

First Minister writes to the Foreign Secretary calling for Gaza humanitarian corridor

The First Minister, Humza Yousaf, has written to the UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly asking for a humanitarian corridor to be set up in Gaza to allow civilians to leave.

Mr Yousaf told Gina Davidson of LBC on Monday about his parents-in-law who are in Gaza. Following the events of last weekend the First Minister said he feared for their safety.

The text of the letter follows:

To: Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, James Cleverly

From: First Minister Humza Yousaf

“I am writing concerning the horrific terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas over the weekend, and the escalating conflict in Israel and Gaza.

“The Scottish Government and I unequivocally condemn the abhorrent terrorist actions of Hamas. Israel – like any other country – has a right to protect itself and its citizens from terror.

“Too many innocent people have already lost their lives as a consequence of these completely unjustifiable and illegitimate

attacks by Hamas. However, innocent men, women and children cannot, and should not, pay the price for the actions of a terrorist group. Collective punishment of innocent civilians cannot be justified and will do nothing to set the conditions for peace in the region.

“As the number of civilians displaced in Gaza increases and with supplies restricted, innocent people are being affected and conditions will worsen. The United Nations Secretary General has called for “relevant parties to allow United Nations access to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians trapped and helpless in the Gaza Strip” and the international community to mobilise to provide support. I support this view.

“As a close friend and ally of Israel, I therefore ask the UK Government to call on the Government of Israel to ensure innocent civilians are protected and to put in place an immediate ceasefire to allow the safe passage of civilians through the Rafah border. Furthermore, it should open a humanitarian corridor into Gaza to allow supplies, including food, fuel, water and medical supplies, for those civilians who are trapped, helpless and cannot leave.

“Finally, I call on the international community to be proactive and work towards an immediate ceasefire and a long-lasting peace that sees Israelis and Palestinians treated as equals.

“I am grateful for the ongoing engagement of Lord Ahmad, who has briefed me on the situation concerning UK nationals in Israel and Gaza. The Scottish Government stands ready to assist any efforts to support those who find themselves caught up in this tragic situation.”