

Dear David

Thank you for your email regarding the situation in Gaza.

The events we have seen unfolding in Israel are truly horrific. I join the UK Government in utterly condemning the barbaric terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas, and in standing with Israel as it seeks to defend itself in the face of such atrocities.

The UK recognises the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and supports a lasting solution for Israelis and Palestinians alike. However, Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people or their aspirations; it offers nothing for them other than more terror and more bloodshed. I therefore support Israel's right to target Hamas, take back the hostages, deter further incursions and strengthen its security for the long term.

The UK has long been a significant provider of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people, and I welcome that on 16 October, the UK Government announced that it will increase aid by a third, with an additional £10 million of support. Furthermore, the UK has deployed significant military support to the region to help facilitate the humanitarian response and mitigate escalation of the conflict.

I note your calls for the UK to push for a ceasefire. The UK is working via all diplomatic channels—bilaterally and collectively in the region—to ensure that this conflict, which has cost so many lives already, can be brought to a halt.

I must reiterate that Israel has the right to take action to defend itself and to recover its hostages, and the UK, while respecting that, will always encourage it to adhere to international law and protect civilians.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Best Wishes,

Maria

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