



January 2024

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the situation in Gaza.

A tragedy is unfolding in the Middle East. Israel has suffered the worst terror attack in its history at the hands of Hamas, and Palestinian civilians in Gaza are experiencing a humanitarian disaster.

Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas. However, the UK has been consistently clear that in doing so it must respect international humanitarian law.

There must be a reduction in civilian casualties, and I agree with the Government that we want to see Israel take greater care to limit its operations to military targets and avoid harming civilians and destroying homes.

Nobody wants to see this conflict last a moment longer than necessary, and I welcome that the UK Government is supporting a sustainable ceasefire. For a ceasefire to be sustainable, the conditions need to be in place for it not to collapse within a few days.

There is no perfect formula for peace. Clearly, however, leaving Hamas in power in Gaza would be a permanent roadblock to a two-state solution. A ceasefire would also not last if hostages are still being held. A sustainable ceasefire must mean that Hamas is no longer there, able to threaten Israel with rocket attacks and other forms of terrorism.

Ahead of a permanent ceasefire, the UK wants to see immediate and sustained humanitarian pauses. This will allow a window for hostages to leave and more aid to enter Gaza.

The UK Government continues to work with its partners towards a two-state solution, which remains the only viable long-term solution.

As you mention, South Africa has filed a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). I agree with the Government that this development is unhelpful and I do not support it.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**

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Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas but, as I said, it must act within international humanitarian law. I do not believe that calling this genocide is the right

approach. The British Government's long-standing position is that it is for courts to decide on matters of genocide, not for states. It of course respects the role and independence of the ICJ.

Thank you 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**