

Ruth Davidson MSP
Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party
Scottish Conservative Central Office
67 Northumberland Street
Edinburgh, EH3 6JG
Scotland

4 October 2016

Re – Delegation of Conservative members of the Scottish Parliament to the Occupied Syrian Golan

Dear Ms Davidson,

Following my previous letter of 5 September 2016 expressing concern regarding a recent visit by a delegation of conservative MSPs to the Occupied Syrian Golan, I spoke with John Lamont MSP, the leader of the delegation, on 27 September via a Skype call, as suggested by your office.

During the call, Mr Lamont provided additional details regarding the visit to the Occupied Syrian Golan whilst I provided him with background information to the human rights violations suffered by the native Syrian population since the Israeli occupation and explained in more detail Al-Marsad's concerns following the delegation's visit to the Occupied Syrian Golan – in particular, to a winery in an illegal Israeli settlement.

Mr Lamont listened to these concerns and asked for my views on several issues related to the Occupied Syrian Golan and the broader region. He made a commitment to meet with Al-Marsad or other members of the native Syrian community, should he visit the Occupied Syrian Golan in the future. I thank him for this.

However, I am concerned by other aspects of the call. Primarily, that Mr Lamont did not confirm whether the delegation raised the issue of the construction and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements with the Israeli authorities during the visit; and that he did not directly answer whether he or the Scottish Conservative party is opposed to the construction and expansion of these settlements, and recognises their illegality under international law.

For that reason, I remain concerned about the issues raised in my initial letter. Hence, I would be grateful if you could confirm that:

- The Scottish Conservative Party is opposed to the construction and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Syrian Golan, in particular, plans announced last year to increase the number of Israeli settlers in the Occupied Syrian Golan by 100,000 over the next five years;

- The Scottish Conservative party is in line with the position of the international community¹ and recognises that the Syrian Golan is occupied Syrian territory and is not part of the State of Israel.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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CC
John Lamont MSP

¹ See recent statements from the [United Nations](#), [United States](#), [European Union](#) and [Britain](#) rejecting Israel's latest rhetoric regarding sovereignty of the Occupied Syrian Golan.