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Caroline Lucas MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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Foreign &  
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Dear Ms Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of 8 July to the Foreign Secretary, about the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

You raised concerns about Israeli operations in the West Bank following the kidnap of the Israeli teenagers. You will no doubt be aware that a Palestinian teenager was also murdered on 2 July. We have condemned these acts, and both the Prime Minister and the former Foreign Secretary, The Rt Hon William Hague MP, have stressed the importance of those responsible being brought to justice.

We have a regular dialogue with the Government of Israel about the implementation of its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention as the occupying power. Mr Hague made clear during the search for the Israeli teenagers that any use of force must be proportionate.

You will also be concerned by the current Gaza crisis. This conflict is taking a terrible toll. The Prime Minister has been clear that Israel has a right to defend itself, but must do so in a way that is proportionate and must take all measures necessary to prevent loss of civilian life. He has urged Israel to do everything to avoid civilian casualties, to exercise restraint, and to help find ways to bring this situation to an end.

We are also extremely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. That is why we have decided to provide £5m in emergency assistance to help tens of thousands of Palestinians affected. We are providing £2m in additional assistance to help the UN provide a package of essential goods to the thousands of families sheltering in schools. It includes mattresses, blankets, tarpaulins, basic hygiene items and cooking equipment. Within our existing programme we are immediately making funds available to the UN Relief and Works Agency to help repair more than 30 schools in which displaced Gazans are sheltering.

Finally, we are bringing forward £3m in funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross to help them repair water infrastructure, deliver emergency medical services and protect the civilian population. But we are clear that a political solution is required to the current crisis in Gaza if we are to avoid this suffering happening again. I can assure you UK effort is focused to that end.

**TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State