



Home Office

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson  
DBE MP  
Minister of State for Policing, Fire  
and Crime Prevention  
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DECS Reference: MIN/1262273/25

13 February 2025

Dear Zack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January to the Home Secretary regarding the march for Palestine that took place on Saturday 18 January. I am replying as the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention.

Peaceful protest is a vital part of our democratic society. It is a long-standing tradition in this country that people are free to gather and to demonstrate their views, provided that they do so within the law. This Government is fully committed to protecting and preserving that right.

However, the right to peacefully protest must be balanced with the rights of others to go about their lives without serious disruption. Under section 12 and 14 of the Public Order Act 1986, the police have the power to impose conditions on protests where they reasonably believe the protest may result in serious disruption, disorder, damage or the purpose of those organising the protest is to intimidate others. They can impose any condition they deem necessary to prevent these outcomes from occurring, including the location and route of the protest.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) have outlined their position with respect to the protest on Saturday 18 January on their website here:

<https://news.met.police.uk/news/more-than-70-arrested-at-palestine-solidarity-campaign-492799>.

The use of these powers and the management of demonstrations are an operational matter for the police. I trust you can appreciate that Home Office Ministers and officials are unable to intervene in individual cases and complaints against the police. This is not through any lack of concern, but risks undermining the principle that the police are operationally independent of government.

If you wish to contact the MPS about this matter, you can do so directly at the following link: <https://www.met.police.uk/fo/feedback/complaints/complaints/>. The statutory police complaints system is available to members of the public who are dissatisfied with the police to make a complaint. When a complaint is made about the police, by law the force must be able to investigate it and have the opportunity to explain, apologise or put things right themselves. We think this is a proportionate approach and it is usual in other

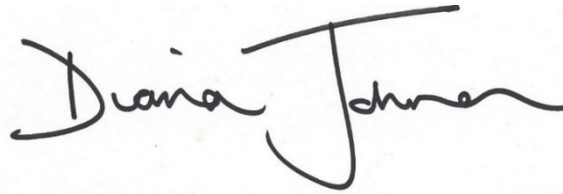
complaints systems that matters should be dealt with locally where possible and escalated only if the complainant remains dissatisfied. Where a complaint is serious or a sensitive matter, a complaint will be referred immediately to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) for consideration and investigation, if the IOPC deems it appropriate.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, then they are entitled to apply for a review or appeal, which would be carried out either by the local Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or the IOPC. Further details on this process is detailed on the IOPC's website at the link below:

<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/complaints/reviews-and-appeals>

I trust this clarifies the position for you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Diana Johnson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'D' and 'J'.

**Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP**  
**Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention**