

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

21st November 2018

Dear Constituent,

RE: OPERATION DEFEND ISRAEL.

Thank you for contacting me recently about Hamas in Gaza; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I am deeply concerned by the recent activities of Hamas in Gaza, including attempts to rearm and rebuild tunnel infrastructure. These actions undermine efforts to improve the situation in Gaza and harm prospects for the Middle East Peace Process. Hamas must renounce violence, recognise Israel, and accept previously signed agreements. Ministers have been clear that any investigation into the recent violence in Gaza must examine the role of non-state actors, including Hamas.

The Government's policy towards Hamas is clear – it does not have contact with Hamas, which is a proscribed terrorist organisation. Hamas must make a credible movement towards the conditions set out above, which remain the benchmark against which their intentions are judged, before the Government considers a change in our stance.

Israel, like any state, has the right to ensure its own security, and its citizens also have the right to live without fear of attack. I can assure you that the UK will continue to support Israel's right to defend itself. The UK Government has called on Iran to end its financial support for Hamas, as well as its supply of military equipment.

There is an urgent need for all parties to reach an agreement that addresses the underlying causes of conflict in Gaza and to take the necessary steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. Any agreement should ensure that Hamas and other militant groups permanently end rocket and other attacks against Israel, that the Palestinian Authority resumes control of Gaza and restores effective governance, and that Israel lifts its restrictions to ease the suffering of ordinary Palestinians.

I can assure you that the UK remains focussed on securing progress towards a two-state solution, with a sovereign and democratic Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel. Only a negotiated settlement can achieve this.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE