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## **Britain's unwavering support for Israeli war crimes is also an attack on dissent**

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR-UK) is alarmed to note [Britain's role](#) in supporting Israeli war crimes against Palestinians in Gaza while stifling dissent among its own population.

Despite widespread international condemnation of Israeli's attacks on and invasion of Gaza, Britain has followed the United States in attempting to block calls for a ceasefire while repeating the mantra that "Israel has the right to defend itself".

This comes despite warnings from the United Nations that Israel may have committed war crimes during its operations against Gaza - a position backed by international organisations including the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

More than 8,000 people, including more than 3,000 children, have so far been killed during this latest war on Gaza, which has also displaced more than one million people. Borders continue to be sealed, preventing civilians from escaping, while electricity, water and food supplies remain blocked from entering the territory.

UN secretary general António Guterres has slammed the limited level of aid allowed into Gaza, calling for "much, much more" to be delivered to those in need.

Despite this, the [UK remains unmoved](#). The demands of the British state to unconditionally support Israel - a vital geopolitical ally for its operations in the Middle East as well as a major customer for its arms trade - are not limited to the ruling Conservative Party. The opposition Labour Party, which is widely expected to take



power in elections next year, has mirrored the government's position, with its leader, Sir Keir Starmer, arguing that a ceasefire would only benefit Hamas.

The British public, in contrast, overwhelmingly backs a ceasefire. A recent poll by YouGov shows that 76% of British adults want an immediate ceasefire, with just 8% opposed.

People in Britain have also answered Israel's violence with huge street protests - with organisers of the latest London march claiming that half a million took to the streets on Saturday, 28 October.

British home secretary Suella Braverman, in response, slandered the protests for peace as "hate marches". She also mischaracterised a popular slogan used on such demonstrations, "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", as calling for Israel and Israelis to be wiped out, and called on police to take draconian action against those using it. [The police](#) had to point out to their boss that those making such chants were breaking no laws, so there was little action they could take. Braverman had similarly poor success in her attempts to ban people from flying the Palestinian flag.

The crackdown on solidarity with Palestinians has also led to several prominent politicians being sacked. Paul Bristow, a ministerial aide at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, was dismissed on Monday, 30 October, for asking the prime minister to call for an end to the conflict. Similarly, Labour MP Andy McDonald was suspended from his party for telling pro-Palestinian protesters: "We won't rest until we have justice, until all people can live in peaceful liberty."

While MPs are encouraged to line up to support the bloodbath in Gaza, those making even timid calls for peace are being treated as pari.

Britain's global influence is at its lowest level in many years, and its total capitulation to Israel - or, more accurately, to the United States - is likely a display of loyalty to US-led international order, as well as an attempt to maintain lucrative arms contracts with Israel.

But the above examples of crackdowns on dissent show not the strength of the British state in supporting Israel, but its weakness. Britain's democratic credentials are withering away as it uses tactics employed by dictatorships to stifle opposition. Both of the UK's leading parties know that public opinion is not on their side and, as with



the Iraq war two decades ago, they are attempting to scare people away from dissent. But it is having the opposite effect.

AOHR-UK calls on the British government and all politicians to call for a ceasefire and to recognise that this conflict grew out of decades of Palestine's occupation, oppression and ethnic cleansing.

It also calls on the legal system to abide by national and international law, and to resist illegal restrictions on the right to protest and call for peace.

And it calls on the people of the UK to stay strong in their opposition to the humanitarian disaster being inflicted on the people of Gaza. History will judge those calling for peace well, but it will not look kindly on those who resort to threats and a clampdown on freedom of speech to help facilitate horrific war crimes against the people of Palestine.

**Arab Organisation for Human Rights in UK**