

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2021

*Dear Constance*

Thank you for your email about Western Sahara.

The UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined. As a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the UK regularly discusses Western Sahara with Morocco and others, and fully supports UN-led efforts to reach a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The UK is encouraging all parties to engage with the UN-led political process.

The UK's position on Western Sahara is consistent and longstanding. It is unaffected by recent developments, be it the normalisation of relations between Israel and Morocco, or the decision by former President Trump in December 2020 to recognise Western Sahara as part of Morocco – which is purely a matter for the US.

Support for human rights and human rights defenders is a UK foreign priority around the world, including in Morocco, and I know that the UK Government regularly raises human rights issues with the Moroccan authorities. The UK has consistently supported language in UNSC Resolutions which encourages the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara.

Finally, HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are rigorously assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available. No export licenses are issued where there is a clear risk that the goods might be used for internal repression or in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

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  
Peter Gibson*

PETER GIBSON MP

*Member of Parliament for Darlington*

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