



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-0047 | 7 February 2017

# Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

## Backbench Business Committee Debate Chamber Thursday 9 February 2017

### Motion to be debated:

"That this House reaffirms its support for the negotiation of a lasting peace between two sovereign states of Israel and Palestine, both of which must be viable and contiguous within secure and internationally recognised borders; calls on the Government to take an active role in facilitating a resumption of international talks to achieve this; welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 2334 adopted on 23 December 2016; and further calls on the government of Israel immediately to halt the planning and construction of residential settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories which is both contrary to international law and undermines the prospects for the contiguity and viability of the state of Palestine."

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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Debate to be led by Sir Desmond Swayne, Mark Williams, Chris Bryant, Tommy Sheppard and Dr Tania Mathias.

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [parliamentlive.tv](http://parliamentlive.tv)

# 1. Summary

The West Bank and Gaza have been occupied by Israel since 1967, and are collectively known as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). Before the 1967 war, the West Bank was part of Jordan whilst Gaza was part of Egypt.

Following the beginning of the occupation in 1967, many Israelis moved into purpose-built Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza (though the settlements in Gaza were demolished by the Israeli Government in 2005, and the settlers forcibly evacuated). When the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C in the mid-1990s, areas containing Jewish settlements were generally classed as Area C, and hence remained under Israeli control.

The UN Security Council in December adopted resolution 2334 which states settlements have 'no legal validity':

1. *Reaffirms* that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;
2. *Reiterates* its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard.<sup>[1]</sup>

The UK Government voted in favour of the resolution. In the weeks since the Resolution the Israeli Government has announced plans to construct several thousand new settlement homes. The Foreign Office has condemned "the increased pace of settlement activity" and says such action makes a two-state solution "much harder to achieve."

The Government has also condemned demolitions of Palestinian buildings which the Israeli authorities say lack building permits. Data collected by UN OCHA suggests that Israel demolished or seized over 1,000 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank and Jerusalem in 2016, the highest number since recording began in 2009.

Benjamin Netanyahu met Prime Minister Theresa May in London on 6 February 2017 where they discussed the establishment of a new UK-Israel Trade Working Group, Iran and the Middle East Peace Process.

## 2. UN Security Council Resolution 2334

### [Resolution 2334 \(2016\)](#)

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 7853rd meeting, on 23 December 2016**

*The Security Council,*

*Reaffirming* its relevant resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [446 \(1979\)](#), [452 \(1979\)](#), [465 \(1980\)](#), [476 \(1980\)](#), [478 \(1980\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), and [1850 \(2008\)](#),

*Guided* by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirming, inter alia, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

*Reaffirming* the obligation of Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and *recalling* the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice,

*Condemning* all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions,

*Expressing* grave concern that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperilling the viability of the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines,

*Recalling* the obligation under the Quartet Roadmap, endorsed by its resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#), for a freeze by Israel of all settlement activity, including "natural growth", and the dismantlement of all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

*Recalling* also the obligation under the Quartet roadmap for the Palestinian Authority Security Forces to maintain effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantling terrorist capabilities, including the confiscation of illegal weapons,

*Condemning* all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction,

*Reiterating* its vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders,

*Stressing* that the status quo is not sustainable and that significant steps, consistent with the transition contemplated by prior agreements, are urgently needed in order to (i) stabilize the situation and to reverse negative trends on the ground, which are steadily eroding the two-State solution and entrenching a one-State reality, and (ii) to create the conditions for successful final status negotiations and for advancing the two-State solution through those negotiations and on the ground,

1. *Reaffirms* that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;
2. *Reiterates* its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard;
3. *Underlines* that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations;
4. *Stresses* that the cessation of all Israeli settlement activities is essential for salvaging the two-State solution, and calls for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse the negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution;
5. *Calls* upon all States, bearing in mind paragraph 1 of this resolution, to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;
6. *Calls* for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction, calls for accountability in this regard, and calls for compliance with obligations under international law for the strengthening of ongoing efforts to combat terrorism, including through existing security coordination, and to clearly condemn all acts of terrorism;
7. *Calls upon* both parties to act on the basis of international law, including international humanitarian law, and their previous agreements and obligations, to observe calm and restraint, and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, with the aim, inter alia, of de-escalating the situation on the ground, rebuilding trust and confidence, demonstrating through policies and actions a genuine commitment to the two-State solution, and creating the conditions necessary for promoting peace;
8. *Calls upon* all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010;

9. *Urges in this regard* the intensification and acceleration of international and regional diplomatic efforts and support aimed at achieving, without delay a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; and *underscores* in this regard the importance of the ongoing efforts to advance the Arab Peace Initiative, the initiative of France for the convening of an international peace conference, the recent efforts of the Quartet, as well as the efforts of Egypt and the Russian Federation;
10. *Confirms its determination* to support the parties throughout the negotiations and in the implementation of an agreement;
11. *Reaffirms* its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;
12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution;
13. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

### 3. Press Articles

The following is a small selection of recent press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for the views expressed in, nor the accuracy of, external content.

**[Palestinians demand action against Israel over settlements law](#)**

Guardian  
Peter Beaumont  
7 February 2017

**[Israel votes to legalise thousands of settler homes built on private Palestinian land with unprecedented new law](#)**

Independent  
Bethan McKernan  
7 February 2017

**[Israel passes controversial law on West Bank settlements](#)**

BBC News Online  
7 February 2017

**[UN: Israeli Settlement Law Crosses 'Thick Red Line'](#)**

New York Times  
7 February 2017

**[Palestinians say Regulation Law aims to 'legalize theft of Palestinian land'](#)**

Times of Israel  
Sue Surkes  
7 February 2017

**[Israel passes bill retroactively legalising Jewish settlements](#)**

Guardian  
Peter Beaumont  
6 February 2017

**[Theresa May urged by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to back fresh Iran sanctions](#)**

Independent  
Ashley Cowburn  
6 February 2017

**[Israeli Parliament Legalizes 4,000 Jewish Settlements on Private Palestinian Land](#)**

ReliefWeb  
6 February 2017

**[British Labour party: Israeli settlement construction 'undermines trust'](#)**

Middle East Monitor  
6 February 2017

**[Israel approves 3,000 new settler homes as Amona evacuation begins](#)**

BBC News Online  
1 February 2017

**[Israel and the Palestinians: Can settlement issue be solved?](#)**

BBC News Online  
23 January 2017

**[Jewish settler group 'invited to Donald Trump's inauguration' amid concerns over President-elect's stance on Israel](#)**

Independent  
Lizzie Dearden  
13 January 2017

**[Cognitive bias and UNSC Resolution 2334](#)**

Jerusalem Post  
Eric R. Mandel  
3 January 2017

## 4. Press Releases

### **PM meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: 6 February 2017**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
7 February 2017

Prime Minister Theresa May met with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and discussed free trade, security and Iran.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister hosted Prime Minister Netanyahu at Downing Street today for their first bilateral meeting and a working lunch.

In their discussions, the Prime Ministers committed to working together to build on our longstanding relationship and the strong ties that already exist between our 2 countries in a wide range of areas, from trade and investment, to innovation and technology, and defence and security.

They discussed their shared belief in free trade and agreed to establish a new UK-Israel Trade Working Group to continue the progress we have seen in our burgeoning trade and investment relationship, and to prepare the ground for a post-Brexit trade agreement. It was noted that Lord Price will visit Israel soon to take this forward. They also discussed opportunities to increase investment in research and development and technology, and strengthen partnerships in these areas between our governments, universities and businesses.

They talked about the important work we do together on intelligence-sharing and cyber-security, and committed to talk further about how we can deepen this co-operation, to help keep our people safe.

They also discussed a number of international issues. On Iran, the Prime Minister was clear that the nuclear deal is vital and must be properly enforced and policed, while recognising concerns about Iran's pattern of destabilising activity in the region. They also talked about the Middle East Peace Process and the UK's firm commitment to a 2-state solution as the best way to bring stability and peace to the region. The Prime Minister reiterated the UK's opposition to settlement activity.

As we prepare to mark 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, the Prime Minister underlined that Britain remains a close and firm friend of Israel and reiterated our support for Jewish communities in the UK. She invited Prime Minister Netanyahu to attend events taking place in the UK to mark the anniversary in November, as

a Guest of Government. He also invited her to visit him in Israel.

**Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood statement on Israel's Land Regularisation Bill**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
7 February 2017

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood statement on Israel's Land Regularisation Bill being passed through the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset.

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

It is of great concern that the bill paves the way for significant growth in settlements deep in the West Bank, threatening the viability of the two-state solution.

As a longstanding friend of Israel, I condemn the passing of the Land Regularisation Bill by the Knesset, which damages Israel's standing with its international partners.

We reiterate our support for a two-state solution leading to a secure Israel that is safe from terrorism, and a contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in the West Bank**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
1 February 2017

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood statement on the Israeli Government's announcement to build 3,000 settlement units in the West Bank.

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

The announcement of further settlement units in the West Bank is part of a growing trend which we condemn. We have consistently been clear that settlements are illegal under international law, and not conducive to peace. This spike in settlement activity undermines trust and makes a two state solution – with an Israel that is safe from terrorism and a Palestinian state that is viable and sovereign - much harder to achieve.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in East Jerusalem**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
24 January 2017

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood has commented on the Jerusalem municipality approving plans to build 566 new settlement homes in East Jerusalem.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

It is the long held view of the British Government that settlements built on occupied Palestinian territory are contrary to international law and an obstacle to a two-state solution and we condemn them. The UK reiterates its support for a negotiated peace settlement that leads to an Israel that is safe from terrorism and a Palestinian state that is viable and sovereign.

**Explanation of vote by Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations on Israel-Palestine**

(Transcript of speech to the UN, delivered on 23 December 2016)  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
5 January 2017

Mr President, The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2334 today - the first Security Council resolution on the Israel-Palestine issue in over seven years.

The adoption of this resolution is, first and foremost, a clear reinforcement of the international community's conviction that a two state solution remains the only viable route to sustained Arab-Israeli peace.

As the Quartet Report in July highlighted, the foundations of peace - trust and goodwill - are being corroded for all sides because of violence, incitement, demolitions, and settlement activity.

Ultimately, as long as terrorists are treated as martyrs, peace will be distant. The scourge of anti-Semitic, racist and hateful language must be excised from the region. It is critical that the Palestinian leadership implement the recommendations of the Quartet Report and continue their efforts to tackle terror and incitement, strengthen institutions, and develop a sustainable economy. And the UK will continue to provide the Palestinian Authority with professional support in helping develop its security institutions.

But good will alone will not secure peace. Today's resolution is a sober recognition that the two state solution is slipping away. By undermining the prospects for a contiguous Palestinian state, settlement construction is corroding the possibility of a two state solution. Since the Oslo process in 1993, the population of settlements has doubled to 570,000,

including 85,000 settlers deep in the West Bank. The Quartet Report warns of sliding into “a one-state reality of perpetual occupation and conflict”. That is no future at all.

The UK is a dear and close friend of the State of Israel. We reject all efforts to de-legitimise or undermine Israel. The movement for Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions – rooted as it is in a culture of prejudice and hostility to Israel – is a barrier to peace. And my government will never support any resolution that advances the cause of boycotts or de-legitimisation in any way.

It is because of our steadfast and stalwart commitment to Israel’s security and its existence as the Jewish homeland that we voted for today’s resolution, and worked tirelessly to secure a balanced final text. We believe that Israeli settlement activity represents a clear and present danger to our shared vision of two states for two peoples. The United Kingdom’s longstanding view is that settlement expansion is illegal, and this is not in Israel’s long-term interests.

Today’s resolution also takes important and balanced steps to support peace through:

First of all, calling for immediate steps to prevent incitement and all acts of violence against civilians, including terror. And it also calls for a strengthening of efforts to combat terrorism, including through existing security coordination, as well as clearly condemning all acts of terrorism;

Second, Mr President, this resolution Calls upon both parties to act on the basis of international law and to refrain from provocative actions in order to build trust and create the conditions for peace;

And third, this resolution Calls upon all parties to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues, urging the intensification and acceleration of international and regional efforts to support a comprehensive peace.

We have long held that for negotiations to be successful, they will need to lead 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.

In closing, Mr President, we recognise that the passing of this resolution will not change the situation on the ground overnight. 2017 will not be an easy year for the Israel-Palestine issue: fifty years since the Six Day War and the subsequent occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and one-hundred years since my country issued the Balfour Declaration. However, we must all uphold our responsibility, as this Council has finally upheld its responsibility today, in order to deliver the long-term security that Israelis deserve, and the statehood and end to the occupation that Palestinians are calling out for.

Thank you.

