



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

21st May 2021

Dear Confrontant,

RE: ISRAEL - HAMAS ROCKET ATTACKS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the situation in Israel; your comments upon which I have read with interest and concern.

I share your concern about the violence we have witnessed in recent weeks. My thoughts are with all those affected, especially the families of those civilians killed.

From the outset, the UK unequivocally condemned the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Hamas and other terrorist groups at Jerusalem and locations in Israel. There was no justification for these attacks, and the UK fully supported the right of Israel to defend its citizens against them. In doing so, of course, the UK was clear that it was essential for actions to be proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and that every effort was made to avoid civilian casualties.

I welcome the announced ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, effective as of the 21st May. This is an essential step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life.

I note your point about Sheikh Jarrah. However, the UK's position on this matter, which I support, is that the evictions of Palestinians from their homes causes unnecessary suffering and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK continues to urge Israel to cease such actions. However, this is certainly no justification for the violence we have seen.

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. We 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. We 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.

All sides must now work together to consolidate the ceasefire, facilitate humanitarian access in and out of Gaza, and to find a durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which will end the cycle of violence and deliver a sustainable and just peace. I am assured that the UK will do all it can to support efforts to this end.

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