did so after people approached them in a way they deemed threatening.

It said that in the incident on Sunday, troops had fired “warning shots” after “thousands” of people gathered and posed “an immediate threat”, but disputed the death toll reported, without providing figures of its own.

The 28 countries also condemned the continued detention of the roughly 50 Israeli hostages still in Hamas captivity, and demanded their “immediate and unconditional

release". The countries argued that a ceasefire deal was "the best hope of bringing them home and ending the agony of their families".

"We need a ceasefire and we need it straight away," UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said, shortly after the release of the statement.

David Lammy, the UK's foreign secretary, said the new aid scheme was "a grotesque spectacle".

"The Israeli government must answer: what possible military justification can there be for strikes that have killed desperate, starving children? What immediate actions are they taking to stop this litany of horrors? And what will they do to hold those responsible to account?"

Lammy added that plans floated by Israeli politicians to displace forcibly Gaza's population into the south of the strip would amount to a violation of international law. "This is a cruel vision that must never come to pass," he said.

While some countries, including the UK, have placed sanctions on two far-right ministers in the Israeli government, they have faced growing domestic criticism for stopping short of taking more far-reaching measures on Israel over the war, such as imposing economic sanctions.

The joint statement came as the Israeli army advanced on Deir al-Balah, one of the few places in Gaza where it has not yet deployed ground forces, in an expansion of its 21-month offensive, which has heightened international concerns about the catastrophic humanitarian conditions in the territory.

The UN has warned that Gaza's entire 2.1mn population is at risk of famine due to Israel's offensive and wide-ranging restrictions on aid, and the World Food Programme said on Sunday that almost one in three Gazans had not eaten "for days".

According to Palestinian officials, the Israeli offensive has killed more than 59,000 people in Gaza, more than half of them women and children, as well as reducing most of the enclave to uninhabitable rubble.

Israel launched its offensive in Gaza in response to Hamas's October 7 2023 attack on Israel, during which militants killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli officials, and took a further 250 hostage.

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