

LUKE POLLARD MP
MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES

4.8.1.1

1 May 2025

Dear Shockat,

Thank you for securing the recent Westminster Hall Debate on “Military Collaboration with Israel”. I am writing to ensure I have responded to all the questions you asked in this debate, and hope that I can offer you further clarity on the topics you raised.

Firstly, I want to reiterate that we do not support a return to fighting and are urging all parties to return urgently to talks, implement the ceasefire agreement in full, and work towards a permanent peace. The remaining hostages must be released and the way to return them safely is through a deal. A negotiated solution and a political horizon towards a two-state solution will, over time, ensure the long-term peace and security of both Palestinians and Israelis.

In the debate, you asked several questions about UK military cooperation with Israel, and whether, through this cooperation, we are adhering to international law. The UK is fully committed to international law and respects the independence of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court. We have been clear that Israel has a right to defend itself, in accordance with international law, and we have remained focused on pushing for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, to bring an end to the devastating violence. We continue to consider the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion carefully, with the seriousness and rigour it deserves. UK commitment to a two-state solution is unwavering, and we are of the clear view that Israel should bring an end to its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as rapidly as possible, and that this must be done in a way that creates the conditions for negotiations towards a two-state solution.

As for Ministry of Defence (MOD) training and assistance activity, the MOD always adheres to the long-standing cross-Government Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) policy to ensure the UK’s targeted and focused defence engagement activity with Israel is assessed against our human rights obligations and our values. These assessments are kept under constant review. On the use of UK overseas bases specifically, for operational security reasons and as a matter of policy, the MOD will neither confirm, deny, nor comment on any foreign nations’ military aircraft movement or operations within UK airspace or UK overseas bases.

Shockat Adam MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

As for export licenses for Israel, which you also raised in the debate, the UK's robust export licensing criteria states that the Government will not issue export licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law. When the Foreign Secretary took office in July 2024, he ordered a review into Israel's compliance with International Humanitarian Law. Following this review, we suspended certain export licences to Israel where we have assessed there is a clear risk that they might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations international humanitarian law. There are no extant licences for these items. This is subject to the specific measures set out to Parliament excluding exports to the global F-35 programme from the scope of the suspension.

I hope this is helpful and explains our position on these issues.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke', with a stylized, cursive script.

LUKE POLLARD MP