

June 2024

Dear Resident,

I am delighted to endorse Theresa Villiers, your Conservative candidate in the General Election on 4th July.

Over the last 19 years as your representative in Parliament, **Theresa has been a true friend of both Israel and the UK's Jewish community**. She has **stood firmly with Israel and worked tirelessly to combat antisemitism**, particularly in recent months following the atrocities of 7th October 2023.

Theresa has **met with the families of hostages and repeatedly raised their plight** with Government Ministers in Parliament, as well as **visiting Israel in January on a CFI solidarity trip to bear witness** to the harrowing events and hear directly from those impacted. She has been a frequent attendee at rallies in support of Israel and against antisemitism and has urged the police to **"use the full force of the law against perpetrators of anti-Jewish hate crime"**.

Theresa has shown **unflinching determination in her support for Israel** throughout this challenging period. She is a Vice Chair of CFI and has spoken in Parliament many times in support of Israel, **raising awareness of the existential threats Israel faces** including from Iran.

Theresa has pledged her commitment to ensuring religious freedoms will not be compromised and as a Cabinet Minister from 2012 to 2016 **she helped secure the annual, now £18 million, security fund to protect Jewish schools** and other community premises. In February 2024, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced £54 million of new, additional funding to the Community Security Trust (CST) as part of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant.

As Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Theresa was a **committed defender of shechita**, opposing regulations that would increase the cost of kosher meat through labelling changes. In June 2019, **Theresa led a landmark debate calling on the Government to recognise the plight of over 850,000 Jewish refugees** who were forced to flee their historic communities in the Middle East and North Africa since 1945. In March 2018, Theresa introduced legislation in Parliament to **maintain Holocaust survivors' right to recover their artwork and cultural objects** looted in the Nazi era.

For 14 years, I am proud that **the Jewish community has enjoyed unwavering support from Conservative Governments**. In that time, **the UK-Israel relationship has gone from strength to strength** with a new strategic partnership, close ties in defence, security, science and health and thriving bilateral trade.

In government, the Conservatives proscribed Hezbollah and Hamas, opposed Israel boycotts, took action against the UN's bias against Israel, opposed the International Criminal Court's investigation into Israel and arrest warrants for Israeli leaders and provided crucial military assistance in intercepting Iran's missiles targeting Israel on 13-14th April. **Theresa has played a vital part in ensuring that our ties with Israel are stronger than ever.**

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has been unequivocal in his support for Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas and stood in solidarity with the UK's Jewish community. However, it is of the utmost importance to have MPs like Theresa, not Jewish themselves, who **understand the issues important to the Jewish community and Israel, and are willing to advocate for them at the highest levels.**

Genuine supporters of our community like Theresa are crucially important to help combat the growing anti-Israel sentiment that has gripped political discourse. Alarmingly, Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy supported the ICC's decision to seek arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, and the rifts within the Labour Party on Israel run deep.

In 2019, Theresa was re-elected as your MP with only 1,212 more votes than the Labour candidate which followed her narrow 353 win in 2017. In this election, **every vote matters** and re-electing Theresa Villiers is crucial to ensuring we have MPs that understand and respect our community.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Polak CBE
Honorary President, Conservative Friends of Israel