



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



Department  
for International  
Development

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Jo Swinson MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Jo,

Thank you for your email of 4 December to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of a number of your constituents about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I am replying as the Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East and North Africa.

The UK is deeply concerned by recent violence in Gaza and southern Israel, including civilian casualties. We strongly condemn the firing of projectiles from Gaza towards Israel. Our Ambassador to Israel visited communities affected by the rocket fire on 13 November. Hamas and other factions must end such attacks immediately.

We urge restraint from all parties and welcome the recent return to calm. We strongly support the mediation efforts of the international community led by Egypt and the UN. In order to protect civilians, it is crucial that a ceasefire is agreed and maintained as part of a political process that sees the Palestinian Authority (PA) return to Gaza and the lifting of restrictions on the Gazan people and economy. We call on Israel, the PA and Egypt to work together to ensure a durable solution for Gaza.

We must do everything we can to avoid another devastating war, which would compound the already awful humanitarian and security conditions faced by ordinary Gazans and further threaten the security of Israeli border communities. I regularly discuss the situation in Gaza with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK, as well as with representatives from the PA.

Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We understand and share the deep frustration on all sides at the lack of progress on the Middle East Peace Process. This violence underlines that a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue.

*Jan eve*

*Alistair*

**THE RT HON. ALISTAIR BURT MP**  
**Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa**