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Nick Herbert

Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2011 to the Prime Minister regarding your concern about Leicestershire business owners who do not qualify for compensation under the Riot Damages Act 1886. I am replying as the Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice.

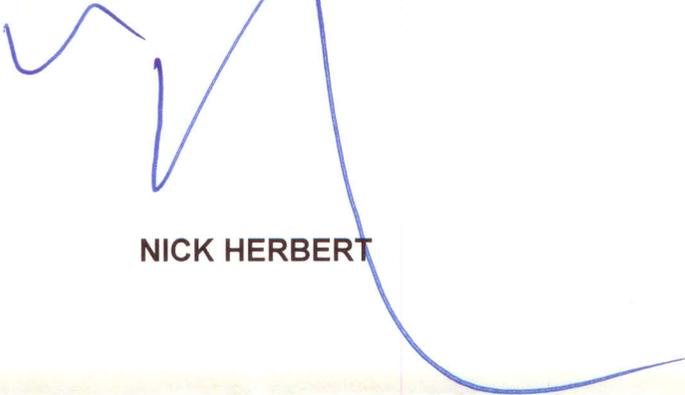
The disorder, violence and common criminality we saw in Leicester and other parts of England at the start of August was totally unacceptable and unjustifiable. The Government stands against the criminality that blighted our communities on such an unprecedented scale. The Government also recognises the damage and devastation caused by the disturbances, and is prepared to assist the police with both the operational and riot damages costs.

Under the Riot Damages Act 1886, affected police authorities in England and Wales are liable to pay for damages to buildings and their contents when a riot has occurred. It is rightly the responsibility of individual police authorities to determine, based on the legal definition of a riot (Section 1, Public Order Act 1986) whether the disturbances in their police force areas should be classified as a riot or not.

As you may be aware, the Government has worked hard to support those affected by the August disturbances, including by extending the application period for compensation under the Riot Damages Act from 14 to 42 days, and by extending the payment deadline for the High Street Support Scheme from 7

November 2011 to 3 January 2012. Unfortunately, there are currently no other compensation schemes in place to assist victims of the disturbances.

I appreciate that my response is not what you and the affected business owners in Leicester are hoping for. Whilst I am sympathetic to their plight, I am sorry that I am unable to provide the reassurances they are seeking.



NICK HERBERT