



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office



**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon  
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29 November 2022

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

*Dear Sir George,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 October to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of a number of your constituents, about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as the Minister of State for the Middle East, responsible for Human Rights.

We regularly raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities. We encourage Israel to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible should be held to account.

While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of the Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity.

The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defence Forces police non-violent protests and the border areas, including use of live ammunition. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population particularly the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

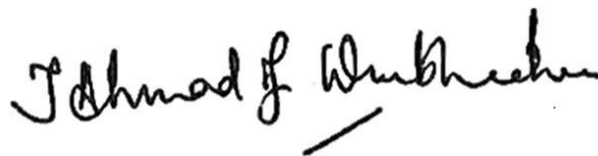
The UK Government takes its defence export responsibilities extremely seriously and operates some of the most robust export controls in the world. All applications for export licences are assessed on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria. We will not issue a licence if there is a clear risk that the equipment might be used to commit or facilitate internal repression.

We will continue to monitor closely the situation in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, and if extant licences are found to be no longer consistent with the Criteria, those licences will be revoked.

The UK Government does not believe that imposing a blanket arms embargo would lead to progress in the peace process.

We firmly believe a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions, which make peace more difficult.

*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