



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office



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30 April 2024

Rt Hon. Sir Stephen Timms MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

*Dear Stephen,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 April to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of a number of your constituents about the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I am replying as the Minister of State for the Middle East.

Israel suffered the worst terror attack in its history at the hands of Hamas and Palestinian civilians are facing a devastating and growing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. We want to see an immediate end to the fighting in Gaza to get aid in and hostages out, then progress towards a sustainable, permanent ceasefire, without a return to destruction, fighting and loss of life. On 25 March, the international community took a significant step towards achieving that. We welcome United Nations Security Council resolution 2728, which reflected widespread international support for Britain's position and considerable efforts by our diplomats to secure a consensus.

Palestinians are facing a devastating and growing humanitarian catastrophe. The UK is playing a key role in alleviating that suffering. For example, we trebled our aid commitment this financial year and we are doing everything we can to get more aid in as quickly as possible by land, sea and air. On 25 March, the Royal Air Force airdropped 10 tonnes of food aid – including water, rice and baby food – directly to civilians in Gaza. 150 further tonnes of UK aid arrived in Gaza on 13 March, including 840 family tents, 13,440 blankets, almost 3,000 shelter kits, and shelter-fixing kits, 6,000 sleeping mats and more

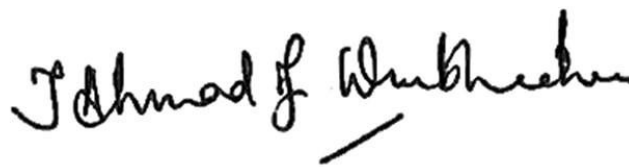
than 3,000 dignity kits. A field hospital, provided by UK Aid funding to UK-Med, has arrived in Gaza. This facility, staffed by UK and local medics, is treating over 100 patients a day, ensuring those with health issues have access to vital aid. The Foreign Secretary's Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Mark Bryson-Richardson, is also working intensively to address the blockages preventing more aid reaching Gaza.

Allegations that UNRWA staff were involved in the events that took place on 7 October in Israel are appalling, which is why we took decisive action to pause future funding to the organisation. The Prime Minister has been clear that the UK will set out its position on future funding to UNRWA following careful consideration of Catherine Colonna's final report, which has now been issued, UNRWA's response and the ongoing UN Office for Internal Oversight Services investigation into these allegations. UNRWA continues to play a pivotal role in alleviating the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and in the wider region.

Five vital elements are required for a lasting peace: the release of all hostages; the formation of a new Palestinian Government for the West Bank and Gaza, accompanied by an international support package; removing Hamas's capacity to launch attacks against Israel; Hamas no longer being in charge of Gaza; and a political horizon which provides a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution, of Israel and Palestine living in peace and security.

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and I have reiterated these messages in contacts with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mustafa, including during the Foreign Secretary's visit on 17 April, as well as with leaders in Qatar, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia Lebanon, Egypt, and the UAE in recent weeks. Throughout these discussions, as I have outlined, the immediate priority must be a stop in the fighting, which is the best route to secure the safe release of hostages and significantly step up the aid reaching Gaza. We want to see this cessation lead to a sustainable ceasefire without a return to further fighting and that remains the primary focus of all our diplomatic efforts.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**

Minister of State

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict