

Calling on all parties to take urgent steps to reduce tensions and avoid further escalation in Jerusalem: UK Statement at the UN Security Council

Let me start by thanking Tor Wennesland, the Special Coordinator, for your briefing, and for the tireless efforts of you and your team on the ground.

The UK shares the concerns expressed around this table about the fragile situation in Jerusalem. It is crucial that all parties take urgent steps to reduce tensions, and avoid further escalation.

Jerusalem is a holy city to so many, and the UK remains firmly of the belief that maintaining the historic Status Quo is the only means of ensuring freedom of worship. Amid rising tensions on the Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount, we urge the parties to engage and deescalate the situation, particularly in terms of ensuring sensitive policing. All religious sites must be treated with utmost respect.

We condemn recent terror attacks in Israel, resulting in the deaths of 14 people. Our hearts go out to the families of those killed. We fully support Israel's right to ensure its security. And we unequivocally condemn rocket attacks against Israel by militants in Gaza.

The UK is also concerned by the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli Security Forces in recent weeks, including minors. We continue to urge thorough and transparent investigations into the deaths of Palestinian civilians, and call for restraint in the use of force. Israeli security forces have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the Palestinian population.

In closing, let me stress that it is not too late to reverse these trends. We must do all we can to prevent a return to the violence we witnessed last May, to rebuild trust and work towards a sustainable and comprehensive peace. The UK remains fully committed to a two-state solution, and to playing its part in efforts to that end.