**"Together we must deplore incitement on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."**

(Transcript of speech to the UN)  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
16 December 2016

Thank you Mr President,

I will begin by welcoming the briefing from the Secretary-General. As this will probably be your last public session on this issue, Secretary-General, I want to thank you for your unrelenting activism on the Middle East Peace Process. It has been a difficult, and at most times frustrating, portfolio, but you have not wavered in your resolve to bring a conclusion to what is one of the longest running issues on this Council's agenda. I agree with every word that you have said in your briefing just now.

But it is perhaps with your successor in mind that I want to talk today. He faces a challenge on which we – in the broadest possible sense – have failed for over 60 years.

So what can we do, as the Security Council, to make sure that the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations doesn't endure the frustrations of his predecessors? What can we do together to ensure that the people of Israel and Palestine enjoy decades of peace ahead, rather than relapse into the decades of division and hatred?

I want to focus on three issues where our activism is needed most; illegal settlements, Gaza, and tackling incitement and violence.

The UK's position on settlements is clear. It's a position shared by all of us around this table I think. Settlements are illegal under international law, and take us further away from the two-state solution that we all want to see.

Despite the findings of the Quartet report this year, the situation has only got worse. Like the Foreign Minister of New Zealand, we are especially concerned by the land regulation bill in the Knesset, which would retroactively legalise settlement outposts in the West Bank. Should this proposal go ahead, it would be a serious blow to the prospects for a two-state solution. It would pave the way for an exponential rise in settlements deep in the West Bank, creating more grievances, more hopelessness, more anger amongst Palestinians.

The United Kingdom regularly raises settlements with Israel at all levels. The Foreign Secretary raised it when he met Prime Minister Netanyahu on 30 September. But we should use the voice of this Council to also make this call, to urge Israel to cease its policy of settlement expansion, to lift this grave barrier to peace.

[...]

Before I give up the floor, Mr President, I recognise that it will take more than this Council's words to finally make progress on this issue. We need also to work with partners in the region and internationally to

drive improvements on the ground and build trust between the parties, if we are to secure progress towards meaningful negotiations.

And with that in mind, it is incumbent on this Council to take appropriate action in support of these efforts. We believe that there is clear merit in a Council resolution which commands the full support of this chamber.

We will judge any proposal that emerges on its merits, and whether it supports progress towards peace. But there is a great deal that we all clearly agree on, and I hope that we can make progress towards a lasting peace in the days and weeks ahead.

Thank you.

### **Minister for the Middle East statement on settlements in the West Bank**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
8 December 2016

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood extremely concerned by plans for further expansion of settlements in the West Bank.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

I'm extremely concerned that the Knesset has passed the first reading of a bill which would expropriate privately owned Palestinian land and pave the way for a significant further expansion of settlements in the West Bank. This would be illegal under international law, and once again calls into question the Israeli government's commitment to a two state solution.

I am also concerned that settlement planning around Jerusalem has continued and increased in pace, with 770 units in Gilo receiving final approval on 7 December.

### **Minister for the Middle East concerned by settlement plan in East Jerusalem**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
28 November 2016

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood concerned by plan for 500 new units in Ramat Shlomo.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

We are deeply concerned by reports that the Jerusalem Municipality has revived a plan for constructing 500 new units in the illegal settlement of Ramat Shlomo in East Jerusalem. The planned expansion of Ramat Shlomo

includes construction on privately owned Palestinian land and further cuts off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

It is disappointing that Israel has proceeded with this plan despite serious international criticism when these plans were announced in 2014. Israel's policy of continuing to expand settlements is illegal under international law and systematically undermines the prospects for a two-state solution.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement outposts across the West Bank**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
16 November 2016

FCO Minister Tobias Ellwood deeply concerned by the land regulation bill in the Israeli Knesset to 'legalise' settlement outposts across the West Bank.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

We are deeply concerned by the land regulation bill in the Israeli Knesset to 'legalise' settlement outposts across the West Bank. Such outposts are currently illegal under both Israeli domestic law and international humanitarian law. Should this proposal go ahead, it would seriously undermine prospects for a two-state solution. I urge the Israeli government to reconsider the land regulation bill at the earliest opportunity.

**Continuing Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank is eroding the viability of the two-state solution**

(Transcript of speech to the UN)  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
14 October 2016

Thank you, and thank you to our co-hosts for convening this important meeting. And I want to thank our briefers from B'Tselem and Americans for Peace Now.

