

Whilst we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we have consistently called on the Israeli Government at the highest levels to ease movement and access restrictions, including when the Foreign Secretary met Prime Minister Netanyahu on 30 September. Access to essential medical treatment is clearly an important issue, and we will seek appropriate opportunities to raise this.

The restrictions imposed in Gaza pose a particular barrier to medical access for Palestinians. The UK provided £10 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross between 2013 and 2015 to deliver emergency medical services and rehabilitate hospitals, including in Gaza. In close coordination with the Office of the Quartet and EU partners, we continue to lobby the appropriate Israeli authorities on the issue of improving movement and access into Gaza. The closure of the Rafah Crossing also has an impact on urgent medical and other priority cases in Gaza. We encourage Egypt to show maximum flexibility on opening the Rafah crossing.

The UK also supports the Access Coordination Unit (ACU) to support humanitarian access into and out of the West Bank and Gaza. The ACU works with the World Health Organisation, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and aid agencies to facilitate the transfer of medical equipment, supplies and patient referrals as well as producing data and reports that support advocacy for improved access and adherence to existing agreements.

The UK's previous support to the Palestinian Authority has helped build Palestinian institutions, promote economic growth and support the provision of basic services such as health care. The Secretary of State is currently conducting a full examination of our work in the OPTs, including our financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority. I can assure you that the UK remains firmly committed to supporting the Palestinian Authority to build and strengthen the institutions needed for a two-state solution, a core part of which is building its capacity to deliver services including healthcare.

The context for these problems is, of course, the need for a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. The UK Government believes that a negotiated two-state solution is the only way to end conflict once and for all. We do not underestimate the challenges, but firmly believe that if both parties show leadership, peace is possible.