

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP

10 Downing Street
London
SW1 2AA

Opposing the US and Israel's war on Iran is a cost of living priority

Dear Prime Minister,

As trade union leaders, we have seen how the US and Israel's devastating, illegal war on Iran is deepening the cost of living crisis faced by our members and the British public. Disruption to the world's food and energy supplies is hurting communities here in Britain and having a catastrophic impact in the global south.

Since the war started, the average British household has seen its annual energy bill rise by £221, while monthly food bills are forecast to rise by £32.80.¹ Without an end to the war, there will be no end to this cost of living crisis.

We are encouraged by the new government's focus on the cost of living and the measures it is taking to make life more affordable. However, we are deeply concerned that the same government has authorised US air strikes to be conducted from bases on British territories as part of the war against Iran.

Ending rather than escalating this war — which the US and Israel chose to start in violation of the UN charter — is essential for the government's affordability agenda to be a success.

As modelling by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows, the war on Iran has undone the marginal improvements to living standards made since 2024.² While broad measures are needed to address the cost of living crisis, de-escalation and an urgent end to the war are essential to preventing bills from surging and averting a systemic shock to the world economy.

The UK has a central role to play in de-escalation: the US has relied on its bases on UK territories to conduct the war, as they are capable of launching strategic bombers and sit within range of Iran.³

Revoking permission for the US to use these bases would have a significant impact on the US' ability to further escalate a war that has been a catastrophe for people in the Middle East and an economic disaster for the world.

We urge the Prime Minister to vocally and actively oppose the war and to revoke the UK's approval of US air strikes from British territories. Most of the British public oppose these air strikes.⁴

Opposing this war is a necessity if the cost of living agenda is to succeed.

¹ See Kevin Peachey, "Energy Bills to Rise for Millions as Impact of Iran War Hits", *BBC*, 27 May 2026, [Available Here](#) and Christian Jaccarini, "Food Inflation From Iran War Could Hit Poorer Households 50% Harder Than Richest", *Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit*, 22 April 2026, [Available Here](#).

² Chris Belfield, Sam Tims, Nadim Hamdan, Francisca Ladouch and Nik Percival, "Rebuilding Living Standards and Economic Security", Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2026, [Available Here](#).

³ Rory Fleming-Stuart, "The British Bases Behind the Bombs: How Much Has the UK Enabled US Air Strikes on Iran", Action on Armed Violence, 2026, [Available Here](#).

⁴ "Do you support or oppose the government allowing the US to use UK airbases specifically to launch attacks against missile bases in Iran?", *YouGov*, 22 July 2026, [Available Here](#).

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Egan, General Secretary, UNISON

Daniel Kebede, General Secretary, National Education Union

Dave Ward, General Secretary, Communication Workers Union

Eddie Dempsey, General Secretary, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

Fran Heathcote, General Secretary, Public and Commercial Services Union

Jo Grady, General Secretary, University and College Union

Paul W. Fleming, General Secretary, Equity

Maryam Eslamdoust, General Secretary, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association

Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union

Steve Wright, General Secretary, Fire Brigades Union