

Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP  
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30 October 2023

Dear Sir Keir,

**URGENT CALL FOR CEASEFIRE – Open letter**

Firefly International is a small, Edinburgh-based charity helping war affected children. Firefly supports its partner organisation in Gaza, in providing counselling for children suffering from the effects of trauma. Following the horrendous attacks conducted by Hamas extremists in southern Israel ten days ago, our clinic has had to close because of Israeli bombardments of Gaza. We receive sporadic updates on the situation in Gaza from project staff. The situation on the ground is absolutely brutal – carnage – and supplies essential for life have run out.

From our What's App message received from our project manager two weeks ago: *'I fled to different areas for fear of bombardment, and I was given voicemails to evacuate my house by the army. I tried to go south but it was hard. They killed 70 people going south of Gaza...returned to northern Gaza. I suffer from no drinking water, electricity, internet, fuel, vegetables, we live on food canned and some bread. Every day I think we will go to the sky...massacres, massacres, shelling and shrapnel arriving in our house.'*

While we understand the Government of Israel's goal of destroying Hamas, once and for all, we abhor a strategy to achieve that goal, which entails the continuation of the slaughter now being perpetrated and the siege which cuts off supplies of the essentials needed to sustain life.

As a lawyer yourself, I am sure you will have read the statement signed by 800 scholars and practitioners of international law from around the world on 20 October but for ease of reference it is [here](#). Nearly 400 British lawyers and leading academics in law have written [an open letter](#) to the Prime Minister calling for a ceasefire saying serious breaches of international law are being committed.

At Firefly we are not lawyers nor are we political. Nor do we take sides between Israel and Gaza. We are humanitarians. Children don't start wars. They are suffering massively from this one. Please use your considerable influence to stop their suffering by calling for an immediate ceasefire.

Yours sincerely,



Sebastian Chambers  
Chair, Firefly International

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