

2025.09.30

4.20 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding condemning Israel's actions in Gaza (OQ.208/2025):

Further to the report of the U.N. (United Nations) Independent International Commission of Inquiry stating that Israel has committed genocide against the people of Palestine in Gaza, will the Chief Minister advise what action, if any, he intends to take to communicate Jersey's condemnation of Israel's actions?

[11:30]

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

I refer Members to my previous answer, but I know many Islanders expect us to speak with moral clarity on this issue and I share the grave concern at the findings of the United Nations report and the scale of human suffering in Gaza. In July, I wrote to the Foreign Secretary to express Jersey's grave concern at the scale of civilian suffering in Gaza. In that letter I highlighted the devastating loss of life and the destruction of essential infrastructure which has compounded the humanitarian crisis. I made clear that while Jersey recognises the complexity of the situation there can be no justification for the disproportionate harm being inflicted upon civilians. I also drew attention to reports raising serious concerns that aspects of Israel's actions may be in breach of international obligations and emphasised the need for unrestricted humanitarian access, protection of civilians and urgent progress towards peace. The letter was intended to ensure that Jersey's concern was communicated clearly to the United Kingdom Government, which holds responsibility for foreign affairs, while reflecting our Island's commitment to humanitarian principles and international law. We will continue to monitor the developments in Gaza closely. We welcome the peace initiative that has appeared overnight and will not hesitate to make further representations to the United Kingdom Government where we feel it necessary to do so.

4.20.1 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Will the Chief Minister go as far as to accept the U.N. Independent International Commission of Inquiry's report and acknowledge the fact that a genocide has in fact taken place in Gaza?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The United Nations report did not specify that exactly. It specified that there were reasonable grounds for genocide where 4 of the 5 criteria had been met in their opinion and that is the current situation with the report. I think I can pass no further comment at this stage, but I hope the Deputy and the Assembly accept the sentiments of my previous answer.

4.20.2 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North:

Has the Chief Minister responded to calls for a statement of condemnation in regard to the Gaza Freedom Flotilla that was attacked in the Mediterranean, which was trying to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

As other Members, I have received a number of emails from unknown parties in relation to that issue and that is something we are seeking further information on. I have received direct calls via email, but we have not made a decision on how we are going to respond to that just yet.

4.20.3 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Will the Chief Minister be responding on behalf of all Members?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think my role is to respond on behalf of the Government initially, but that is something that I would certainly keep all Members informed about.

4.20.4 Deputy T.A. Coles:

As developments continue in the Middle East, will the Chief Minister support sanctions brought against anybody who is guilty of war crimes?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Again, we align ourselves with the U.K. on sanctions and will support any sanctions, as is our policy, that the U.K. brings. We have no plans to operate sanctions outside of the U.K.'s policy and strategy on that at present.