



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2018.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Bahrain Westminster Hall Debate

Thank you for contacting me about the recent debate on Bahrain. Unfortunately, due to other parliamentary commitments I was unable to attend, but I am very pleased that the House of Commons had the opportunity to debate this important issue.

I agree that while Bahrain is a key partner for the UK in the Middle East, that it is certainly true to say that it has more work to do on human rights.

I believe, however, that it is right that the UK Government makes no apology for the partnership with Bahrain - our two countries share a close and lasting bond that dates back more than 200 years. This partnership is built on mutual interests, shared threats and a desire to promote greater security and peace in the Gulf.

However, I agree with the Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, when he said in the recent debate that none of that allows the UK to overlook the things that need to be brought out in a relationship between friends. Bahrain continues to be a human rights priority country for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

In my view, the best approach with human rights is to engage with Governments and work with international partners and civil society organisations to promote and defend universal freedoms, and bring about positive change.

The depth and breadth of the UK's relationship with Bahrain means the UK Government can, and does, express its concerns about human rights in a frank and open way at senior levels. It does this publicly, but crucial and more often, in private discussions. The FCO's latest annual human rights report outlined action taken by the UK, relating, for example, to the prison sentence given to Nabeel Rajab, as well as concerns about the deprivation of nationality, where that renders an individual stateless.

I am encouraged that the UK will continue to support Bahrain to address those and other human rights concerns, both through bilateral engagement and through international institutions. However, it is right to acknowledge and welcome the steps that Bahrain is taking to address a range of rights issues.

I was encouraged by the decision of the Bahraini Minister of Justice to refer the cases of Mohammad Ramadan and Husain Moosa back to the Court of Cassation for retrial.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alister Jack'.

Alister Jack DL MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.

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