



## Craig Whittaker MP

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### Prisoners in Iran

Thank you for contacting me about British prisoners in Iran and the recent debate in Westminster Hall on this important issue.

Following that debate, I am reassured that the British Government is doing all it can for British detainees in Iran.

The British Ambassador raises the issue of our detainees with the Iranian authorities at every opportunity and seeks to secure consular access and to ensure their welfare. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have raised all our consular cases with their counterparts and stressed the importance of resolving them as quickly as possible.

However, there are limitations on what the UK can do, particularly in the light of Iran's refusal to recognise dual citizenship (which all these detainees have). Iran considers them to be Iranian, and therefore does not recognise the British Government's right to consular access.

Britain has re-opened our embassy in Iran and new relationships are opening up, and the Government will take the opportunity to explore what this chance of a new relationship will mean for the UK.

Whilst the Government continues to work hard on behalf of these detainees, it is unfortunately the case that this is not a matter in the hands of the UK Government to resolve, it has to be resolved by the Iranian regime, but the British Government is working hard to facilitate that.

Alistair Burt, Minister for the Middle East, has pledged to continue to act in the best interests of the detainees, as well as constantly listening to those with other ideas and to the families, so that the Government does as much for them as it possibly can.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP