# Britons accuse Foreign Office of abandonment as evacuation efforts lag behind other nations in Israel crisis



Britons stranded in Israel amid escalating regional tensions have criticised the UK Foreign Office for what they describe as a lack of adequate support and evacuation measures, as several other nations have acted swiftly to repatriate their citizens. With Israel closing its airspace due to increasing conflict with Iran and ongoing hostilities, tens of thousands of UK nationals remain trapped, facing growing dangers without coordinated rescue efforts.

Despite the Foreign Office issuing strong travel advisories against all journeys to Israel, it initially held back from arranging evacuation flights, advising British citizens instead to register their presence with authorities and to stay near bomb shelters. Many Britons, including young people like 19-year-old Miles Mackay, who was visiting friends in Tel Aviv, report feeling abandoned. Mackay told media outlets he felt “basically on his own” after seeking help and has contemplated a risky overland journey to the Jordanian border due to the absence of official evacuation plans.

Some families have resorted to organising their own departures. Jonathan Gold, visiting with his two adult children, was preparing to travel through the desert to Egypt amid the crisis. Such self-directed escape efforts highlight the perceived vacuum in government assistance faced by many.

The UK government has urged nationals to register via an official portal to facilitate emergency support and has deployed Foreign Office staff to strategic locations such as the Jordanian border to assist those able to leave by land. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has underscored the importance of this registration, citing it as crucial for safety planning. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to enhance logistical support for evacuation through neighbouring countries, reflecting a shift towards more active intervention.

Recently, the Foreign Office announced plans to operate evacuation flights from Tel Aviv, with the first expected to depart shortly and further flights subject to security conditions. Eligible individuals are being contacted directly and advised not to go to airports unless instructed. The decision to initiate evacuation flights comes after many international airlines, including British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, and others, suspended services to Israel amid security concerns. This suspension further restricted commercial exit routes, prompting renewed government action.

Meanwhile, the UK is reinforcing its diplomatic and military posture in the region. Prime Minister Starmer has hinted at the possible deployment of RAF fighter jets in support of Israel’s defence, a move framed as a contingency to ensure regional security amidst mounting tensions with Iran. The UK government is also engaged in international diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation, involving leaders such as the US President and Saudi Crown Prince. Financial and humanitarian support has been pledged, including funding to protect Jewish community sites in the UK and aid for Palestinian refugees affected by the conflict.

The Foreign Office has advised British diplomats’ families to leave Israel as a precaution, while embassy operations continue to provide consular services. Casualties among UK nationals have been reported, adding to the urgency of safe evacuation and assistance measures.

Other countries, including Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and Slovakia, have been more proactive in arranging buses, convoys, and charter flights to evacuate their citizens, intensifying pressure on the UK to match such efforts. The Foreign Office claims its actions are aligned with ensuring safety and adapting to complex and rapidly evolving conditions, though calls from those stranded insist on faster and clearer government involvement.

