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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) following on from recent events in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem.

I share your concern at the violent escalations we have witnessed recently. The UK Government is urging all parties to de-escalate. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop and every effort must be made to avoid loss of life. My thoughts are with all those affected, especially the families of those civilians killed.

The UK is clear that evictions of Palestinians from their homes causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, calls into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. I join Ministers in calling for them to cease with immediate effect.

The UK regularly makes clear our concerns about the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem to the Israeli authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem, both bilaterally and in co-operation with like-minded diplomatic partners.

The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv has raised this issue with the Israeli Authorities, as has the Minister of State, James Cleverly, with the Israeli Ambassador in London. The British Consul General to Jerusalem visited families at risk of eviction in Sheikh Jarrah on the 3rd May to reiterate the UK's opposition to the practice.

The UK is clear that the violence against peaceful worshippers at the al-Aqsa mosque was unacceptable. Attacks against peaceful worshippers of any faith must stop. The Status Quo in Jerusalem is important at all times, especially during religious festivals such as Ramadan. I encourage all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the Status Quo to ensure the safety and the security of the Al Haram Al Sharif / Temple Mount and all who worship there. I urge all sides to refrain from any kind of provocation so that calm is restored as quickly as possible. The restoration of peace and security is in everyone's interests.

I note the suggestion about the imposition of sanctions. I do not, however, speculate on potential future designations as to do so could undermine their impact. I know that the FCDO keeps all relevant evidence under constant review.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

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