

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

30th November 2023

Dear Constance,

RE: WESTERN SAHARA

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about Western Sahara. I have read your comments with interest.

The UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined. As a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the UK regularly discusses Western Sahara with Morocco and others, and strongly supports the work of the UN Secretary General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara to reach a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The UK is encouraging all parties to engage with the UN-led political process, and I am pleased that the Minister of State for the Middle East discussed the importance of moving the process forward towards resolution with Morocco's Foreign Minister at the 4th UK-Morocco Strategic Dialogue on the 9th May.

Support for human rights and human rights defenders is a UK foreign policy priority around the world, including in Western Sahara, and I know that the UK Government regularly raises human rights issues with the Moroccan authorities. The UK has consistently supported language in UNSC Resolutions which encourages the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara, including the freedoms of expression and association. Furthermore, senior UK Government officials raised the importance of media freedoms with the Moroccan Government at a Human Rights Dialogue between the two nations on the 1st December 2022.

The UK's position on Western Sahara is consistent and longstanding. It is unaffected by recent developments, be it the normalisation of relations between Israel and Morocco, or the decision by former President Trump in December 2020 to recognise Western Sahara as part of Morocco – which is purely a matter for the US.

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