

I'm afraid that I have a policy of not completing questionnaires such as these, since I do not feel that the responses can do justice to the complexity of the topic.

However, these are issues with which I am very familiar given my previous roles as Chair of Defence Select Committee and on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, as well as being a Minister in the Department for International Development. Indeed I have visited the West Bank on a number of occasions and I would like to get to Gaza too.

The international community must redouble its efforts to support a comprehensive peace agreement that delivers an independent Palestine alongside a safe and secure Israel. A two-state solution brought about through negotiated agreement is the most effective way for Palestinian aspirations of statehood to be met on the ground.

The Israeli Government is well aware of the UK position on settlements, which has not changed; settlements in the OPTs are illegal and an obstacle to peace.

The UK Government continues to press for an end to restrictions and urgent measures to relieve the humanitarian suffering of those in Gaza. The Department for International Development is helping to build Palestinian institutions and promote economic growth, so that any future state will be prosperous and an effective partner for peace.

As part of its review of UK aid to the OPTs, the Government has confirmed that it will continue to provide funding to the Palestinian Authority, but key changes will be made to ensure this funding delivers the best value for money and maximum impact for Palestinians.

The UK Government continues to press for a sustainable political solution which will address Israel's legitimate security concerns whilst opening up movement and access to Gaza.

While I understand that there are currently no plans for legislation to ban the import of settlement products, I know that the Government works with the EU to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. This work includes measures to ensure that settlement produce does not enter the EU duty-free, under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and steps to ensure that EU-wide guidelines are issued to make sure that settlement products are not incorrectly labelled as Israeli produce, in violation of EU consumer protection regulations. I think that consumers should be in a position to make informed decisions about companies they choose to engage with.

The Government does not believe that imposing a blanket UK arms embargo on Israel would promote progress in the Middle East Peace

Process. Defence and security exports support states' legitimate right to self-defence, security and law and order.

I am assured that the Government takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust licensing systems in the world. All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking into account all relevant factors at the application.

A license would not be issued for any country if to do so would be inconsistent with any provision of the mandatory criteria, including where it is assessed that there is a clear risk that it might be used in the commission of a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law. The Government continues to monitor the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and takes into account the latest circumstances when assessing licence applications.