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The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Our Ref: DSU/JC35334

11 May 2021

Dear Secretary of State

Re: Sheikh Jarrah evictions and Al-Asqa Mosque

Like all of our colleagues I have been hugely disturbed by the scenes over the last few days in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians protesting planned evictions from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah district, in clear violation of international law, and also just going to pray have been brutalised in the storming of Al-Asqa Mosque by Israeli police.

As you know this happened in the context of an expected far-right march through occupied East Jerusalem planned by political extremists emboldened by the Netanyahu government's aggressively expansionist policies. The quasi-legal attempt by to evict Palestinians to make way for settlers is in fact, in international terms, completely unlawful.

In response to these protests against the evictions police have been guilty of rank brutality, with the liberal use of batons, tear gas and skunk spray not only against those trying to save their neighbourhoods from forced eviction and dispossession. I was especially disturbed by reports that officers kneeled on the necks of protesters.

Hostilities are now escalating and it is extremely saddening to see a return to the retaliation and counter-retaliation of rocket fire and air strikes, leading to the loss of many innocent lives. To my mind the peace process is in danger of reaching its lowest ebb for many years; that is why the international community must act without hesitation.

The time for mere condemnatory statements has passed, and the Government now needs to send a clear message that it expects a moratorium on evictions for Palestinians and an end to the discriminatory laws on which the evictions are based. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cryer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name "John" is larger and more prominent than the last name "Cryer".

John Cryer