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Ms Sarah Calborne  
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*Dear Ms Calborne,*

Thank you for your recent correspondence to the Prime Minister about Gaza. I have been asked to reply.

The Government shares your concerns about the situation in Gaza. Mr Hugh Robertson, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East, issued a statement on 28 November expressing our concern at the deteriorating economic situation in Gaza and calling on Israel to ease its restrictions, including on import of construction materials and on movement of goods to the West Bank and Israel. The recent storms made the need to work together to improve the humanitarian situation even more pressing. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians in Gaza and that supporting legal trade for Gazans is firmly in Israel's long-term interests.

We are also encouraging the Palestinian Authority, Israel and other interested parties to find both an immediate and long-term solution to Gaza's energy crisis, which caused the recent failure of sewage plants. On 15 December, following a Qatari donation to the Palestinian Authority to fund the purchase of fuel for Gaza, Israel allowed 450,000 litres of industrial diesel to enter via the Kerem Shalom Crossing for the Gaza power plant. This has enabled the plant to restart partial operations for the first time since 1 November.

As well as our diplomatic efforts, the UK is providing practical assistance to the people of Gaza. The Department for International Development (DFID) supports the Palestinian Authority and the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to provide basic services, such as education and health, to the people of Gaza. DFID also funds the UN Access Coordination Unit to facilitate the transfer of vital humanitarian assistance, including medical equipment and supplies.

*Yours sincerely,*

*J Moriarty*

**John Moriarty**