



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

11<sup>th</sup> August 2021

*Jen Confront*

**RE: MILITARY EXPORTS TO ISRAEL - EDM 138.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of military exports to Israel and associated Early Day Motion (EDM) 138.

With regard to the EDM, notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs. With that in mind, I would like to assure you I have relayed your concerns to my ministerial colleagues.

However, I remain concerned about security in Israel and our friendship with Israel does not prohibit our criticism of some Israeli policies, or our recognition of Israel as a thriving democracy. The UK supports Israel's right to defend itself and will work alongside anyone in the Middle East who seeks to establish better stability and security for their people. Israel has a right to self-defence and to defend its citizens from attack. I hope and wish, as we all do, for the cycles of violence in Israel and Palestine to end. Every effort must be made to avoid loss of life, especially the lives of children. Civilian deaths, both in Gaza and Israel, are a tragedy.

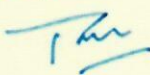
I know the Government takes its export control responsibilities extremely seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are rigorously assessed on a case-by-case basis against the *Consolidated EU & National Arms Export Licensing Criteria*, based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available.

Licence decisions take account of prevailing circumstances at the time of application and include human rights and international humanitarian law considerations. I understand the Government will not issue export licences where there is a clear risk that the arms might be used for internal repression, or in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.



The UK's support for Israel's right to self-defence does not extend to support for the annexation plans for part of the West Bank. I strongly welcome the shelving of these annexation plans as part of the normalisation of relations between Israel and the UAE last year.

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**