



June 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the situation in Gaza. Gaza's humanitarian situation remains deeply concerning. The difficulties are exacerbated by restrictions on movement and access to the Gaza strip.

I am assured that the UK regularly raises with the Government of Israel the urgent need to ease all access and movement restrictions on Gaza, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. Ministers and officials continue to stress the damage that these restrictions are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians in Gaza, and that supporting legal trade for Gazans is firmly in Israel's long-term interests.

The UK also regularly raises the issuance of medical permits, which is vital for healthcare for Gazans, with the Israeli authorities.

Restrictions on movement impact infrastructure development, the delivery of vital humanitarian services and limit the professional development of health and humanitarian workers. The UK provided £800,000 in 2020/21 to the Access Coordination Unit (ACU) and the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism to ensure humanitarian access to UN, INGO and NGO workers and allow the entry of building materials into Gaza for the purposes of reconstruction. The ACU has played an important role in facilitating movement of humanitarian personnel and goods during the Covid-19 crisis.

More widely, the UK is a longstanding supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides core services, including healthcare to Palestinian refugees in Gaza.

HM Government takes its export control responsibilities extremely seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are rigorously assessed in accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Licence decisions take account of prevailing circumstances at the time of application and include human rights and international humanitarian law considerations. Export licenses are not issued where to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria, including where there is a clear risk that the items might be used for internal repression.

I am assured by my ministerial colleagues that HMG continues to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories closely, and will take action to suspend, refuse or revoke licences if circumstances require.

Ultimately, there needs to be a just, fair, agreed, and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee question as part of a negotiated peace agreement. The UK is firmly committed to a two-state solution to provide the long-term answer for Palestinian refugees and continues to work closely



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with international partners, strongly advocating for a two-state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations in the region.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY