



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP**  
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Stephen Hammond MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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17 December 2021

*Dear Stephen,*

Thank you for your letter of 17 November to the Foreign Secretary, about Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe. I am replying as the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) engages with the families of British detainees in Iran on a regular basis. Support is available to them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While on hunger strike, from 24 October to 13 November, Richard Ratcliffe met the Foreign Secretary, myself, and senior officials.

The Foreign Secretary continues to work to secure the release of British nationals unfairly detained in Iran. She spoke to her Iranian counterpart, Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian on Monday 8 November and on Thursday 11 November, I spoke with the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Bagheri Kani, raising the cases of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Morad Tahbaz, and Anoosheh Ashoori.

This Government remains committed to doing all we can to secure Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's return home. Iran has put her through a cruel and inhumane ordeal. We continue to call on Iran, in the strongest possible terms, to end her suffering and allow her to return home to be reunited with her daughter, Gabriella, and husband, Richard. Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe must be allowed to return to her family in the UK.

We continue to call on Iran not to return Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe to prison. We remain committed to securing the immediate and permanent release of unfairly detained dual British nationals in Iran. The Prime Minister raised the issue with his counterpart on 10 March. Our Ambassador in Tehran has regularly raised the cases of our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Prime Minister met Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's husband in January last year to reinforce the UK's support for bringing his wife home. The Foreign Secretary will continue to remain in close contact with both Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her family. She met Richard Ratcliffe most recently on 28 October. FCDO officials also remain in close contact with both Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her family, and continue to provide support.

We continue to explore options to resolve this 40-year old case and will not comment further as discussions are ongoing. It is unhelpful to connect wider bilateral issues with those arbitrarily detained in Iran. It remains in Iran's gift to do the right thing and allow British dual nationals home to be reunited with their family. We have been consistently clear that we continue to explore options to resolve this 40-year old case.

This Government is clear that we do not accept dual British nationals being used as diplomatic leverage. We continue to call upon the Iranian government to allow the immediate return home of those British nationals who have been arbitrarily detained

*Yours ever,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Cleverly', is centered on the page.

**The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP**  
**Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa**