



The Rt. Hon. James Cleverly MP
Minister of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

12 May 2020

Dear Mr Cleverly,

On behalf of the International Relations and Defence Committee, I am writing to express our concern at Israel's intention to annex areas of the territories it occupied following the war of June 1967, including the Jordan Valley, as set out in the national unity coalition agreement. The annexation of occupied territory is in violation of international law, as set out in UN Security Council Resolutions including UNSCR 242, UNSCR 338 and UNSCR 2334.

As you will be aware, in May 2017 the then International Relations Committee published a report, *the Middle East: time for new realism*,¹ which considered the Israel-Palestine situation. We would like to reiterate these conclusions and recommendations—set out below—which we believe remain valid three years on.

266. A negotiated two-state outcome remains the only way to achieve an enduring peace that meets Israeli security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967, and resolves all permanent status issues. We condemn the continuing Israeli policy of the expansion of settlements as illegal and an impediment to peace.

267. On its current trajectory, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is on the verge of moving into a phase where the two-state solution becomes an impossibility and is considered no longer viable by either side. The consequences would be grave for the region. The resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute must remain high amongst British foreign policy priorities. The Government should be more forthright in stating its views on these issues despite the views of the US administration.

268. The aim at this juncture is to ensure that the climate for diplomacy does not degrade any further.

269. In the absence of US leadership, it is time for the Europeans to play a more active role. The UK should support European diplomacy, including the French-led initiative. The International Conference intends to meet again at the end of 2017 and the UK should undertake to support it meaningfully, both politically and financially. It is also an opportunity to bring moderate states of the region on board to build a broad coalition of international support.

270. The balance of power in the delivery of peace lies with Israel. If Israel continues to reduce the possibilities of a two-state solution, the UK should be ready to support UNSC resolutions condemning those actions in no uncertain terms. The Government should give serious consideration to now recognising Palestine as a state, as the best way to show its determined attachment to the two-state solution.

¹ Select Committee on International Relations, 2nd Report of Session 2016–17, HL Paper 159, *The Middle East: time for new realism*
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldintrel/159/159.pdf>

We have three questions, to which we would be grateful for your urgent response, as follows.

First, can you reassure us that the UK's position remains unchanged, namely that any unilateral Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories it has occupied since 1967 would violate international law and jeopardise the peace process. Can you also confirm that the UK will not recognise any changes to the status quo unless they have been agreed by the parties themselves?

Second, what actions will the Government be taking to re-engage parties on the peace process? What steps will it take to bring all parties back to negotiations in support of a two-state solution? How will the UK work with its partners to support this objective?

Third, if Israel does proceed with its planned annexation, what would be the consequences for its preferential access to the UK market, as set out in the *UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement*? How would the UK distinguish between legal and illegal products in order to provide preferential access only for legal Israeli exports to the UK?

Yours, as ever

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jayce Anelay".

Baroness Anelay of St Johns
Chair, International Relations and Defence Committee