



# Letter writing guide to MPs

As of 12 November 2023

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## General tips

- **Avoid using a standard, pro-forma, repeated template letter.** Some MPs have email software that detects these and sends them straight to the bin.
- **Try and introduce a personal touch** – especially a story if possible. Think about how to make your letter unique.
- **Keep it succinct:** make your points clearly and succinctly, with your key points at the start.
- **Think about a question or invitation that requires an answer.** Non-ministerial MPs may read their own emails but Ministers who have to sign replies are more likely to read – or at least the reply drafted by the staffer.

## Who are you writing to?

In our current interim government Chris Hipkins and the Labour MPs have limited powers. Any actions or written/spoken statements apparently require agreement from Luxon and the incoming government.

We should still write to Chris Hipkins and the Labour MPs as they need to know the strength of public opinion too. Luxon's office has said that *"the outgoing government is keeping (them) informed of the situation in Israel and Gaza."*

Write separate emails to each MP. If you copy them into someone else's email they may rely on someone else to read and/or respond.

### The more people you write to the better!

You can write to your local MP and prominent MPs who have influence and/or are likely to be supportive.

Find your local MP here: <https://www.govt.nz/browse/engaging-with-government/members-of-parliament/>

Suggested MPs:

- Christopher Luxon [christopher.luxon@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:christopher.luxon@parliament.govt.nz)
- Nicola Willis [Nicola.Willis@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Willis@parliament.govt.nz)
- Gerry Brownlee [Gerry.Brownlee@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Gerry.Brownlee@parliament.govt.nz) (fulfilling some Foreign Affairs duties now)
- Chris Bishop [Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz)
- David Seymour [David.Seymour@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:David.Seymour@parliament.govt.nz)
- Winston Peters [Winston.Peters@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Winston.Peters@parliament.govt.nz) (former FA Minister – maybe again?)
- Chris Hipkins [chris.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:chris.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz) ; [Chris.Hipkins@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Chris.Hipkins@parliament.govt.nz)
- Grant Robertson [Grant.Robertson@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Grant.Robertson@parliament.govt.nz) (current (caretaker) responsibility for FA)

Also: Labour MPs known to be supportive, such as:

- Phil Twyford [Phil.Twyford@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Phil.Twyford@parliament.govt.nz)
- Rachel Boyack [Rachel.Boyack@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Boyack@parliament.govt.nz)



## Letter content

### INTRODUCTION

After Tēnā koe / Dear ... or your preferred greeting, you can **choose from the statements and paragraphs below, or write your own.**

#### Please note:

- Any coloured blue or red words are best for the MPs of the matching party. Return text to black before sending.
- Remember not to include the headings.
- Quoted text is italicised.

**In your first paragraph include what you are calling for and repeat it in the final paragraph.**

### EXAMPLE CALLS TO ACTION

I urge you to take the following actions now:

1. Call for an immediate ceasefire.
2. Join the international humanitarian call for protection and aid for civilians and children.
3. Take whatever diplomatic action is necessary to encourage Israel to halt attacks; this may be expelling the Israeli ambassador and recalling our ambassador to Israel: However, this may need to be evaluated given that NZ needs also to navigate the diplomatic landscape so that New Zealanders are safe in both Gaza, the occupied territories and in Israel.

**OR just:** 3. Expel the Israeli ambassador.

4. Send funds to trusted aid agencies such as the UN, Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières for supporting Palestinians in Gaza and those who have fled.

I appreciate that New Zealand voted in favour of humanitarian measures and protections at the UN General Assembly, despite the inhumane votes of our Five Eyes partners. However, the situation in Gaza has escalated and the world has moved on: this UNGA statement is not enough.

It is hard to fathom why New Zealand has been slow to call for a ceasefire: Perhaps because you have not been well-informed by officials [or the outgoing government](#). Perhaps because we have an interim government situation. But the worsening humanitarian crisis requires urgent, strong bipartisan actions and statements.

If nothing else, PLEASE speak up and take actions for innocent children.

**What better legacy for a departing Prime Minister and Government?**



## STATEMENTS AND FACTS ABOUT THE CURRENT HORRIFIC SITUATION

As I write more than 11,000 people and over 4500 children have been killed by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). In one day, 6 hospitals have been attacked; schools, churches, food, water and power sources have been targeted. Journalists and health professionals have been killed. Children have been burned by white phosphorous and have endured painful emergency medical procedures without anaesthetic. Babies have been removed from life-saving incubators and in one hospital (Al-Nasr) 150 children have been left behind to die.

1.5 million Palestinians have been displaced. You have probably seen images depicting a new Nakba.

## STATEMENTS ABOUT NZ DOING THE RIGHT THING FOR HUMANITY – as we have in the past...

**Aotearoa** New Zealand has a proud history of independently doing the right thing for humanity: for example, our anti-nuclear stance of the 1980s, [the National Government's support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(2010\)](#), [the successful work of the Labour Government during the Covid pandemic to save thousands of Kiwi lives](#) and our recent Foreign Minister's condemnation of Russia's acts of aggression towards Ukraine. [As a Kiwi, I was proud also of Jacinda Ardern's stance and global reputation immediately following the Christchurch Mosque attack and later with the Christchurch Call](#). It is now time to speak out to prevent more deaths, injuries and traumatising of innocent children and civilians in Gaza.