Look, this is a long running issue on the Security Council's agenda. And I think what the briefers have done today is to confirm what is I hope a strong and shared conviction of the whole of the Security Council which is that every Israeli and every Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security, free from fear, free from violence. And it's a shared conviction that the two-state solution is the best hope for a sustained, peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And yet, as we have heard so clearly from the briefers, those aspirations remain distant, unrealised, and unfulfilled.

And there are clear obstacles to those aspirations being fulfilled. One is continuing violence. I'd like to reiterate at the start the British Government's condemnation of the terrorist attacks in Jerusalem last weekend. We're appalled by this wave of attacks against innocent Israeli civilians, as well as the praise shown by Hamas, among others, for those carrying out the attacks. Our thoughts and prayers are with victims and their families.

And this violence is directly undermining the prospects of a two-state solution. And it's undermining what little trust remains between the two sides. And it simply cannot continue.

And a second sadly recurring obstacle to peace is the continued expansion of settlements. As the Quartet Report made clear in July, continuing Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank is eroding the viability of the two-state solution.

Even since that report was issued, Israel has made several new settlement announcements, with over 1,000 new units proposed. As the British Minister for the Middle East, Tobias Ellwood, said, these policies "fundamentally call into question Israel's commitment to the two-state solution".

So we need to speak clearly and honestly today. Too many times we hear that "settlements are not the issue" and that is simply not the case. The expansion of settlements is illegal under international law. And settlements are also fundamentally detrimental to a future peace agreement, creating facts on the ground in advance of that agreement. Since the Oslo process began in 1993, the population of settlements has more than doubled, and the Quartet report estimated that the current settler population is now 570,000 people.

The continued growth of this population and the continued expansion of settlements only complicates the basis for any future agreement and undermines the geographical contiguity of a future Palestinian state.

But it also undermines Palestinian communities' ability to develop socially and economically. In the West Bank, Area C comprises the majority of agricultural lands, natural resources, and land reserves. 70 percent of this area has been unilaterally taken for exclusive Israeli use. Of the area that remains, there are severe restrictions on the ability of Palestinian communities to develop their land: less than one per cent of building permits for Palestinians in Area C have been approved over the last five years.

Peace and prosperity so often go hand in hand; denying Palestinian communities their right to develop will only damage the prospects of both.

But this is only part of the problem. A lack of development is being further exacerbated by demolitions of Palestinian structures. This year it's estimated that nearly 800 buildings have been demolished, displacing 1000 people, including 500 children. What hope then is there for the two-state solution when communities are simply removed from the map, when futures are literally bulldozed to the ground?

This is most clearly seen in the concerning demolition orders issued against the Palestinian village of Susiya and the Khan Al Ahmar School, East of Jerusalem. If these orders are carried out, they will have a terrible human cost on the 350 inhabitants of Susiya and the children of Khan Al Ahmar. Such orders could lead to the forcible transfer of these people, in violation of international humanitarian law.

So we again call on the Israeli government to stop the demolitions. Instead, let them provide a transparent, effective and legal route to construction. Let them allow Palestinians to build their schools, their houses; their places of worship – and in doing so - allow Palestinians to build a future that will restore faith and trust in the two-state solution.

Thank you.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on plans to construct a new settlement in the West Bank**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
5 October 2016

Minister for the Middle East, Tobias Ellwood, condemns announcement to construct a new settlement near Shilo in the West Bank

Foreign Office Minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

We condemn the recent announcement of plans to construct a new settlement near Shilo. This is the latest example of a series of worrying new settlement announcements in recent months.

Settlements are illegal under international law. As underlined in the July report of the Middle East Quartet, settlement activity undermines trust and makes a two state solution much harder to achieve.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in the West Bank**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
2 September 2016

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood deeply concerned by reports that plans for over 450 new settlement units are being progressed in the West Bank.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

The UK is deeply concerned by reports that plans for over 450 new settlement units are being progressed in the northern West Bank.

The increased pace of settlement advancement, including moves to retroactively approve unauthorised settlement units and outposts, fundamentally calls into question Israel's commitment to the two-state solution.

The Quartet Report laid out the damaging impact of Israel's systematic policy of settlement construction and expansion in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the parallel obstruction of Palestinian development. Once again, we urge Israel to cease its policy of settlement expansion, which is a barrier to peace.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in East Jerusalem**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

28 July 2016

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood condemns the Israeli authorities' decision for a further 323 settlement units in East Jerusalem.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

The UK condemns the Israeli authorities' decision to issue tenders for a further 323 settlement units in East Jerusalem. This follows recent development of plans for 770 new units in the Jerusalem suburbs.

