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Arms Embargo on Israel

Thank you for contacting me about arms sales to Israel.

I share your distress at the number of recent deaths and injuries in Gaza but I do not believe that imposing a blanket arms embargo on Israel will resolve the current situation.

The Government takes its defence export responsibilities extremely seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications, including those for Israel, are rigorously assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

These strict criteria take account of all prevailing circumstances at the time of application and include human rights and international humanitarian law considerations. The Government does not issue export licences where there is a clear risk that the goods might be used for internal repression, in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law, or where the export would provoke or prolong conflict.

Under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, countries have a right to defend themselves, and a properly regulated arms trade can help countries to meet their defence and security needs.

I am confident that by adhering to the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, the Government will continue to ensure that UK arms exports to Israel are not used for internal repression, violating international humanitarian law, or for provoking or prolonging conflict. I am reassured that the Government has committed to keeping the situation in Israel under continual review, as it does with other countries.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP