

14 February 2024

Gaza Humanitarian Aid in HMRC update

The department has responded to PCS that they are only seeking a fundraising “pause” and we are continuing to press for the fundraising block to be lifted.

On 6 February, PCS representatives in HMRC's Leeds Regional Centre were prevented from fundraising for ‘Medical Aid for Palestinians’.

PCS meet HMRC for further talks

On 12 February, PCS once again met with HMRC to raise our concerns about our Leeds-based representatives being told they were unable to fundraise for [‘Medical Aid for Palestinians’](#) (MAP); a charity fully registered with the UK’s Charity Commission and recognised by HMRC for ‘Gift Aid’ purposes.

In response to PCS reminding HMRC that MAP is a recognised and fully registered charity, the department responded that on their website it is asking people to write to their MP to “call for an immediate ceasefire”. HMRC say this makes it political. PCS believes it is unremarkable for a humanitarian charity to call for a ceasefire; and we’ve seen no sign of HMRC saying that people shouldn’t support, say, [UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund](#), that is also calling for an immediate ceasefire.

HMRC went on to say that they were not banning PCS from fundraising for MAP, but that they were just asking for a “pause”. They reiterated our reps had only informed the department that they had planned to begin the fundraising at 3:00pm the previous day, so managers did not have the opportunity to check the charity's credentials. We responded that our reps had given local management the details of the charity back in mid-January, almost three weeks earlier; and (as we’ve already pointed out) it takes seconds to look them up on the Charity Commission’s own website.

There’s no “pause” for those suffering in the Middle East; and with Rafah, to the South of Gaza, now threatened with a fully-fledged military incursion, [UNICEF has](#)

[sent the clearest message:](#)

“Rafah is one of the most densely populated places on earth, teeming with children and families, some already displaced many times by war in Gaza. Of the 1.3 million people seeking shelter, 600,000 are children. They have nowhere safe to go. They must be protected.”

[Even the UK’s Foreign Secretary has urged the Israeli government to “stop and think very seriously”.](#)

What happens next?

PCS has rightly condemned the killings and hostage-taking by Hamas on 7 October 2023; but that can’t prevent us from wanting to see an end to the killing and the suffering currently taking place in Gaza.

We are continuing to press HMRC to relent and to allow the fundraising. We’ve made it clear that if HMRC is going to try to set itself up as some kind of ‘arbiter of worthiness’, when it comes to the relief of humanitarian suffering, it will be putting itself in a very difficult place indeed.

We’ll keep you informed of developments.