

**PRESS RELEASE FROM RICHARD BURDEN MP**

**Chair, Britain-Palestine All Party Parliamentary Group**

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009

For immediate release

Over 60 Parliamentarians from different parties have so far signed a statement demanding an end to the slaughter in Gaza. The statement calls for an immediate ceasefire, an embargo on the supply of military equipment to both sides and for urgent intervention by the international community to stop the humanitarian catastrophe which is unfolding.

Richard Burden MP, who chairs the Britain-Palestine All Party Group in the UK Parliament said today:

*“The continuing slaughter in Gaza is an outrage. The international community has to make clear that respecting its calls for a ceasefire is not simply an optional extra for those launching attacks on either side. International humanitarian law must be upheld. That means protecting civilians from military attack. Common humanity also demands that food, medicines and other essential supplies must be allowed to get through to the one and a half million people who are under siege.”*

The statement is reprinted below with the list of signatories as at 14.00 GMT on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. A founding list of signatories was published in *the Guardian* newspaper yesterday (31<sup>st</sup> December 2008), Further signatures by UK Parliamentarians should be sent to: [burdenr@parliament.uk](mailto:burdenr@parliament.uk).

## **STOP THE SLAUGHTER IN GAZA**

Israel's continuing massive military strikes on Gaza are an outrage that the international community must not allow to continue. Palestinian rocket attacks which traumatise the lives of communities in Southern Israel are also utterly unacceptable. Both sides must cease fire.

Israel's actions are disproportionate and counter productive to achieving either security for the people of Israel or peace in the Middle East. Physicians for Human Rights (Israel) have warned that "targeting of civilians and of medical facilities is a breach of international humanitarian law. The targets chosen by the Israeli military include also clearly civilian installations."

Gaza is one of the poorest and most densely populated places on earth. For the last two years, the blockade and previous Israeli strikes had already disrupted electricity supplies and access to clean water. Even before the

current attack, Gaza's health system was near collapse. Hospitals are short of medicines, blood and essential equipment. Only half of Gaza's 58 ambulances are functioning.

We call on the international community, and especially the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to intervene to stop the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza. We call for an immediate ceasefire by all parties and for an embargo on the supply of military equipment to both sides. The international community must also assert unambiguously that there is no military route to peace in the Middle East and redouble its efforts to create a secure and independent state of Palestine alongside a secure and independent Israel.

*Signatories as at 14.00 - 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009:*

**House of Commons:**

Danny Alexander MP (LD), John Austin MP (Lab), Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (Lab), Roger Berry MP (Lab), Peter Bottomley MP(Con), Lyn Brown MP (Lab), Karen Buck MP (Lab), Richard Burden MP (Lab), Chris McCafferty MP (Lab), Katy Clark MP (Lab), Harry Cohen MP (Lab), Michael Connarty MP (Lab), Frank Cook MP (Lab), Jeremy Corbyn MP (Lab), Jim Devine MP (Lab), David Drew MP (Lab), Clive Efford MP (Lab), Natascha Engel MP (Lab), Paul Flynn MP (Lab), Hywel Francis MP

(Lab), Neil Gerrard MP (Lab), Ian Gibson MP (Lab), Roger Godsiff (Lab) MP, Nia Griffith MP (Lab), Nick Harvey MP (LD), John Hemming MP (LD), Simon Hughes MP (LD), Brian Iddon MP (Lab), Eric Illsley MP (Lab), Sir Gerard Kaufman MP (Lab), Mark Lazarowitz MP (Lab), Sally Keeble MP (Lab), Peter Kilfoyle MP (Lab), Tom Levitt MP (Lab), Martin Linton MP (Lab), Andy Love MP (Lab), Judy Mallaber MP (Lab), Rob Marris MP (Lab), John McDonnell MP (Lab), Madeleine Moon MP(Lab), Nick Palmer MP (Lab), Alan Reid MP (LD), Linda Riordan MP (Lab), Martin Salter MP (Lab), Mohammad Sarwar MP (Lab), Alison Seabeck MP(Lab) , Virendra Sharma MP (Lab), Jim Sheridan MP (Lab), Andy Slaughter MP (Lab), Sir Peter Soulsby MP (Lab), Phyllis Starkey MP (Lab), Jo Swinson MP (LD), David Taylor MP (Lab), Ian Taylor MP (Con), Sarah Teather MP (Lab), Hywel Williams MP (PC), Tim Yeo MP Con),

(57)

**House of Lords:**

Lord Hylton, Baroness Lindsay Northover, Lord Sheikh of Cornhill

Baroness Jenny Tongue, Lord Wright of Richmond