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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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Hon. Rob Nicholson
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

June 29, 2015

Dear Minister Nicholson,

I am sure that you will agree that people's right to peaceful protest must be respected, especially in difficult situations of conflict, and that the safety of all parties involved must be a priority.

Early this morning, a boat carrying 20 people with the intention of sailing to Gaza City was intercepted by the Israeli navy and diverted to an Israeli port. The passengers on this boat include four Canadians. As you are aware, it is not our policy to support these flotillas, however we reiterate our concern for those involved and continue to urge restraint in response to protest flotillas.

I also note that the government of Canada has a clear responsibility to provide consular assistance to Canadians detained abroad. Please let us know what steps your government has taken to provide these services to the four Canadians who were on this boat.

More broadly, I remind you that the NDP has consistently called for an end to the blockade of Gaza to alleviate the human suffering caused by the conflict. We also recognize Israel's legitimate security concerns with respect to the smuggling of weapons into Gaza and have called for effective international arrangements to address these concerns.

This position is in keeping with the UN Security Council resolution 1860, which called for "unimpeded provision through Gaza of food, fuel and medical treatment, and intensified international arrangements to prevent arms and ammunition smuggling."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Paul Dewar, M.P.
NDP Foreign Affairs Critic



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