



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Hamish Falconer MP

Minister for the Middle East, North Africa,
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Rt Hon. Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
House of Commons
London
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Our ref: MC2025/31343
Your ref: ID20083

18 September 2025

Dear Sir Iain,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 September to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of your constituent, Dr Hasanat Husain of 32 Woodland Way, Woodford, Essex, IG8 0QQ, about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as the Minister responsible for the Middle East.

Since our first day in office, this Government has pressed for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, to free the hostages and to bring humanitarian aid to civilians who have suffered so much. During this time, we have taken decisive action. We restored funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suspended arms exports that could be used in Gaza, and provided tens of millions of pounds in humanitarian aid. We signed a landmark agreement with the Palestinian Authority, defended the independence of international courts, and imposed three rounds of sanctions on violent Israeli settlers. We suspended trade negotiations with Israel and sanctioned far-right ministers for incitement. On 21 July 2025, the UK led 28 international partners in demanding an immediate end to the war.

Israel suffered a heinous attack on 7 October 2023. We have always supported Israel's right to defend Israelis against terrorism. But this escalation is wholly disproportionate. The suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths. The Israeli government's aid delivery model is dangerous, fuels instability and deprives Gazans of human dignity. We condemn the drip feeding of aid and the inhumane killing of civilians, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs of water and food.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic. The decision by the Israeli Security Cabinet to launch an additional large-scale military operation will aggravate this crisis, endanger the lives of hostages, and further risk the mass displacement of civilians. The plans announced by the Government of Israel risk violating International Humanitarian Law. The worst-case scenario of famine is unfolding, and the exclusion of vital humanitarian organisations would be an egregious signal. We strongly reject these actions and urge the Government of Israel to amend its registration system to ensure humanitarian actors can continue their essential work in line with humanitarian principles.

Hamas are a terrorist organisation responsible for the atrocities on 7 October 2023. Hamas must immediately release all the hostages, sign up to an immediate ceasefire, accept that they will play no part in the government of Gaza, and commit to disarmament.

The hostages continue to suffer terribly. A negotiated ceasefire offers the best hope of bringing them home and ending the agony of their families. Diplomacy, not more bloodshed, is how we get security for Israelis and Palestinians.

As your constituent is aware, on 29 July 2025, the Prime Minister announced that the UK Government intends to recognise the State of Palestine when the UN General Assembly convenes in September 2025, unless the Israeli government ends its military campaign in Gaza and commits to a long-term peace based on a two-state solution. This decision reflects the UK's historic responsibility to support the two-state solution. Recognition alone will not resolve the conflict, but it is a necessary step to preserve the viability of a two-state solution and to signal our commitment to a just and lasting peace. The full statement can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-words-on-gaza-29-july-2025.

I was honoured to join the former Foreign Secretary in New York at the Two State Solution Conference on 28-29 July 2025. The UK is committed to leading international efforts towards a two-state solution, which I reinforced in bilateral meetings with regional counterparts, including from Qatar, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the OPTs. I continue to work closely with international partners and allies, in pressing for an immediate ceasefire and laying the groundwork for a sustainable peace. That ceasefire must be sustainable and it must lead to a wider peace plan, which we are developing with our international partners. This plan will deliver security and proper governance in Gaza and pave the way for negotiations on a two-state solution.

The situation in the region continues to evolve rapidly. But please rest assured that this Government will continue to do all that it can to push for peace.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hamish Falconer', written in a cursive style.

HAMISH FALCONER MP
Minister for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan