



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Secretary of State

19 August 2014

The Rt Hon Sir John Stanley MP
Chairman
Committees on Arms Export Controls
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 7 August about the Government's review of extant licences for Israel.

I am sure you appreciate that this is a complex and delicate issue and I have considered it carefully in the context of our obligations under the EU and National Export Licensing Criteria in order to ensure that the Criteria are applied rigorously and appropriately.

The situation in Gaza is unpredictable and there have been several points at which it seemed that a ceasefire might be possible. Although none of these has yet led to a lasting cessation of hostilities, we now have another in place that should be given every chance of success.

Officials have scrutinised extant licences and identified those relating to items most likely to be part of equipment used by the Israeli Defence Forces in Gaza. In making this assessment, officials have judged it unlikely that many of the components that were the subject of extant licences were for incorporation into systems that would be likely to be used offensively in Gaza, for example: imaging cameras or decoy and counter-measures.

However, 12 licences have been identified (8 for items to be incorporated into equipment manufactured in the US and Germany, and 4 for items to be exported directly to Israel) where, in the event of a resumption of significant hostilities, and on the basis of information currently available to us, there could be a risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Therefore, the Government has concluded that, in the event of a resumption of significant hostilities, these 12 licences should be suspended.

Whilst the Government is committed to full and open provision of information to the CAEC, I would ask you to consider and respect the extreme sensitivities of the current situation and understand that I am not willing to release the list of licences for possible suspension at this stage. Should suspension become necessary, the Government will then release the list to the CAEC.

The findings of the review are summarised in the attached press release which issued from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on 12 August.

I am copying my letter to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Hammond', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON PHILIP HAMMOND MP