

5 March 2024

HMRC continues to block fundraising for medical aid for Gaza

The department is still refusing to allow on-site fundraising for medical aid for Gaza, but Leeds branch will be holding a collection outside the office on 7 March, with other branches to follow.

PCS has once again met with HMRC, in an effort to secure the department's agreement to our Leeds-based representatives going ahead with long-held plans to fundraise for medical aid in Gaza. Sadly, it became clear at the meeting that HMRC's position remains resolutely unchanged: they still insist that fundraising for medical aid is too political; and even as the reported death-toll in Gaza reaches 30,000, HMRC still won't allow on-site fundraising to go ahead.

A reminder about MAP

HMRC are still blocking our Leeds reps from holding an on-site fundraiser for [Medical Aid for Palestinians](#), which is a UK-based charity, [fully registered with the Charity Commission](#) and whose work revolves around providing medical services, along with poverty and famine relief. It's approved by HMRC for 'Gift Aid' purposes.

Initially, HMRC's excuse for refusing to allow the fundraising was that MAP were calling for a ceasefire in Gaza; a radical demand, shared only by such secretive and shadowy organisations as ...er... [UNICEF: The United Nations Childrens Fund](#), the [World Health Organisation](#), and [Médecins Sans Frontières \(Doctors Without Borders\)](#).

We did think it might be the mysterious figures who run the charity they're worried about. After all, what do we know about the President, [Baroness Morris of Bolton](#) (apart from the fact that she's a former Conservative Shadow Minister and she's now Deputy Speaker for the House of Lords)? Then there's the Honorary Patrons, like [Baroness Helena Kennedy](#). She might well be King's Counsel, a former Trustee of the British Museum, and a Labour Member of the House of Lords; but what do we really know about her? Or that other Honorary Patron, that

[Sir Terence English](#) bloke. Yes, he might be the former President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and he might have carried out the UK's first successful Heart Transplant...

So where do we go from here?

PCS has said all along that we have 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 slaughter of what now amounts to 30,000 Palestinians. [The BBC has reported that over 20,000 of those were women and children.](#)

Remember, our reps have deliberately chosen a charity focusing on providing medical aid; HMRC on the other hand, seem to be the ones who are making a conscious decision to prioritise the suffering of one group of people over another.

Our general secretary, Fran Heathcote, has already raised this matter with our parliamentary group; and we have asked that the matter is raised in Westminster and in the devolved assemblies.

All of the time we're spending going back-and-forth with HMRC, in an effort to persuade them that trying to help alleviate the suffering is not a political thing to do, it's a humanitarian thing to do; people in Gaza are dying – not just from guns and missiles, but from a lack of food and a lack of medical facilities.

This argument with HMRC has dragged on for weeks; and we've advised our Leeds reps that if HMRC will not allow humanitarian fundraising on-site, they should hold bucket collections outside the site entrance. Given it's also International Women's Day this week, and in particular, the terrible suffering the events in Gaza has inflicted on women and their children, our Leeds branch reps are arranging a collection outside their site, which will take place on **Thursday 7 March 2024 between 11:00-13:00.**

All branches encouraged to support MAP

This is obviously not just a matter for Leeds branch; and PCS is encouraging all HMRC and VOA branches to organise a collection outside their workplaces on **Thursday 18 April 2024.**

If you're interested in spending an hour on 18 April, to help your branch to fundraise for medical aid for Gaza, then you should contact your local PCS representative.

The PCS national executive committee has already agreed to make a donation to the charity; and in the meantime, if you wish, [you can donate directly to Medical Aid for Palestinians online](#).

Join PCS

As your trade union, PCS continues to negotiate with HMRC to stand-up for your interests, and to fight for what's right. If you've read this briefing and you aren't yet a member of PCS, then you should [join today](#).