



Ministry  
of Defence

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*Dear George*

Thank you for your correspondence in which you passed on the concerns of your constituent

I too am extremely concerned about the protection of all civilians in Iraq including children affected by the military operations to retake Mosul from Daesh. It is important to emphasise that this is an Iraqi-led operation which will allow Iraqis to take back their city from Daesh with the support of the Global Coalition, including airstrikes undertaken by the RAF. The United Kingdom strongly supports the government of Iraq and its efforts to re-unite communities. Protection of civilians is paramount in the effort to defeat Daesh and all air strikes are meticulously planned to minimise the risk of civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure.

In an effort to protect and aid civilians, the Department for International Development has committed £169.5 million to humanitarian assistance since the summer of 2014, including £90 million we announced this year. More than half of this £90 million is to be provided to partners responding to the crisis in Mosul. In addition, the UK is providing over £15 million to assist the United Nation's stabilisation work, securing liberated areas, clearing explosives left behind by Daesh and supporting the renovation of water facilities, power networks, clinics and schools.

The Department for International Development is aware of the potential for a large number of civilians to flee the city, in very difficult security conditions. The identification and maintenance of safe routes is key, and success will hinge entirely on the good will of all parties to the conflict. The Iraqi Security Forces will facilitate transports for civilians fleeing the city to locations outside the conflict zone, where they can be sheltered and assisted by the UN and other humanitarian actors, as happened successfully during the liberation of Fallujah.

Rt Hon George Howarth MP  
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We share concerns about the question of the very necessary security screening that will need to be undertaken of civilians fleeing the conflict in Mosul. The UK continues to vigorously lobby the Government of Iraq and other authorities to respect International Humanitarian Law during screening operations. We agree that screenings should take place in a transparent manner, under a fully capable chain of command, and be monitored independently by the UN or other impartial humanitarian actors.

The Iraqi Government has stated its commitment to human rights on several occasions and the UK continues to engage with the Iraqi Government to ensure this commitment is honoured. The UK will continue to support protection programmes in Iraq, these benefit at risk groups including children, and have currently helped thousands of displaced girls and boys to receive support including education and vaccinations.

The UK is at the forefront of efforts to support a Government of Iraq led, UN-supported response to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the operation to recover Mosul, coordinated with military and stabilisation planning.

*Regards*

*MP*

**RT HON MIKE PENNING MP**