

Thank you for contacting me about Palestine. I appreciate your concerns about the difficult situation there, and I'm pleased to confirm that my party and I support a two state solution – a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a fair and realistic settlement for refugees.

When Theresa May met Prime Minister Netanyahu earlier this year, she reiterated our firm commitment to a two-state solution as the best way to bring stability and peace to the region, as well as our continued opposition to settlement activity. But the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is deeply complex and Israeli settlements aren't the only obstacle to peace. The people of Israel also deserve to live free from the scourge of terrorism and anti-Semitic incitement, which gravely undermine the prospects for a two-state solution.

We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community. That's why we continue to support Palestinian institutions and promote economic growth, so that any future state can be a prosperous and effective partner for peace.

We have strongly urged the Israeli Government to reverse recent announcements on proposed settlements, which damage Israel's standing in the international community. We also continue to provide funding to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in order to maintain stability, provide vital services and build and strengthen the institutions needed for a viable two-state solution. However, certain key changes will be made to ensure this funding truly benefit the Palestinian people:

- UK support will now focus only on vital health and education services, in order to meet the immediate needs of the Palestinian people. We will help to pay the salaries of up to 30,000 teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives and other essential health and education public servants on a vetted list. This will make it possible for around 25,000 young Palestinians to get an education, provide up to 3,700 immunisations for children, and around 185,000 medical consultations annually.
- DFID will provide up to £25 million to the PA this financial year, although future payments will be subject to annual sign-off by UK Government ministers after reviewing the PA's commitment to the UK Partnership Principles and progress against key reform indicators.

At the same time we're doing this, we're also clear that Israel has a right to defend itself from attack. Hamas faces a fundamental decision about whether it is prepared to join efforts for peace, or whether it will continue to use violence and terror.

So I hope this helps explain where my party and I are standing on this issue but please don't hesitate to contact me again if you have any remaining questions or concerns about this and I'll be happy to respond with more details.