

# Humanitarian aid for Gaza

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 29 Ionawr 2024  
Petitions Committee | 29 January 2024

Reference: SR24/7752-1

Petition Number: P-06-1387

Petition title: Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza

Text of petition:

*Gaza and the Palestinian people are facing a humanitarian crisis as bombs rain down indiscriminately on residential buildings, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, and refugee camps. Thousands of innocent civilians, including more than 3,500 children, have been killed, with many more seriously injured or displaced. The Welsh Government has previously provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine following the Russian invasion in 2022. It should now do all it can to provide aid to the Palestinian people.*



# 1. Background

The Welsh Government has previously provided humanitarian aid in response to international appeals, such as a £100,000 payment to the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) [Pakistan flood appeal](#) in 2022-23 and [£300,000 to the DEC's Türkiye and Syria Earthquake Appeal](#) to people affected by earthquakes in February 2023.

As the petition acknowledges, the Welsh Government has also provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine following Russia's invasion on 28 February 2022. On 1 March 2022, the First Minister announced [£4 million in "financial and humanitarian" aid](#). He also advised the Welsh Government was:

- Assessing what surplus medical equipment could be usefully provided;
- Ready to welcome people who need and want to leave Ukraine;
- Urging the UK Government to make it easier for Ukrainians to come to the UK; and
- Encouraging anyone who can to donate to the British Red Cross, UNICEF UK or to the UNHCR UK.

To date, the Welsh Government has not provided a financial contribution of humanitarian aid. Its response has focused on providing community cohesion support, and in exploring potential routes to the UK for British nationals caught up in the conflict [in intergovernmental meetings](#).

On 14 November 2023, the Welsh Government voted in support of a [Senedd motion to consent to UK Government regulations](#) extending UK housing benefits eligibility to those fleeing the conflict from Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights or Lebanon (conditions apply).

According to the [House of Commons Library](#), the UK Government has committed £87million for 2023-24 to the Occupied Palestinian Territories which includes £60 million announced throughout October and November 2023. The [Scottish Government has provided £750,000](#) to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) [Flash Appeal](#).

## 2. Welsh Government action

### 2.1. Response to Plaid Cymru calls to provide aid

During [First Minister's Questions](#) on 17 October 2023, Leader of Plaid Cymru, Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, asked if the Welsh Government would make a “contribution, including a financial contribution, to that humanitarian effort in Gaza”.

The First Minister described the Welsh Government response, including potentially using its [Faith Communities Forum](#), and that it is “eager” to help people in Wales and to support UK-level action. He did not specifically address making a financial contribution.

On 24 October 2023, Mabon ap Gwynfor MS [repeated Plaid Cymru's call](#) for the Welsh Government to provide humanitarian support, and asked for assurance that it is “using all of its powers” to call for a ceasefire. Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths MS, responded:

I can assure you that Welsh Government is taking the steps to which you refer.

She reiterated that the Welsh Government is in contact with faith groups in Wales to provide support. In response to [Nation.Cymru coverage](#) following the exchange, a Welsh Government spokesperson said:

The First Minister has strongly condemned the appalling attacks carried out by Hamas and expressed his deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. He has called on the international community to come together to work again for a lasting peace.

During the Plaid Cymru [debate on the conflict in Israel and Gaza](#) which culminated in a vote in favour of a ceasefire, the Minister for Social Justice outlined the support being provided by the Welsh Government:

The Welsh Government is committed to discharging the responsibilities in our hands by doing all we can to support community safety and promote cohesion.

This includes:

- Meetings held by the Minister and First Minister with representatives of Muslim and Jewish communities in Wales.

- meetings with representatives of the Faith Communities Forum and visiting places of worship to hear directly from members of affected communities in Wales.
- Being clear that “there is no place for hate in Wales, and we must all play our part in standing against prejudice”. The Minister explained steps taken with the Minister for Education to discuss with faith leaders how the Welsh Government can do more to promote understanding and tackle antisemitism, Islamophobia and all forms of faith-based hate in education settings.
- The Minister outlined how Wales’s hate support centre, run by Victim Support Cymru, is working alongside the four police forces to monitor spikes in antisemitic and Islamophobic hate crime in Wales.
- Activities carried out as part of the Welsh Government’s community cohesion programme, such as monitoring community tensions and connecting with faith leaders.

## 2.2. Response to the petition

Responding to the petition on 17 January 2024, the Minister for Social Justice said:

The Welsh Government believes that there must be a renewed sense of urgency among the international community to deliver a full and permanent ceasefire, to end the intolerable levels of violence and human suffering as soon as possible. This cessation of violence must be the essential platform for a longer-term and determined political process towards which we can work to establish a two-state solution based on a sovereign Palestinian state and a secure Israel.

Referring to the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza, the Minister confirmed that, in the past, the Welsh Government has donated to a number of appeals run by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). The DEC is monitoring the humanitarian situation in Gaza and is assessing whether it meets its three key criteria for launching an appeal. The Minister highlighted one key criteria, that:

... member agencies can effectively spend money raised and they believe that only a lasting ceasefire would allow them the opportunity to effectively provide the desperately needed aid to the Palestinians living in Gaza.

The Minister said the Welsh Government will “continue to be focused on those responsibilities in our hands”, including tackling Islamophobia and antisemitism,

“to ensure all communities can live together in Wales peacefully and with mutual respect”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.