As set out in the Quartet report, settlement activity is counterproductive and undermines progress towards a two-state solution. This announcement comes on the back of an alarming increase in demolitions of Palestinian houses throughout 2016, including in East Jerusalem.

These steps are the latest examples of what seems to be an acceleration of a systematic policy of illegal settlement expansion and demolition of Palestinian property. Along with our international partners, we call on Israel to halt all demolitions and settlement activities.

## 5. PQs

### **Israeli Settlements: Crimes of Violence** **03 Feb 2017 | HL4919**

**Asked by: Baroness Tonge | Party: Non-affiliated**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning reports of violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have repeatedly raised with the Israeli authorities our concerns about incidents of settler violence and intimidation, and have stressed the importance of bringing the extremist settlers responsible to justice and of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

### **Israeli Settlements** **01 Feb 2017 | 61470**

**Asked by: Jim Cunningham | Party: Labour Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the building of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

On 24 and 25 January I issued statements regarding the latest settlement announcements. I raised the issue of settlements with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister when we spoke on 10 January 2017.

The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and take us further away from a two-state solution. We regularly raise our concerns on this issue with the Government of Israel and urge it to reverse its systematic policy of settlement expansion. We believe the construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is illegal, which is why we supported UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016).

### **Israel: Palestinians** **24 Jan 2017 | HL4541**

**Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the remarks on Middle East Peace made by US Secretary of State John Kerry on 28 December 2016, whether those remarks were in line with the UK Government's policy on this issue, and if so, whether UK policy has changed.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK Government's longstanding policy on the Middle East peace process is well known. We support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. It has long been the UK Government position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal and undermines the viability of two states for two peoples which is why we supported in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016). But we have also always been clear that settlements are far from the only obstacle to peace: terrorism and incitement must also end.

**Israeli Settlements  
20 Jan 2017 | 59710**

**Asked by: Dr Rupa Huq | Party: Labour Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) on the cessation of Israeli settlement and demolition activities in the West Bank is enforced.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

It has long been our position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal and undermines the viability of two states for two peoples, but it is far from the only obstacle to peace. UN Security Council Resolution 2334 addresses settlements while also calling for an end to incitement and terror. The resolution was passed on 23 December and asks the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of its provisions. We will monitor the situation closely.

**Israel and Palestine: Paris Peace Conference  
19 Jan 2017 | 778 c335**

**Asked by: Lord Steel of Aikwood | Party: Liberal Democrats**

Would the Minister agree that it is important to draw a clear distinction between the support for the state of Israel and the policies of the present Israeli Government? Given that the ministerial absence from this conference followed the crass repudiation of a speech by Senator John Kerry, who had done so much to support the peace efforts, will she confirm that it is still the policy of Her Majesty's Government to recognise that settlements in the West Bank are illegal and, therefore, one of the obstacles to peace?

**Answered by: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, this is about more than illegal settlements, although I have made it clear from this Dispatch Box that this Government view illegal settlements as an obstacle to peace. What I affirm, against the background of what the noble Lord has raised, is that the UK's long-standing position on the Middle East peace process is clear: we continue

to 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 and agreed settlement for refugees.

### **Israeli Settlements**

**17 Jan 2017 | 59064**

**Asked by: Dr Matthew Offord | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) on progress towards a two-state solution to -Palestinian conflict.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) is a clear reinforcement of the international community's conviction that a two state solution remains the only viable route to sustained Arab-Israeli peace. The resolution supports progress towards a two state solution by calling on all parties to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues and urging the intensification and acceleration of international and regional efforts to support a comprehensive peace.

### **Palestinians: Politics and Government**

**16 Jan 2017 | 58985**

**Asked by: Sir Nicholas Soames | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the objectives of the Government's diplomatic and political policy on Palestine are for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK's longstanding position is clear: 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 and agreed settlement for refugees. We are encouraging both sides to resume direct bilateral negotiations and we work through international organisations, including the UN and EU, to encourage Israel and the Palestinian Authority to take steps that rebuild trust.

**Israeli Settlements**

**16 Jan 2017 | 58927**

**Asked by: Barry Sheerman | Party: Labour Party – Cooperative Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what contribution his Department made to the drafting and promoting of UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The resolution was an Egyptian draft and not UK co-sponsored. The UK engaged with the text, as we do all Security Council products. Where we did engage we worked to secure a balanced text that includes calls to end incitement and terrorism. We would not have voted for any text without those balancing elements.

**Israeli Settlements**

**16 Jan 2017 | 58877**

**Asked by: Dr Matthew Offord | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether Ministers of his Department were made aware of the final text of UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) before the vote on that resolution took place.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The relevant UK ministers were aware of the text of the resolution before the vote took place. The UK voted for UN Security Council Resolution 2334 because of our support for the two state solution and commitment to Israel as the Jewish homeland.

**Israeli Settlements**

**16 Jan 2017 | 58870**

**Asked by: Dr Matthew Offord | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department held with 10 Downing Street before the UN Security Council Resolution 2334 vote took place in December 2016.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office discussed the UK's voting position on UNSCR 2334 with 10 Downing Street prior to the vote in the UN Security Council. The UK's support for UNSCR 2334 is consistent with our long held position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal and undermines the viability of two states for two peoples. As the Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) stated in her speech to the Conservative Friends of Israel in December, the UK remains one of Israel's strongest friends, but it is important as a true friend to stress that settlements are illegal.

### **Israeli Settlements**

**13 Jan 2017 | 59409**

**Asked by: Sir Nicholas Soames | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of Israeli compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) on urging an end to Israeli settlements.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

It has long been our position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal and undermines the viability of two states for two peoples, but it is far from the only obstacle to peace. UN Security Council Resolution 2334 addresses settlements while also calling for an end to incitement and terror. The resolution passed on 23 December and asks the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of its provisions. We will monitor the situation closely.

### **West Bank: Illegal Settlements**

**10 Jan 2017 | 619 cc146-9**

**Asked by: Paula Sherriff | Party: Labour Party**

What recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in Israel on illegal settlements in the West Bank.

**Answered by: Boris Johnson | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I spoke to the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Netanyahu—he is also the Israeli Foreign Minister—on 23 December and raised the subject of illegal settlements. I probably spoke for a large majority of Members when I said that I am a strong and passionate supporter of the state of Israel, but I also believe that the continued expansion of illegal settlements in the west bank is by no means conducive to peace.

### **Israeli Settlements**

**23 Dec 2016 | HL4124**

**Asked by: Lord Judd | Party: Labour Party**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of preliminary approval having been given by the Knesset of Israel to a bill to retroactively legalise Jewish settlement outposts in the occupied West Bank, what is the most recent estimate of the total number of unofficial Jewish settlement outposts in the West Bank; what is their assessment of the impact of such legislation on any two-state solution for Israel; what representations they have made, alone and with other governments, to the government of Israel in respect of the plans; and what steps they are taking to monitor the impact of any such representations.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK is extremely concerned that the Knesset has passed the first reading of a bill which would retroactively “legalise” around 55 settlement outposts, expropriate privately owned Palestinian land and pave the way for a significant further expansion of settlements in the West Bank. This would be illegal under international law, and once again calls into question the Israeli Government's commitment to a two-state solution. The UK urges the Israeli Government to reconsider the land regulation bill at the earliest opportunity. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr. Ellwood), raised the issue with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister when they met in London on 12 December. Minister Ellwood also raised the issue with the Israeli ambassador to London and issued two press statements expressing the UK's concerns.

**Occupied Territories: Housing  
23 Nov 2016 | 53085****Asked by: Jim Cunningham | Party: Labour Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will estimate the number of Palestinian people displaced from their homes through Israeli settlement building in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We condemn the continued demolitions of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. According to the UN, since the start of 2016, 1010 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished in Area C and in East Jerusalem, displacing 1476 people, including 696 children. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and take us further away from a two-state solution. We strongly urge the Government of Israel to reverse its systematic policy of settlement expansion which distances Israel from its international partners and undermine peace.

**Occupied Territories: Housing**  
**18 Nov 2016 | 53030**

**Asked by: Stephen Timms | Party: Labour Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to discourage illegal settlements in Palestine.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We will continue to raise our grave concerns about Israeli settlements with the Israeli Government. On 16 November I issued a public statement expressing our deep concern over the land regulation bill in the Israeli Knesset which seeks to 'legalise' settlement outposts across the West Bank. Such outposts are currently illegal under both Israeli domestic law and international humanitarian law. Should this proposal go ahead, it would seriously undermine prospects for a two-state solution. We urge the Israeli Government to reconsider the land regulation bill at the earliest opportunity. On 3 November I also issued a public statement condemning the recent announcement by the Israeli authorities to approve permits for constructing 181 new homes in the illegal settlement of Gilo in East Jerusalem. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv have also regularly raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on the continued expansion of settlements and the retroactive "legalisation" of outposts in the West Bank.

