



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

6th August 2025

Dear Prime Minister,

There is a young poet in Gaza, Haia Mohammed, who has won a scholarship to Goldsmiths College, London. She and more than 80 other successful applicants to U.K. universities cannot get here because of the biometric data requirements for a student visa.

We write on behalf of Haia and all the students like her, who have secured scholarships to study in the UK against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Within the first one hundred days of the war, every single university in Gaza had been bombed, leaving over 90,000 students without access to higher education. By the middle of last year, over 80% of schools, many of which were being used as shelters, had been destroyed or severely damaged.

Yet, the devastation goes far beyond the destruction of buildings; over 5,000 students, 250 teachers, and nearly 100 university professors have tragically been killed. This is a tremendous loss; one that will be felt in Palestine for generations to come.

Even before the war, leaving Gaza to pursue higher education was a complex process. The ongoing siege and restrictions made travel extremely difficult, but in the current state of constant bombardment, shootings at aid sites, and an IPC-declared famine, this process has become all but impossible.

In order to leave Gaza and take up their studies in the U.K., these scholars require a student visa; but there is no Visa Application Centre in Gaza that can record their biometric data.

As Members of Parliament we represent many of the institutions where these young people have secured a place. We ask that you defer biometric checking to arrival in Egypt or Jordan for student visa applicants based in Gaza and open a safe passage to enable these young people to fulfil their academic dreams.

Other countries such as Ireland, Belgium, France and Italy have taken proactive steps to ensure safe evacuation routes for students bound for their countries, and we are aware that the U.K. previously made a similar exception for Ukrainian students.

You have rightly adopted Project Pure Hope's proposal to facilitate the evacuation of 30 children in need of urgent medical treatment to the UK. We ask you today to coordinate an urgent evacuation route for this group of students, who have lost everything, and yet have achieved scholarships to study, so that they may return to rebuild Palestine for the future.

We urge you to act swiftly so the necessary arrangements are in place in time for them to join their courses at the beginning of the new academic year in September.

We request a meeting with you to discuss the practicalities and we trust you will consider this request with the compassion and urgency that it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

Abtisam Mohamed MP
Co-Chair APPG International Students

Barry Gardiner
MP for Brent West

Grahame Morris MP

Patricia Ferguson MP

Valerie Vaz MP

Clive Lewis MP

Andy McDonald MP

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP

Paula Barker MP

Yasmin Qureshi MP

Lorraine Beavers MP

Olivia Blake MP

Mary Glendon MP

Kate Osborne MP

Emma Lewell MP

Richard Burgon MP

Dr Allison Gardner MP

Ian Lavery MP

Naz Shah MP

Kim Johnson MP

Dawn Butler MP

Debbie Abrahams MP

Paul Waugh MP

Jon Trickett MP

Rachael Maskell MP

Cat Eccles MP

Apsana Begum MP

Ms Rebecca Long Bailey MP

Imran Hussain MP

Charlotte Nichols MP

Andrew Ranger MP

Dr Simon Opher MP

Cat Smith MP

Shockat Adam MP

Neil Duncan-Jordan MP

Ayoub Khan MP

Brian Leishman MP

The Rt Hon Ms Diane Abbott MP

Martin Rhodes MP

Clive Efford MP

Euan Stainbank MP

Jas Athwal MP

The Rt Hon John McDonnell MP

Ellie Chowns MP

Chris Hinchliff MP

Peter Lamb MP

Chris Law MP

Ms Marie Rimmer MP

Andy Slaughter MP

Nadia Whittome MP

Steve Witherden MP

Toby Perkins MP

Ian Byrne MP

Sadik Al-Hassan MP

Alex Sobel MP

Rosie Duffield MP

Tracy Gilbert MP

Liz Saville Roberts MP

Afzal Khan MP

Ben Lake MP

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP

Ann Davies MP

Sarah Champion MP

Llinos Medi MP

Kirith Entwistle MP

Sorcha Eastwood MP

Ms Stella Creasy MP

James Naish MP

Dr Rupa Huq MP

Mr Richard Quigley MP

Kirsteen Sullivan MP

Sam Rushworth MP

Mohammad Yasin MP

Mr Adnan Hussain MP

Brendan O'Hara MP

Yuan Yang MP

Wendy Chamberlain MP

Marsha de Cordova MP

Jess Brown-Fuller MP

Sir Edward Leigh MP

Navendu Mishra MP

Kirsty Blackman MP

Matt Western MP

Stephen Flynn MP

Andrew Pakes MP

Seamus Logan MP

Colum Eastwood MP

Pete Wishart MP

Chi Onwurah MP

Dave Doogan MP

Stephen Gethins MP

Frank McNally MP

Dr Scott Arthur MP

Mary Foy MP

Carla Denyer MP

Dr Beccy Cooper MP

Ian Sollom MP

Catherine Fookes MP

Vicky Foxcroft MP

Alex Ballinger MP

Siân Berry MP

Bambos Charalambous MP

Tonia Antoniazzi MP

Steve Race MP

Steve Darling MP

David Chadwick MP

Tahir Ali MP

Darren Paffey MP

Layla Moran MP

Michelle Scrogham MP

John Finucane MP

Jeremy Corbyn MP

Naushabah Khan MP

Chris Murray MP