



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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Manuela Perteghella MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC2025/14538  
Your ref: MP03011

4 July 2025

Dear Manuela,

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 May to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of several of your constituents, about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as the Minister responsible for the Middle East.

Despite the glimmer of hope from January's ceasefire, its collapse has only deepened the suffering in this ongoing conflict. Over 50,000 men, women and children have been killed in Gaza and more than 90% of the population have been displaced, many repeatedly.

The Prime Minister has stated the current level of aid distribution is inadequate and has called on the Israeli government to significantly scale up humanitarian assistance to Gaza. We are doing all we can to alleviate the suffering and increase the flow of aid. On 28 April 2025, we announced a comprehensive support package for the OPTs, including £101million for humanitarian aid, support for Palestinian economic development, and strengthening Palestinian Authority governance and reform.

Last financial year, we announced £129million in aid for the OPTs and to Palestinian refugees across the region to ensure healthcare, food and shelter reaches tens of thousands of civilians and to support vital infrastructure across the OPTs. UK support has meant over half a million people have received essential healthcare, 647,000 have received food, and 284,000 people have improved access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

Israel's newly introduced measures for humanitarian aid are endangering civilians and deepening the desperation in Gaza. These measures are not only inhumane—they are deadly, with Palestinians being killed or injured while trying to access basic aid. No one should risk their life just to feed themselves or their families, especially after enduring almost two years of relentless conflict.

We urgently call on the Israeli government to lift all restrictions on humanitarian assistance. Immediate action is needed to allow the UN and aid organizations to operate freely and deliver essential supplies—food, water, and medicine—safely to those in need, wherever

they are. We remain committed to supporting the UN and trusted non-governmental partners, who continue to be the most effective and principled channels for delivering life-saving aid.

The Prime Minister issued a joint statement with his French and Canadian counterparts on 19 May 2025, stating that the Israeli government's denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable and risks breaching International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The UK also led a further statement with 26 other partners, criticising Israel's proposed new aid delivery mechanism and defending the essential humanitarian principles of the international system that the UK did so much to establish in the first place.

The Foreign Secretary addressed the House of Commons on 20 May 2025 on the situation in Israel and the OPTs, where he stated that we are now entering a dark new phase in this conflict. He added that Netanyahu's government were planning to drive Gazans from their homes into a corner of the Strip to the south and permit them a fraction of the aid that they need.

We strongly oppose the expansion of Israel's military operations. We believe there is no military solution to this conflict. Israel's plan is morally indefensible, grossly disproportionate, and ultimately counterproductive. Despite claims by Israeli ministers, this approach will not bring the hostages home, as nearly all have been freed through negotiation, not force.

We have been clear that this Government will uphold both our domestic and international legal obligations when it comes to arms exports. We have successfully implemented the suspension decision and continue to refuse all relevant licence applications. As set out to Parliament, the only exception to the suspension is parts for the global F-35 programme, to protect its role in NATO and international peace and security. Undermining the F-35 programme would disrupt international peace and security, NATO deterrence and European defence. We have suspended direct exports of F-35 components for use by Israel. Where UK-produced parts go to the global spares pool, Israel operate a small proportion of the F-35s in the global fleet. Subject to the specific measures taken to protect the global F-35 programme, we are clear there are no export licences currently being used for military operations in Gaza.

We continue to consider the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 19 July 2024 carefully, with the seriousness and rigour it deserves. The issues raised are by their nature complex and require proper consideration. The UK is fully committed to international law and respects the independence of the ICJ. UK commitment to a two-state solution is unwavering. We are of the clear view that Israel should bring an end to its presence in the OPTs as rapidly as possible, but this must be done in a way that creates the conditions for negotiations towards the two-state solution.

On 10 June 2025, I announced the UK imposition of sanctions on prominent Israeli Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir for their role in inciting settler violence against Palestinian communities in the West Bank - violence that has led to the death of

Palestinian civilians and the displacement of whole towns and villages. That violence constitutes an abuse of Palestinians' human rights. It is cruel, it is degrading, and it is completely unacceptable. We have told the Israeli government repeatedly that we would take tougher action if this did not stop. It still did not stop: the appalling rhetoric has continued unchecked; and violent perpetrators continue to act with impunity and encouragement. We acted alongside Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Norway, all of whom announced their own measures on 10 June 2025.

The UK's position is unequivocal: settlements are illegal under international law, undermine prospects for peace, and pose a serious threat to the viability of a two-state solution. Alarming, settlement approvals are now being reviewed on a near-weekly basis, with construction accelerating rapidly alongside a sharp rise in settler violence. The UK strongly condemns any comments proposing the annexation of land in Gaza or the West Bank, as well as the inciteful remarks made by prominent Israeli Ministers Smotrich and Ben-Gvir. We will challenge those who undermine a two-state solution, press for a change in course and continue to act against those carrying out heinous abuses of human rights.

Israel suffered a horrific attack on 7 October 2023, and like all states, has a right to self-defence. However, this plan will neither eliminate Hamas, nor ensure Israel's security. Instead, it risks perpetuating the cycle of violence, leaving a generation traumatised and vulnerable to radicalisation. Opposing a war that has killed thousands of children is not rewarding Hamas. We have been clear that Israel must ensure all its actions are in line with international law.

From our first day in office, this Government has pressed for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, to free the hostages and to bring humanitarian aid to civilians who have suffered so much. A negotiated solution is the only way to ensure long term security for both Israelis and Palestinians, and we urge all parties to return to negotiations. The Foreign Secretary has visited Israel and the OPTs three times since taking office, meeting with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, as well as families of hostages, victims of violence and members of the humanitarian community.

We support a two-state solution that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. It is essential to provide the people of the West Bank and Gaza with a credible and irreversible pathway to a Palestinian state and a new future. Our long-standing position has been that we will recognise a Palestinian State at a time that is most conducive to the peace process.

UK bilateral recognition is the single most important action the UK can take with regard to Palestinian statehood. That is why it is important to get the timing right, so it creates genuine momentum and is not simply a symbolic gesture. We remain deeply committed to the Two State Solution which remains the only way to guarantee security, dignity and a just and lasting peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. The two-state solution Conference has been postponed following military escalations in the region. We will continue to work closely with France, Saudi Arabia and others to make the conference a success when it is re-scheduled.

The situation in the region continues to evolve rapidly. But please rest assured that the Foreign Secretary and his entire Ministerial team will continue to do all they can to push for peace.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hamish Falconer', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**HAMISH FALCONER MP**  
**Minister for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan**