



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

29 September 2014

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Sir Jeremy,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August about the situation in Gaza. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

I am deeply saddened by the tragic loss of civilian life that was seen in the recent escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel. The conflict has taken a terrible toll. Whilst we have condemned Hamas' rocket fire, and recognised Israel's right to take proportionate action to defend itself, I have also urged Prime Minister Netanyahu to do everything he can to avoid civilian casualties, and to exercise restraint in line with humanitarian law.

The priority now must be to secure a durable agreement on Gaza that breaks the cycle of violence. There must then be rapid movement to address the underlying causes of the conflict, with a central role for the Palestinian Authority, and a strong one for the international community, including the UN. We are working closely with international partners in order to secure that goal.

I agree with you on the importance of accountability for actions as a result of the latest round of violence. There must be meaningful investigations into possible violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all sides, including those committed by Hamas and other militant groups. In line with your suggestion, we are calling on both sides to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry set up by the UN Human Rights Council, which must itself be independent and balanced in its approach.

I also share your concerns about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. We are urging all parties to continue to enable unhindered access throughout Gaza. We have decided to provide more than £19 million in emergency assistance to the UN and NGO's to help the tens of thousands of Palestinians affected. Alongside this significant humanitarian effort, it is vital

to continue to work with the Palestinian Authority and other partners to ensure a future Palestinian state will be stable, well-run and an effective partner for peace with Israel. The Department for International Development's wealth creation programme promotes state building and the wider prospects for peace by increasing fiscal sustainability, reducing unemployment and poverty.

With regard to export licences, you know that the UK operates one of the most rigorous and transparent regimes in the world with strict criteria governing the provision of licences. Our recent review of licensed exports to Israel found that the vast majority of exports currently licensed for Israel are not for items that could be used by Israeli forces in operations in Gaza. For the twelve licences identified for components which could be part of equipment used by the Israel defence forces in Gaza, we have taken the decision that they will be suspended in the event of a resumption of significant hostilities. No new licences of military equipment have been issued for use by the Israeli Defence Force during the review period and as a precautionary measure this approach will continue until hostilities cease.

I can assure you that securing a lasting peace in the Middle East continues to be one of our highest foreign policy priorities. Events in Gaza only reinforce the urgent need for progress. With our international partners and through the UN the UK stands ready to do all it can to support this goal.

Yours sincerely,
David A

Sir Jeremy Greenstock GCMG