

Rt. Hon. the Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Wednesday 6th December 2023

Dear Lord Cameron,

Open Letter from Firefly International

Firefly International, an Edinburgh-based charity, helps war-affected children by supporting local partners in Bosnia, Turkey (with Syrian refugees), northern Syria and Gaza. In Gaza our partners have been running a child mental health trauma centre. We have had messages from the centre manager sporadically since the onslaught began, when he has charge in his phone. His most recent message to his UK partners, sent during the temporary truce, was this:

'Hello, my family and I are fine - there is no internet yet. My family and I have not received the aid. The situation is catastrophic. Please tell the partners about the centre has been destroyed.'

We have not heard from him since the end of the truce and fear the worst. We know the area where he lives with his wife and three children has been heavily bombed.

Firefly International is a humanitarian organisation not normally concerned with campaigning. However, in this instance, we feel extremely deeply about the threat of catastrophe being compounded by ever greater catastrophe, if the Israeli Government continues its relentless bombing of Gaza, withholding supplies essential to life and ordering its ground forces to continue their military offensive, irrespective of any affiliation with Hamas. We condemn the savage attacks perpetrated by Hamas in southern Israel on 7 October but cannot condone the savage and indiscriminate nature of the retaliatory response and its consequences for children, women and men in Gaza who have nothing to do with Hamas.

I understand that the UK Government is to conduct surveillance flights over Gaza to help in the search for the hostages, so our country is already engaged in this crisis. Can I ask that our government might deepen its engagement by calling for an immediate bilateral ceasefire? This would bring an end to the slaughter, help more effectively in the recovery of the hostages and give peacebuilding, for the long term, a better chance.

Yours sincerely,



Sebastian Chambers

TRUSTEES:

Sebastian Chambers (Chair)
Benedict Constable Maxwell
Fenella Dawnay
Saška Haramina
Diana McMicking
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