



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

14 August 2020

Our reference: N10#2020/13739

Schona Jolly QC
Chair
Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ

Dear Ms Jolly

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 June to the Prime Minister about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as the Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East and North Africa.

As I made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 24 June, we are concerned by reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves toward annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to renewed efforts to restart peace negotiations, and contrary to international law. We hope that the Palestinians will return to negotiations but, if they refuse, that would not justify unilateral annexation. The Foreign Secretary reiterated our position in a call with Alternate Israeli Prime Minister Gantz on 20 May and Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 2 June. The Prime Minister also reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 6 July.

We believe that open and honest discussions, rather than imposing sanctions or supporting anti-Israeli boycotts, best supports our efforts to help progress in the peace process and achieve a negotiated solution.

Ultimately, we support 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 just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

We continue to work closely with international partners strongly advocating a two-state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties.

We firmly believe a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions which make peace more difficult.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes that are difficult to decipher as specific letters.

The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP
Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa