

Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law and unjustifiable. I have been steadfast in my opposition to them, writing to the Foreign Secretary on multiple occasions to ask for more pressure to be put on Israel to cease their construction and withdraw them. The continued expansion of the illegal Israeli settlements is not only an outrage, it is a major obstacle to the attainment of a lasting peace agreement in the region. There has long been a consensus in the international community for a two-state solution to the ongoing crisis, but it is almost impossible to imagine how these efforts can proceed when one of those states is intent on cynically and illegally chipping away at the lands of the other.

I would very much like to see Israel's blockade on Gaza, which imposes cruel and unusual restrictions on the basic necessities on life such as water and medical supplies, lifted immediately. I have visited Palestine with the Council for Arab-British Understanding and the charity Medical Aid for Palestinians to see some of the challenges for myself. I was appalled by the difficulties that Palestinians face in gaining access to healthcare, a situation which is hugely worsened by the blockade. I also heard how Palestinians, especially young men, are often denied fair access to legal representation, and I raised this in Parliament upon my return. Young Palestinian men should not routinely be treated as military prisoners, particularly when fair access to legal representation is denied them.

If I am re-elected on the 8th of June I would continue to campaign on behalf of human rights for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and I would continue to press the Foreign Office to persuade Israel away from the path of building settlements and back to the negotiating table.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paula Sherriff". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Paula Sherriff