



May 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for sharing the recent report by Human Rights Watch regarding Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

I appreciate your concern for this issue, and I know that Ministers are aware of the points raised by this report.

The UK repeatedly calls on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and is in close dialogue with Israel on regarding various issues relating to the occupation. Also, the UK regularly makes clear to the Israeli Government, for instance, our opposition to settlement expansion in the OPTs which causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians, undermines the viability of the two-state solution, and, in most cases, are contrary to International Law.

Israel and the OPTs remain a human rights priority for the FCDO. As such, ministers and British officials will continue to monitor all issues relating to the occupation and raise them with the relevant authorities, and via the appropriate multilateral fora, accordingly.

Regarding arms exports, I know the Government takes its export control responsibilities extremely seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are rigorously assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available.

Licence decisions take account of prevailing circumstances at the time of application and include human rights and international humanitarian law considerations. Export license are not issued where to do so would be inconsistent with the consolidated criteria, including where there is a clear risk that the items might be used for a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

On the issue of bilateral trade, the UK does not recognise the OPTs and settlements there as part of Israel. The UK Government neither encourages nor offers support to individuals or companies who operate in settlements in the OPTs. Goods from settlements are not covered by the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement and do not receive preferential tariff treatment.

There is a suggestion about the imposition of targeted sanctions. I do not, however, speculate on potential future designations as to do so could undermine their impact. I know that the FCDO keeps all relevant evidence under constant review.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY