



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

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Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee
House of Commons
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13 July 2026

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June to the Foreign Secretary, regarding Israel, Palestine, and matters of international law. I am replying as the Minister for the Middle East. These are obviously issues that the Foreign Secretary and I discuss on a regular basis with the Foreign Affairs Committee, but I hope it is helpful to your committee as well if I respond briefly to the key points you have raised.

The UK has a long-standing commitment to a negotiated two-state solution and we strongly oppose any actions that undermine this goal. We have been clear that Israel's settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law and are an obstacle to peace.

In our dealings with Israel, the UK already distinguishes between the territory of the State of Israel within its 1967 borders, and the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. For example, our trade agreement with Israel does not entitle exports from illegal settlements in the West Bank to preferential trade tariffs, and we have recently changed our business guidance to advise British businesses against economic activity in settlements.

Your letter urges greater UK government action regarding Israeli settlement construction in the E1 area. In a joint statement with our international partners, published on 22 May, the Prime Minister specifically highlighted the unacceptable nature of the E1 developments and stated that businesses should not bid for construction tenders. You can see the statement here: [Joint Statement on the situation in the West Bank: 22 May 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

On 9 June, we announced a further round of sanctions under our Global Human Rights regime against entities and individuals associated with settler violence, the UK's fourth such sanctions package since February 2024. I understand that the Committee is keen to know what further measures are under consideration, although – as you are aware – it is the UK's long-standing policy not to speculate in advance on future sanctions designations.

On other measures, we will continue to consider what further steps the UK can take to preserve the goal of a two-state solution. I fully understand the calls for action to ban trade with settlements, and we continue to keep all options for action in this area under review, while appreciating that there are many complexities and difficulties to resolve, as well as potential unintended consequences to address in terms of the impact on Palestinians. We will keep Parliament fully informed on the development of our thinking.

Finally, you asked about the FCDO's work to monitor potential violations of International Humanitarian Law in Gaza, following an entirely misleading report on this issue by *The Guardian* newspaper on 23 April. I published a written answer to the Member for Battersea on 29 April, correcting the record, which can be found here: [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

Alongside our international partners, the UK will continue working towards a just and lasting peace in Israel and Palestine, including identifying further concrete steps we can take to counter settlement expansion and promote respect for international law.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hamish Falconer', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

HAMISH FALCONER MP
Minister for the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan

