



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

24 September 2018

Our reference: MIN-17725-2018

Tareq Shrourou, Director
Natalie Sedacca
Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights

by email: lpnr@live.co.uk

to Mr Shrourou and Ms Sedacca,

Thank you for your letter of 14 August about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

As you know, I remain deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza, and the possibility of further violence. The British Government has called on all sides to show restraint and abide by international law, including making particular effort to protect minors.

We have been clear that that Israel, like any state, has the right to take proportionate action to defend itself to ensure its own security, as its citizens also have the right to live without fear of attack. But we have also made clear that Israel must to do everything it can to avoid civilian casualties, to exercise restraint, and to find ways to bring this situation to an end.

As we discussed in our recent meeting, the UK supports an investigation which establishes the facts about the recent violence in Gaza. Given the importance of accountability, we urge that any investigation be independent and transparent, that its findings be made public, and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. As a supporter of Commissions of Inquiry in general, we will encourage parties to engage constructively with the UN Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. At the same time we will work to ensure that the Commission of Inquiry is as independent, transparent and balanced as possible in its approach.

The people of Gaza are in urgent need. This is why the UK has recently increased its contribution to UNRWA, and will deliver a new package of economic development support in Gaza. We are supportive of Egyptian and UN action to broker a ceasefire

in Gaza, and are urging parties to engage constructively with Hamas-Fatah reconciliation efforts to return the PA to Gaza.

The UK will continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

1/2 eve
Al.
—

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