

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

2nd February 2022

Dear Constance,

RE: UK RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding the UK's position on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I have read your comments on this with interest.

The UK's position, which I support, is clear and longstanding. There should be a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps; Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a fair and realistic settlement for refugees. The UK Government consistently calls – both bilaterally and via the UN – for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

This includes the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem, as well as the demolition of Palestinian property – homes, schools and so forth – and Israeli settlements in the OPTs. The UK is clear that these actions not only undermine progress towards a peaceful two-state solution, but are also illegal under international law. I join Ministers in calling on Israel to halt these activities with immediate and permanent effect.

Ministers also continue to raise with their Israeli counterparts concerns about settler violence and the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the civilian Palestinian population.

On the issue of bilateral trade, the UK does not recognise the OPTs and settlements there as being part of Israel. Goods from settlements are not covered by the *UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement* and do not receive preferential tariff treatment.

The UK Government advises British businesses to bear in mind its view on the illegality of Israeli settlements in the OPTs under international law when considering their investments and activities in the region. Ultimately, it is a decision for an individual or company as to whether to operate in the settlements in the OPTs. The UK Government neither encourages nor supports such activity.

Finally, the UK Government takes its export control responsibilities extremely seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes anywhere in the world. All licence applications are rigorously assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available. Indeed, the Government will not grant any export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the criteria.

I am assured that Ministers will continue to monitor the situation in Israel and the OPTs closely and will take action to suspend, refuse, or revoke licences – in line with the criteria – if circumstances require.

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,
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TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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