

# HOW CAN THE UK PROMOTE PALESTINIAN HEALTH AND DIGNITY?

## CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR UK FOREIGN AND AID POLICYMAKING



# HOW CAN THE UK PROMOTE PALESTINIAN HEALTH AND DIGNITY?

For decades occupation, blockade, annexation and the permanent displacement of refugees have denied Palestinians equitable access to many of the essential building blocks of health. More than 70 years of dispossession has fragmented Palestinian society and stymied the development of collective political structures and essential institutions like healthcare, locking Palestinian communities across the region in a situation of perpetual humanitarian crisis and dependency on international aid.

There is a growing realisation among policymakers that the moribund Oslo peace process has failed to meet even the most basic aspirations of the Palestinian people, instead cementing what the EU has termed a “one-state reality of unequal rights, perpetual occupation and conflict.” While successive UK governments have reaffirmed their commitment to Palestinian self-determination through resolutions at the United Nations, this right remains perpetually unfulfilled.

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) has recently documented how systematic discrimination and the fragmentation of the Palestinian people by Israel present a fundamental challenge to Palestinians’ rights to health and dignity, and inhibit the delivery and development of a Palestinian healthcare system. MAP’s position paper can be read here: [map.org.uk/HealthInequalities](https://map.org.uk/HealthInequalities)

If a just peace is to be achieved – one that enables Palestinians to enjoy their full and equal rights to health and dignity – the UK must ground its foreign and aid policies firmly in international law, and promote sustainable, locally-led development.

**The following checklist offers a series of critical questions that policymakers, officials and other key decision-makers should ask to evaluate whether proposed UK policies and programmes are conducive to this goal. These questions also provide a basis for parliamentarians to scrutinise decision-making through parliamentary questions, debates, correspondence and other action.**

# CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- 1** Can Palestinians meaningfully participate in the development and implementation of the initiative to ensure it is appropriate and relevant to their needs?
  - a. Have Palestinian communities who the programme or initiative seeks to support been consulted and involved in the formulation and design of the programme?
  - b. Has this process been inclusive to Palestinians regardless of gender, disability, age and other characteristics?
  - c. Does the initiative reflect the aims, priorities and risks identified through consultation with those communities?
  - d. Will the aims and outcomes of the initiative be communicated to the communities it seeks to serve, and are there mechanisms for them to provide feedback on its effectiveness?
  - e. Does the initiative give decision-making power to civil society organisations including by providing long-term, flexible funding, as opposed to short-term, project-based approaches?
- 2** Will the initiative support sustainable development and self-determination?
  - a. Does the initiative aim to build on existing local capacities to support the development of locally-led institutions, infrastructure and governance (e.g. healthcare and education)?
  - b. Does the initiative address barriers to sustainability, such as accessibility of professional development opportunities (e.g. due to Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement, or UK visa restrictions) or short-term unsustainable funding?
  - c. Does the initiative aim to challenge fragmentation and build connections between segregated Palestinian communities (e.g. West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, refugees)?
  - d. If the initiative is focused on urgent humanitarian relief, is there a political and diplomatic strategy for ensuring repeated relief is not necessary?
  - e. Does the initiative recognise civil society actors and human rights defenders as significant development actors, and accordingly work in collaborative partnership to promote civic space and protect human rights in a clear and systematic manner?



**3 Is the initiative backed up by political action to address root political, economic and social causes of needs?**

- a. Does the initiative discharge Israel from the costs of maintaining the welfare of the population under its effective control per its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law? If so, is there a plan to address this?
- b. Does the initiative challenge discriminatory and fragmentary policies and practices from which humanitarian, human rights, economic or other needs arise? For example:
  - i. The closure and blockade of Gaza
  - ii. Discriminatory planning regime and demolition of Palestinian homes and infrastructure in Area C and East Jerusalem
  - iii. Settlement expansion, the separation wall, and associated movement restrictions
  - iv. Marginalisation, discrimination and the denial of the rights of Palestinian refugees, including their right of return

**4 Is there a plan for addressing relevant violations of international law which may affect the success of the initiative?**

- a. Will compensation be demanded for any humanitarian infrastructure or material demolished or confiscated by Israel in contravention of its obligations under international humanitarian law?
- b. Will support be given to attempts to ensure potentially serious violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory are investigated in line with international standards, and that wrongdoers are held accountable, including through international mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court?
- c. Will support be given to Palestinian civil society and their attempts to monitor, advocate and seek recourse for violations of international law, including by supporting their participation in international forums such as the UN Human Rights Council?
- d. Will shrinking civil society space and attempts to discredit, delegitimise or obstruct the work of Palestinian and international humanitarian and human rights actors be effectively challenged and countered?



MEDICAL AID FOR **PALESTINIANS**

**MAP works for the health and dignity of Palestinians living under occupation and as refugees.**

MAP provides immediate medical aid to those in need while also developing local capacity and skills to ensure the long-term development of the Palestinian healthcare system.

MAP is also committed to bearing witness to the impact of occupation, displacement and conflict on Palestinian health and wellbeing, and campaigns for the realisation of Palestinian rights to health and dignity.

### **GET IN TOUCH:**

MAP's Advocacy and Campaigns Team are available to connect policymakers to data, stories and analysis relating to the challenges facing Palestinian health and dignity, as well as the voices and perspectives of the communities and partners with which we work in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon.

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