



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
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15 July 2015

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Hugh Lanning
Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Box BM PSA
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Dear Mr. Lanning

Thank you for your letter of 23 June to the Prime Minister about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

The Government understands, and shares, the deep frustration at the lack of progress and the unacceptability and unsustainability of the occupation. A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We noted Prime Minister Netanyahu's statements after the election that Israel is committed to the Middle East Peace Process and achieving a two state solution. We look to all parties, including Israel, to show through policies and actions that this commitment is genuine.

Let me assure you that we will continue to raise our concerns with Israel regarding the effects of Israeli settlements. On 16 June the UK's Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised the issue of settlements with Prime Minister Netanyahu and again on the 21 June with the Israeli Cabinet Secretary and National Security Advisor.

On 23 June, I raised the issue of Gaza during a meeting with the Israeli Interior Minister and Vice Prime Minister. We continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza, and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

I cannot, however, agree with your conclusion that sanctions should be applied to Israel. We do not believe that imposing sanctions, boycotts or a blanket arms embargo on Israel would promote the urgent progress we seek. We continue to believe that only a negotiated two-state solution will resolve the conflict and end the occupation.

We do not underestimate the challenges, but if both parties show bold leadership, peace is possible. The UK is ready to do all it can to support this goal.

Yours sincerely,

TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State