



**THE RT. HON. SIR STEPHEN TIMMS MP**

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*Labour Member of Parliament for East Ham*

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The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

Our Ref: ST108758

18 October 2023

Dear Rishi,

Earlier this week I wrote to the Foreign Secretary about the situation in Gaza. I noted that the Israeli siege of Gaza was troubling. I outlined my fears that many innocent civilians living in the area would struggle to access food, water, electricity or healthcare.

It is believed that any blockades of restricting of essential items might violate the fourth Geneva Convention. Many of my constituents noted with interest recent comments made by the UN Human Rights Chief, Volker Türk. He said on Monday: “...*the imposition of sieges that endanger the lives of civilians by depriving them of goods essential for their survival is prohibited under international humanitarian law.*”

A number of my constituents are keen that the UK Government work with international partners to achieve a cessation of hostilities and maintenance of an international humanitarian corridor through the Rafah crossing. This corridor would enable the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid into Gaza, and allow the safe passage of some seeking refuge out of this besieged region. They believe, too, Ministers in the Foreign Office should expand humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza and mobilise the UK Emergency Medical Team.

It has also been suggested to me that the UK should look at providing emergency preparedness funding to local Palestinian and international health providers in the area, and securing essential services by reversing cuts to funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and for Palestinian health workers' salaries via the PEGASE mechanism.

What is your response to these suggestions?

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

**SIR STEPHEN TIMMS MP**

Cc: Constituents