

Richard Burden MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON, SW1A 0AA

Defend Israel

Thank you to everyone who has contacted me as part of the Defend Israel campaign. Israel like all countries have the right to defend its border and people but there can be no justification for the shooting and killing of unarmed protestors. As the executive director of the respected Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem put it "defending the border is not a licence to kill".

Since 30th March, more than 100 Palestinians have been killed and over 12,000 injured. The recent influx of casualties has put Gaza's health system, which the World Health Organisation had said was "on the brink of collapse" even before this current crisis, under even more pressure.

The government of Israel has sought to shift responsibility for the deaths of protestors onto Hamas. Hamas have indeed encouraged people to join the protests and there is also no doubt that they have talked up their own role to gain political advantage from the protests. Violence by either side does not offer any way forward for the people of Palestine and of Israel and my own condemnation of violent acts carried out by Hamas and other groups is a matter of record.

The reality is however, thousands of people do not put themselves in harm's way because of manipulation by Hamas or anyone else.

All this is why it is important that there is an independent, international inquiry into the events in Gaza and for those found responsible to be held to account – whoever they are.

Regrettably the UK Government did not vote for that type of investigation at the UN Human Rights Council recently. I raised this decision and the response to events in Gaza with the Government in an Urgent Question in Parliament where I pressed the importance of upholding in practice the principle of accountability for violations of international law. You can read the Hansard record of the Urgent Question [here](#).

Thanks again to everyone who has contacted me about this issue.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Burden".

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