

My answer to the emails I received on the Gaza votes

Thank you for your email concerning the Hamas/Israel war. I was in Parliament for the proceedings and was frustrated that we were not allowed to vote on the motion and amendments. This was owing to an error by the Speaker, who wanted to put the Labour amendment first which ran the danger that no vote would then be possible on the original SNP motion. He apologised after the event for his mistake. As a result no recorded votes were undertaken on the issues. The chair said the House passed the Labour amendment unanimously. Many MPs in practice cried No to this amendment and objected to the procedure. No division lobby vote was allowed to demonstrate it was not unanimous.

What matters is what happens in Gaza. A vote in the House of Commons is not going to change the conduct of Hamas and Israel. I have throughout said I would like to see a ceasefire and pointed out this can only occur if the two sides in the conflict negotiate the terms of one, whether temporary or permanent. The UK government is speaking for the whole country when it uses its diplomatic powers to support Qatar and Egypt as they seek to bring the two sides together. It is good news to hear from the US Secretary of State that he thinks progress has been made in crucial talks to try to bring the two sides to a ceasefire.