



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

5<sup>th</sup> June 2023

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: UNREST IN JERUSALEM**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about the situation in Jerusalem. I have read your comments with interest.

My ministerial colleagues and I are committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and to promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Indeed, promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities.

Jerusalem is a holy city to so many, and the UK remains firmly of the view that maintaining the historic 'Status Quo' is the only means of ensuring freedom of worship. All religious sites, including the Al Aqsa Mosque, should be treated with the utmost respect in line with UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/258. The UK's unwavering support for Jordanian custodianship of the holy sites in East Jerusalem was re-affirmed by Lord Ahmad and the Foreign Secretary during their visits to the Al Aqsa Mosque on the 12<sup>th</sup> January and 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 respectively.

At the convergence of Passover, Ramadan and Easter, the UK called for all parties to respect the historic 'Status Quo' arrangements at Jerusalem's holy sites and cease all provocative action. Indeed, the UK condemns the recent Israeli police violence at the Al Aqsa Mosque and calls on the Israeli security forces to ensure there are proportionate investigations in accordance with international law, following the conduct of such operations.

I join ministers in London and officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, the British Consulate in Jerusalem, and at the UN, in calling for all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation, and uphold the status quo, to ensure the safety and the security of all Christians, Jews, and Muslims, as HMG did at the UN Security Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

It is crucial that all parties work to reduce tensions and avoid unnecessary escalation. The UK is committed to playing its part in this regard and our officials continue to engage with the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to support them 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**