The situation remains fluid, with British authorities balancing diplomatic, military, and humanitarian considerations while striving to protect their nationals amid a deteriorating security landscape in Israel and the broader Middle East.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2069554/britons-trapped-israel-accuse-foreign-office-abanondment-evacuate), [[4]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1936097/israel-hamas-latest-foreign-office-evacuate-brits)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2069554/britons-trapped-israel-accuse-foreign-office-abanondment-evacuate), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/uk-advises-citizens-israel-register-with-british-authorities-2025-06-16/)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/fdd3a198-23f6-4e48-90a7-76a21825da17), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67091170), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67087237), [[4]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1936097/israel-hamas-latest-foreign-office-evacuate-brits)
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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2069554/britons-trapped-israel-accuse-foreign-office-abanondment-evacuate> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/uk-advises-citizens-israel-register-with-british-authorities-2025-06-16/> - On June 16, 2025, the UK government advised its citizens in Israel to register their presence with British authorities to facilitate potential emergency assistance amid escalating regional tensions. This guidance followed Israel's bombing of Iran, which had retaliated by launching missile attacks on major Israeli cities. Prime Minister Keir Starmer emphasized the importance of registration for safety planning, and a 'register your presence' portal was launched to help officials track and assist British nationals. Citizens were also urged to follow local authorities' guidance and seek shelter when advised. Additionally, the UK is enhancing logistical support for those seeking to leave the country through neighboring Jordan and Egypt, with British Foreign Office personnel already stationed at the Jordanian border.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/fdd3a198-23f6-4e48-90a7-76a21825da17> - The UK government has issued a travel advisory against all travel to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories due to escalating regional tensions and the threat of Iranian air attacks. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has not ruled out the potential use of RAF fighter jets to support Israel defensively, while emphasizing the deployment as a contingency to safeguard regional security. The UK has dispatched additional military aircraft to the Middle East and is coordinating with allies to promote de-escalation. Chancellor Rachel Reeves emphasized that the RAF’s primary mission is to protect UK personnel but acknowledged historical support for Israel's defense. The government maintains its stance on arms sales to Israel, continuing to review the issue. Discussions with international leaders, including US President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, have focused on urging de-escalation to avoid broader consequences such as rising oil and gas prices. Despite rising tensions, UK officials currently do not plan evacuation flights, citing closed airspace and open land routes to Jordan for emergency departures.
4. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1936097/israel-hamas-latest-foreign-office-evacuate-brits> - The UK could evacuate 60,000 Britons believed to be living in Israel amid concerns Iran might launch a deadly attack. Israeli intelligence suggests an impending Iranian strike on Israel after Iran accused it of assassinating Hamas commander Ismail Haniyeh last month. The British Foreign Office is preparing emergency plans to support around 60,000 Britons believed to be in the country, and admitted travel advice is being 'constantly updated'. Last week it was reported that the Royal Navy and Marines were planning a 'Dunkirk-style' mission to rescue 16,000 British nationals from Lebanon as tensions increased. A Government spokesman said: 'While we continue to use all diplomatic levers to push for de-escalation, our staff are working around the clock to plan for all scenarios to keep British nationals safe. Our travel advice is constantly updated to reflect the latest guidance.'
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67091170> - The UK is arranging flights to get stranded British nationals out of Israel, the Foreign Office has said. The first plane was expected to leave Tel Aviv on Thursday, with more flights planned 'in the coming days, subject to security'. Those eligible to leave will be contacted directly and British nationals should not go to airports unless they are called to. A team of diplomats has been sent to Israel to help people flying to the UK. The Foreign Office said it is 'working to ensure the flight can proceed as soon as possible.' The UK government said earlier this week it would not arrange evacuation flights because commercial routes were still available. But British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, EasyJet, Ryanair, Wizz Air, Air France, Lufthansa and Emirates have all suspended flights in recent days. In other UK developments: International Aid Minister Andrew Mitchell said a review of funding for Palestinian refugees could mean the government will start moving 'essential humanitarian supplies forward near the region'. He told the BBC the UK would 'do whatever is necessary to play our part in meeting humanitarian need'. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has chaired an Israel policing roundtable in Downing Street, ahead of protests expected this weekend. Mr Sunak has also announced £3m to help protect schools, synagogues and other Jewish community buildings. King Charles has held talks at Buckingham Palace with Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis. It comes after palace sources said yesterday that the King condemns the 'barbaric acts of terrorism in Israel'.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67087237> - The families of British diplomats are leaving Israel as a 'precautionary measure', the Foreign Office has said. It said the embassy would remain open and continue to provide consular services to those who need help. Israel has come under heavy rocket fire from Gaza in the days following a deadly surprise assault on communities in the south of the country, launched by Hamas. At least 1,200 people in Israel and 1,200 in Gaza have been killed. The UK government advises against all non-essential travel to Israel, and the Foreign Office said it had made its decision about the dependents of diplomats 'in line' with that advice. Foreign Secretary James Cleverley visited Israel on Wednesday, where he said it had the 'unwavering solidarity' of the UK amid indications it intends to carry out ground military operations in Gaza. He said Israel had a right to defend itself but added 'we would want to see as few civilian casualties as possible'. Commercial flights to and from Israel are being disrupted by the outbreak of the conflict. British Airways said on Wednesday it was suspending all flights to the country after ordering a plane heading to Tel Aviv to turn back due to security concerns. Virgin Atlantic, EasyJet, Ryanair, Wizz Air, Air France, Lufthansa and Emirates have all suspended flights. The government confirmed on Wednesday that 17 British nationals, including children, were dead or missing after the Hamas attack. At least 100 'reservists and active duty soldiers' are understood to have travelled from the UK to Israel to serve in the Israel Defence Forces, the Israeli Embassy in the UK said.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evacuations_during_the_Gaza_war> - During the Gaza war, several countries initiated evacuation plans for their citizens. The UK Foreign Office arranged flights for British nationals stranded in Israel, with the first plane leaving Tel Aviv on October 12, 2023. These flights were commercial services chartered by the Foreign Office, with each passenger charged £300. A team of diplomats was dispatched to Israel to assist British nationals. The UK government had initially stated it would not arrange evacuation flights due to available commercial routes, but this stance changed as airlines suspended flights to Israel. Other countries, including Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and Slovakia, also organized evacuations for their citizens during the conflict.