

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2020

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email.

The UK has a proud tradition of peaceful protest and it is a right of all citizens. However, the scenes of thuggery and violence we have seen and the damage to our national heritage is utterly indefensible; no matter what the cause, there is no justification for it. There is no excuse for pelting flares at police officers, throwing bikes at police horses, attempting to disrespect the Cenotaph or vandalising the statue of Winston Churchill, one of the greatest protectors of our freedoms who has ever lived.

It is not for mobs to tear down statues and cause criminal damage in our streets, and it is not acceptable for thugs to racially abuse black police officers for doing their jobs. The criminals responsible for these unlawful and reckless acts are betraying the very cause they purport to serve. These protests are about injustice, but by attacking our courageous police and our historical monuments, they are acting in a wholly unjust way. Those responsible for criminal acts must be held to account.

As the Prime Minister has said :

"It is clear that the protests have been sadly hijacked by extremists intent on violence. The attacks on the police and indiscriminate acts of violence which we have witnessed over the last week are intolerable and they are abhorrent."

"The statues in our cities and towns were put up by previous generations. They had different perspectives, different understandings of right and wrong. But those statues teach us about our past, with all its faults. To tear them down would be to lie about our history, and impoverish the education of generations to come."

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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It is the case that operational decisions on policing come under the operational independence of chief constables, and the Commissioner of Police in London. Police and crime commissioners also have responsibility for the totality of policing in their force area. I look to these elected authorities to ensure that the rights of the silent, law abiding majority are respected and upheld rather than standing by whilst a minority run amok.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

PETER GIBSON MP