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European Association of Social Anthropologists  
Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux

**To:** The Right Honourable David Lammy MP  
Foreign Secretary  
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office  
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**President**

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Dear Foreign Secretary, David Lammy,

I am writing to you as President of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) to express our urgent concern regarding the situation of Gazan students who have been accepted at UK universities but are unable to travel to begin their studies for the 2025-2026 academic year.

The EASA represents thousands of anthropologists across Europe who are committed to advancing understanding of human societies and cultures. We have been made aware that 50 Palestinian undergraduate and postgraduate students, including 30 postgraduate students, have been offered scholarships and fellowships at 25 UK universities but remain trapped in Gaza due to administrative and logistical barriers beyond their control.

These exceptional students face insurmountable obstacles due to the closure of the visa office in Gaza since 7 October 2023, border closures preventing access to centres in Jerusalem or Ramallah, and the inability to provide required biometric data. This situation represents not only a humanitarian crisis but also a significant loss to UK higher education and research communities.

The EASA strongly supports the measures outlined by the Gaza Scholarship Initiative and echoed by academic colleagues at the University of Edinburgh and other institutions. We urge your government to implement the following critical actions:

**Immediate Administrative Measures:**

- Direct UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to waive biometric requirements for Gaza residents where no suitable collection location is available
- Extend the validity of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) documents, or waive these requirements in favour of institutional support letters



- Implement transitional measures for students with expired travel documents, recognizing that the Palestinian Authority has suspended passport renewals for Gaza residents

**Diplomatic Coordination:**

- Engage with Israeli authorities in Tel Aviv to negotiate safe evacuation procedures for students who satisfy all visa requirements
- Learn from the successful precedents set by Ireland and France, which have recently coordinated safe exits for scholars from Gaza

The EASA recognizes that parallel efforts were successfully undertaken for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, demonstrating that such humanitarian measures are both possible and precedented. These 50 students represent future contributors to UK scientific and cultural life, and their expertise will be essential for rebuilding higher education infrastructure in Gaza when conditions allow.

As an association that has taken a principled stand on the crisis in Gaza, the EASA believes that supporting these students aligns with the UK's values of academic freedom, international cooperation, and humanitarian responsibility. The students' dedication to their studies, despite facing unimaginable challenges, exemplifies the resilience and commitment that would enrich UK academic institutions.

We respectfully request that you prioritize this matter and work with relevant government departments to implement these measures swiftly. The academic year approaches, and delays will result in these students losing their places and the scholarships they have been awarded.

We hope that the UK government will demonstrate leadership in ensuring that educational opportunities remain accessible to all qualified students, regardless of the circumstances beyond their control.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and look forward to your response regarding the steps your government will take to support these students.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Hayal Akarsu

President, EASA (European Association of Social Anthropologists)

On behalf of the Executive Committee of EASA