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Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

From: **AINAGCorrespondence@fco.gov.uk**

Sent: 24 November 2015 11:37:42

To: **lphr@live.co.uk**

Our reference: EMOP/373/2015
 EMOP/1527/2015

24 November 2015

Dear Mr Shourou,

Thank you for your emails of 30 July and 28 October to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), enclosing letters for the Foreign Secretary, about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The Near East Department in the FCO has been asked to reply.

As Tobias Ellwood, the FCO Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East, said in his statement of 13 October and the Foreign Secretary said in his statement of 9 October, we are deeply concerned by the recent violence across the OPTs and Israel. We strongly condemn all acts of violence and all incitement to commit acts of violence. Since the start of the current violence we have spoken regularly to both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government, urging them to use their influence to de-escalate the tensions.

Israel, like all countries, has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are in line with International Humanitarian Law. Our position as a friend of Israel has enabled us to raise concerns where we have them. Our Ambassador to Tel Aviv has raised UK concerns over the use of force (including lethal force) by Israeli security authorities, most recently with the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 October, stressing the need for proportionality and proper accountability.

The UK continues to repeatedly express concerns about the appropriate use of force, including the use of live ammunition by the Israeli Defence Force IDF and the need for Israel to implement the recommendations of the Turkel Commission on improving how the Israeli authorities investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian law.

The context of the current violence is the enduring tragedy of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We look to all parties, including Israel, to show through policies and actions that their commitment to the two state solution is genuine.

Every Israeli and Palestinian has a right to live in peace and security. It is therefore vital that all parties and leaders take actions and use words which will encourage calm and decrease tensions. We will continue our longstanding policy of supporting a negotiated two state solution as the only way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once and for all. We do not underestimate the challenges, but if both parties show bold leadership, peace is possible. The UK is ready to do all it can to support this goal.

On behalf of the

Near East Department

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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