



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP**  
Minister of State for the Middle East and  
North Africa

King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

**Tel: 0207 008 5000**

**Email:**  
**[fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk)**

**[www.gov.uk/fcdo](http://www.gov.uk/fcdo)**

Caroline Lucas MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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2 June 2021

*Dear Caroline,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 May about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May, which is an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life. The UK offers our condolences to the families of those civilians killed. The UK worked actively to urge the parties to work with mediators towards an immediate ceasefire. We fully supported Egyptian, Qatari and UN efforts, working closely with the US. Hamas must now end all attacks on Israel. It is also important for Israel to facilitate rapid humanitarian access in and out of Gaza. The UK will provide £3.2 million of new UK aid to the UN agency for Palestine refugees, UNRWA, responding to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, launched on 19 May. The funding will help provide food, water, and emergency shelter to Palestinians affected by the recent escalation in violence in Gaza.

The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the OPTs on 25 and 26 May for talks with senior leaders as the Israel-Gaza ceasefire maintains calm in the region. During his visit the Foreign Secretary met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution as the best way to deliver Palestinian self-determination and ensure Israel's status as a Jewish, democratic state. Throughout the escalation of violence the UK worked with regional partners to promote an urgent de-escalation. The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 11 and 16 May, and with Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. The Foreign Secretary and Ministers have also engaged regional partners, including with Egypt, Jordan and Turkey. I have spoken to the Israeli Ambassador and to the Palestinian Head of Mission in London to urge them to continue to de-escalate and ensure calm is maintained. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop, and every effort must be made to avoid loss of life.

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. The restoration of peace and security is in everyone's interests.

On the issue of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the UK respects the independence of the ICC and we expect it to exercise due prosecutorial and judicial discipline.

The situation on the ground demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK remains committed to the two-state solution as the best way to bring peace and stability to the region.

*Yours ever,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Cleverly', is centered on the page.

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