

Dear Editor,

The Israeli assault on Gaza has killed over 1300 Palestinians, including hundreds of children. Many more will die through homelessness, hunger and disease arising out of the devastation and continuing embargo. The Israeli government claims this as victory.

The Gazan people have withstood the most ferocious attack and now bravely set about reconstructing their lives - already their traumatised children are returning to school.

But now we must assert their right to survival. The ceasefire is fragile – the last one being broken by the refusal of the Israelis to lift their blockade which had left the Gazans without electricity, water, food and medication even before the bombardment and invasion. When Hamas responded with their rocket attacks, the Israelis used this as an “excuse” for their devastating attack.

If we are to see a lasting peace, the Israelis must be forced by world opinion to immediately end the blockade of Gaza, and the arming of Israel must be brought to an end. The British arms trade to Israel amounted to £19million last year.

We need to ensure real humanitarian support for the Gazan people, and to encourage the brave voices raised within Israel against their government’s continuing hostility to them. We need to work for a secure and independent Palestinian state – the only lasting and just solution.

Without it there will be a continuing threat of conflict, suffering and death to all the people of the region – including their children, who should be busy in school and growing up in peace, stability and freedom, instead of in violence, massive deprivation and oppression – as the children of Gaza are right now.

Sincerely,

Bill Greenshields
National President, National Union of Teachers