



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Felicit Laurence



Our Ref: HD02043

31 October 2024

Dear Felicity Laurence

**Re: UK Arms Exports**

Thank you for contacting me about arms exports to Israel.

The brutal death and destruction in Gaza since the beginning of the conflict following Hamas' barbaric attack on 7 October last year is unbearable. Civilians in Gaza face an increasingly desperate situation. Tens of thousands have been killed and the threat of famine and disease grows every day that the violence continues. I have spent considerable time in the Middle East working with Save the Children and in situations like this it is always children and civilians who suffer the most. It is heartbreaking to see such death and destruction.

I know how important this issue is for so many people across Hastings and Rye. I've recently met with Hamish Falconer MP, Minister for the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan to discuss this issue. That is why I support the Labour government's calls for an immediate ceasefire, for the release of all hostages by Hamas, for the upholding of international law and for much more aid to get into Gaza. A ceasefire would not only alleviate the suffering in Gaza and secure the release of the hostages, but also help to reduce tensions across the region and offer hope of renewed peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

On arms exports to Israel, immediately upon taking office, the new Labour Foreign Secretary David Lammy commissioned new legal advice on Israel's compliance with International Humanitarian Law in relation to the current conflict. That review process has now concluded. It assessed whether there is a clear risk that items exported might be used in serious violation of International Humanitarian Law and it found that, in some cases, a clear risk does exist. The Foreign Secretary has acted immediately on this advice. The Labour Government respects international law, unlike the previous Conservative Government.

The Business Secretary, in line with his legal responsibilities under the Export Controls Act, has announced the suspension of around 30 licenses. This included components for fighter aircraft (F-16s), parts for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones), naval systems, and targeting equipment. This was a legal decision from a Labour Government which is committed to upholding international law and abiding by the requirements set out in the Export Controls Act. Having read the legal advice on

the Government website, it also makes clear that Hamas is a terrorist organisation which shows absolutely no regard for international law.

More widely, I believe it is vital to focus on long-term peace and security in the region and the path to a two-state solution. Labour are committed to recognising a Palestinian state as a contribution to a renewed peace process which results in two states, with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

Thank you once again for contacting me about this matter. If ever I can be of assistance to you or your family on this or any other matter then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

All the best,  
Helena Dollimore MP  
Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Hastings, Rye and the villages