

National Lobby of Parliament for Palestine; 27 November 2013

MPs' briefing on Gaza

- Although the November 2012 Israeli offensives against Gaza received widespread international condemnation, the situation for the population of Gaza has got worse, not better
- Since the coup in Egypt, the movement of goods and people has been severely restricted. Although Israel has allowed more goods to enter Gaza, the 2013 weekly average is still less than half 2007 levels
- 95% of water is contaminated
- The 1.7m residents of Gaza are facing increasing hardship in their daily lives, due to rising prices, scarcity of essential goods including medicines, unsafe water and highly constrained income-earning opportunities
- Israel continues to launch attacks on border areas within Gaza

Hopes, following the fall of President Mubarak, that the Egyptian government would lift restrictions on the free flow of goods into Gaza, have been disappointed. Challenges to both the government of former President Mursi and to the present government from within Sinai have led to the closure or destruction, by Egypt, of 80% of the smuggling tunnels on which the residents of Gaza have relied for their basic supplies, and also a partial closure of the border crossing at Rafah. The economic impact has been considerable, causing even further hardship for a population which was already living at a marginal level.

As your constituent, I would welcome your support in calling on the UK Government to make public, urgent and sustained representations to Israel and Egypt to lift border restrictions so as to permit the free flow of goods and people to and from Gaza. Not only do I seek an end to the humanitarian crisis but also the ability of Palestinians to live normal lives - free to travel, meet relatives, work and have a family life without punitive restrictions. These restrictions represent a collective punishment for the 1.7m who live on the Gaza strip

I would also welcome your support in addressing the key issues relating to Palestine by:

- supporting a parliamentary debate on Palestine
- Expressing your concerns to the Foreign Secretary
- Tabling a question by 1230 Thursday November 28th November for DIFD questions (for answering 11.30 Wednesday December 4th)

Suggestions:

To ask the Secretary of State:

- What assessment she has made of the adequacy of the level of food, fuel, and medical supplies entering Gaza each day?
- What representations she has made to the Israeli and Egyptian governments about the closure of Gaza?
- What research she has undertaken into the humanitarian effects of the blockade of Gaza
- What estimate she has made of the cost of the blockade to the Gazan economy?
- What estimate she has made of the cost to the British taxpayer of the blockade of Gaza?