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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about Hamas.

As you may know, Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001 and is listed in Schedule 2 of the Terrorism Act 2000. The UK maintains a no contact policy with the group in its entirety.

I share the Government's position that the Hamas ideology is unacceptable, and I strongly condemn all acts of terrorism. I appreciate concerns about the political wing of Hamas. I understand the political wing of Hamas is not proscribed as it is considered that there is a clear distinction between Hamas's military and political wings.

In distinguishing between the political and military wings for the purposes of proscription, the Government's aim is to proscribe only those parts of Hamas which are directly concerned in terrorism.

While it is Government policy not to comment on whether or not a group is under consideration for proscription or not, I thought it may be helpful to set out the legal basis on which proscription decisions are made.

Legislation allows for a group to be proscribed in the UK only if the Secretary of State believes it is currently concerned in terrorism, as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000. This means an organisation can only be proscribed if it commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism, promotes or encourages terrorism (including the unlawful glorification of terrorism) or is otherwise concerned in terrorism.

Organisations which cause concern, are kept under continuous review. As and when new material comes to light it is considered and the organisation reassessed as part of that process. Individual members are, of course, subject to criminal law.

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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