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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about ongoing situation in Israel.

I share your concern at the violent escalations we have witnessed recently. The UK Government is urging all parties to de-escalate. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop and every effort must be made to avoid loss of life. My thoughts are with all those affected, especially the families of those civilians killed.

Let me be clear that my ministerial colleagues and I unequivocally condemn the firing of rockets by Hamas and other terrorist groups at Jerusalem and locations in Israel. There is no justification for these indiscriminate attacks, and the UK fully supports Israel's legitimate right to defend its citizens against them.

In doing so, of course, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. It is also important that all possible steps are taken to bring about a swift de-escalation of tensions and an end to violence.

I support the UK's position on Sheikh Jarrah. The evictions of Palestinians from their homes causes unnecessary suffering and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK continues to urge Israel to cease such actions. However, this is certainly no justification for the violence we have seen, which must stop immediately.

The UK is clear that the violence against peaceful worshippers at the al-Aqsa mosque was unacceptable. Attacks against peaceful worshippers of any faith must stop. The Status Quo in Jerusalem is important at all times, especially during religious festivals such as Ramadan. We encourage all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the Status Quo to ensure the safety and the security of the Al Haram Al Sharif / Temple Mount and all who worship there. We urge all sides to refrain from any kind of provocation so that calm is restored as quickly as possible. The restoration of peace and security is in everyone's interests.

The Foreign Secretary spoke to his Israeli counterpart on the 11th May and the Palestinian Prime Minister on the 12th May to reiterate the above points and I know that ministers and British officials will continue to do so in all future representations as part of our longstanding efforts to facilitate peace and stability in the region.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

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