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Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

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Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to express my growing concern at the increasing escalation of violence between Israel and the Palestinian people, and to urge the UK Government to explore every avenue to help bring this to an end.

Events have intensified from the initial proposed illegal eviction of Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah district of occupied East Jerusalem.

Many have warned that these proposed evictions would only lead to increasing violence as the human rights of the Palestinian people were once more disregarded by the Israeli occupying forces.

This is taking place within a broader context of the Israeli government's efforts to demographically alter the population of Jerusalem, and the controversial use of Israel's Absentee Property Law to dispossess Palestinians of their land.

The British Consulate in Jerusalem, it must be recognised, has actively engaged with the affected families, and raised awareness of the proposed illegal evictions. Further, they have clearly stated East Jerusalem to be occupied territory subject to an illegal annexation.

Subsequent actions by the Israeli Defence Forces at the Al Aqsa Mosque complex has only exacerbated what was already a situation of extreme mistrust and tension. This has led to an all too predictable spiralling escalation into violence, whereby the innocent on both sides are caught in the crossfire between the armed might of the Israeli state and the rocket attacks of the Hamas controlled Gaza strip.

Let me be very clear that I condemn illegal acts of violence on all sides of this conflict., whether that be the Israeli intent to illegally evict Palestinian families or the stream of rockets emanating from Hamas controlled Gaza.

Both must stop immediately.

I strongly condemn all breaches of international law and violence and support a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders.

Whilst we enjoy good diplomatic relations with Israel, we cannot, and must not, be silent on the injustices that have been committed against the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian people deserve more than warm words of understanding and sympathy. They deserve recognition of their plight and they deserve the support of the international community.

It is extremely concerning that the Israeli Government has not listened to the international community but instead is intent on pursuing more evictions and continued occupation of Palestinian territories. Israel's disregard for international law has only been emboldened by the unconditional impunity afforded by the international community.

Accountability is needed now more than ever - now is a time for leadership in the International community.



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Between 2016 and 2018, UK arms sales licenses to Israel increased by 1,100%. This growth, occurring as it did during a period when Palestinian children and medics were targeted in acts of unlawful killing which were internationally condemned, makes the immorality of such sales, all the more palpable.

The UK has repeatedly stated that Israeli settlements are illegal and a barrier to peace, but words are not enough.

Whilst there is a continuation of human rights violations, the UK Government needs to impose an arms embargo on Israel. This action would give more credence to the UK's position on the illegal Israeli actions on settlement and occupation and demonstrate the UK's longstanding commitment to a just and honourable two state solution that respects both people.

There is much that the UK can do to promote a new impetus to détente and understanding in the Holy Land, but it will not be easy.

It will require the same moral rigour to be applied to the actions of the British state as to those of both parties, in this conflict.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stewart McDonald".