The following is text taken from Minister Nanaia Mahuta's speech to the UN Human Rights Council on 1 March 2022, condemning Russia's acts of war - adapted to suit the current context. Let us be consistent and similarly speak up for human rights:

*Aotearoa New Zealand is a proponent of peace and reconciliation, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms (Israel's attack on Gaza). This is a clear act of aggression, (oppression and genocide) and a violation of international law and the UN Charter. We are witnessing the blatant act of a bully, brutally using its unbridled power to achieve goals at odds with international law. Sadly, women and children are already the innocent victims of this illegal aggression - this cannot be tolerated. (Israel's) actions will have far-reaching and serious humanitarian, security and economic implications for (the region) and the rest of the world.*

Former Prime Minister, Helen Clark, co-signed a recent statement calling for an immediate ceasefire. [Link here](#). From the statement: *"We also condemn the Israeli government's unacceptable collective punishment of the population of Gaza through siege, the scale of the military assault and its death toll, and the forcible transfer of civilians within the territory, as well as the continuing land and home incursions and demolitions in the West Bank and settler violence against Palestinian communities. These are not legitimate acts of self-defence: they are clear violations of international humanitarian law, and some amount to atrocities for which there needs to be criminal accountability."*



## EXAMPLES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

The director of the New York office of the UN high commissioner for human rights, Craig Mokhiber, left the UN protesting that it is “failing” in its duty to prevent what he categorizes as genocide of Palestinian civilians in Gaza under Israeli bombardment and citing the US, UK and much of Europe as “wholly complicit in the horrific assault”. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/31/un-official-resigns-israel-hamas-war-palestine-new-york>

France – President Macron called for Israel to stop killing civilians. When asked if he wanted other leaders - including in the United States and Britain - to join his calls for a ceasefire, Macron said: "I hope they will." <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/frances-macron-urges-israel-stop-bombing-gaza-2023-11-10/>

Welsh parliament called for a ceasefire: <https://news.sky.com/story/welsh-parliament-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza-and-israel-13003562>

Scottish First Minister called for a ceasefire: <https://www.gov.scot/news/first-minister-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza/>

Please don't let New Zealand earn an enduring reputation for standing on the wrong side of history. Even President Macron called for Israel to stop killing babies and children. Why can we not speak out for human rights?

## CONNECTING TO PERSONAL STORIES IN THE AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

A Gazan family, resident in Wellington, receives spasmodic messages, when the internet is working, from close family sheltering in the two Christian Churches in Gaza City. Two days ago they managed to communicate that they had had absolutely no food or water for two days. Infection and illnesses are rife, which is the case for all Gazans. They have now given up hope that they will survive. You will know about the group of New Zealanders currently in Gaza, and there are a number of people throughout New Zealand who have family members in Gaza.

## STATEMENTS AND REFERENCES THAT SHOW THAT ISRAEL'S AGGRESSION IS ABOUT MORE THAN ELIMINATING HAMAS

There has been an intensification of raids, illegal incarceration, violence and killing in the Occupied West Bank. 2023 has been the deadliest year on record in this region. This suggests that Israel's aggression towards Palestinians is not just about targeting Hamas terrorists.

There has never been any proof that there is Hamas presence inside Al Shifa Hospital. Doctors and staff from Al Shifa hospital and staff from the UN and NGOs report they have never seen any evidence of Hamas at the hospital. Hamas has invited UN and Red Crescent observers to investigate this. Meanwhile 37 newborn babies in the hospital have had power cut to their incubators so they are unlikely to survive.

There is much evidence, from a range of sources, indicating that Israel's attacks on Palestinians are about much more than eradicating Hamas.

*Israel will take "overall security responsibility" in Gaza indefinitely after its war with Hamas, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, the clearest indication yet that Israel plans to maintain control over the coastal enclave one month into a conflict that has claimed thousands of lives and leveled whole swaths of the territory. – PBS Newshour 7/11/23*

Israel is forcing civilians into the South of Gaza (despite telling them they will have a safe passage and then bombing them on the way) with the likely intention of driving them out into the Sinai Desert.

*Former Israeli deputy foreign minister Danny Ayalon explains Israel's plan to move Palestinians from Gaza to the Sinai Desert. – Sydney Morning Herald 31/10/23*

*The idea of resettling Palestinians in Gaza to Sinai is not new. In the mid-1950s, the UN devised a plan to transfer thousands of Palestinian refugees in Gaza to Sinai's north-western region, a project that was met with popular outrage and crushed in a mass uprising. – The Guardian 20/10/23*

A growing number of Israeli hostages have been killed or are missing under the rubble as a result of Israeli airstrikes. Reuters 5/11/23

Israel has plans for full occupation and control. You will have seen pictures of Israeli military planting a flag and singing their national anthem on a beach in Gaza.

Israel's economic motivations for full control of Gaza include:

-the offshore seabed in the sea off Gaza which contains much unmined natural gas ( estimated to be more than 28 billion cubic metres).

- the long held plan to construct an alternate canal: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/07112023-alternate-suez-canal-the-israeli-ben-gurion-canal-oped/?fbclid=IwAR3VP35h5JP5sQ9JBXba0fRvFidsAgN8I3IPZw8wCXaIKyL3-Y32bEAar1w>

SIGNING OFF

**Remember to include your call/s to action in your final paragraph.**

- Ngā mihi nui; Kia ora rawa atu,  
Thank you very much,
- Ngā mihi maioha,
- Thank you – with appreciation,
- Kind regards,
- Yours sincerely,

