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Dear David,

During the Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe Statement on Thursday 18 July, you asked about Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's sentence and her prospects for release. I promised to investigate further and come back to you.

We understand that Iranian law allows for prisoners who have served one third of their sentence to be released. We believe that this is applicable to those who have been imprisoned for relatively low-level crimes such as financial impropriety and other charges, but it is less clear whether those arrested and charged on national security grounds – including Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe – are subject to the same provisions.

In addition, at certain points during the year, including Iranian New Year and Independence Day, the Iranian Supreme Leader often orders clemencies for some prisoners. However, the Iranian Government has previously stated that this is not permitted for those who have been charged on national security grounds.

I regret therefore that it appears unlikely that Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe, or other prisoners charged under similar grounds, will be granted early release under these arrangements. However, this does not mean that we will cease our efforts to press Iran to release Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and other detainees.

We will continue to raise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's situation and the situation of other dual national cases with the Iranian authorities at every opportunity, with the aim of securing their unconditional release.

I very much appreciate your interest in this distressing case and welcome your positive suggestions.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also place a copy in the House library.

Yours sincerely,
Annabel

BARONESS GOLDIE

Lord Hannay of Chiswick
House of Lords