**Israel: Palestinians**  
**08 Nov 2016 | 51476**

**Asked by: Richard Burden | Party: Labour Party**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the contribution that monitoring settlement expansion in the West Bank makes to the prospects for (a) coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians and (b) the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Government has funded a number of projects to monitor and report on settlement expansion in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and to protect vulnerable Palestinian communities from the effects of settlement expansion. Accurate data on settlement expansion is vital in tracking negative developments and enabling us to express our very strong concerns publicly to the Israeli government. The UK's position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace and take us further away from a two-state solution. We will continue to raise our objections to settlements with the Israeli government. The increased pace of settlement advancement, including moves to approve retroactively unauthorised settlement units and outposts, fundamentally calls into question Israel's commitment to the two-state solution.

**Occupied Territories: Housing**  
**26 Jul 2016 | HL1129**

**Asked by: Lord Judd | Party: Labour Party**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the most recent Quartet Report's statement that Israel's "continuing policy of settlement and construction" was "steadily eroding the viability of the two-state solution", what specific actions they plan to take in response to the recent decisions by the government of Israel to approve new settlements and to provide a further \$18 million to support settlements.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

On 5 July, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), issued a statement expressing deep concerns about the announcement of new Israeli settlement units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. A Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesperson statement, on 22 June, also expressed concern about Israel's decision to provide an additional £12 million of funding for settlements. The position of the UK on Israeli settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, an obstacle to peace and make a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, harder to achieve. We will continue to raise our objections to settlements with the Israeli government.

**Middle East Peace Talks**  
**12 Jul 2016 | 613 c156**

**Asked by: Andy Slaughter | Party: Labour Party**

It is a pity that the Foreign Secretary could not attend that conference. Will he be attending or advising his successor to attend the main conference later this year, and will he join France and other European countries in recognising Palestine if Israel refuses to co-operate with the French initiative and continues building settlements?

**Answered by: Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

To make it clear, the summit was moved at short notice to accommodate the Secretary of State for the United States. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary was in Africa at the time, which was why I was able to attend. I hope the hon. Gentleman does not feel short-changed by the fact that I was there instead of the Foreign Secretary. It was an important meeting, as it registered the need for the international community to play its part and we look forward to moving ahead with the process. Discussions will take place in the next few months to bring the parties together.

## 6. Early Day Motions

### **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2334**

**EDM 855 (session 2016-17)**

**11 January 2017**

**Mark Durkan**

That this House welcomes the Government's support for UN Security Council resolution 2334 concerning Israel's illegal settlement building in occupied Palestinian territory; notes clause 5 that resolution text which calls on all states to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between territory of the state of Israel and the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967; calls on the Government to impose a total ban on trade and imports that are proven to either originate or be tied to Israel's illegal settlements in occupied Jerusalem, the West Bank and Golan heights; and further calls on the Government to ensure that the UK acts in compliance with obligations under relevant international laws and treaties which require the Government, along with all third parties, with specific regard to Israel's illegal settlements, to ensure respect for international law, not recognise an illegal situation arising from such breaches and refrain from any activity that would render aid or assistance to serious breaches of peremptory norms of international law.

### **SUPPORT FOR BEDOUIN VILLAGERS IN THE NEGEV**

**EDM 728 (session 2016-17)**

**28 November 2016**

**Tommy Sheppard**

That this House is gravely concerned at plans by the Israeli government to demolish the Israeli-Arab village, Umm al-Hiran, in the Negev area of Israel; notes with dismay that it reportedly intends to evict the 500 Bedouin residents of the village, which has existed for nearly 60 years, with the aim of establishing a new, Jewish-only settlement named Hiran in its stead; considers that the Bedouin villagers are full citizens of Israel but are being treated as though they have no rights; further notes the reports that the Israeli government plans to charge the villagers for the cost of the demolition of their own homes; understands that village leaders say there is no need to evict them as the Jewish settlers can move onto a site next door and live as neighbours; and calls on the Israeli government to cease its harsh and unnecessary actions immediately.

## 7. Further reading

House of Commons Library papers

### [\*\*The Occupied Palestinian Territories: recent developments\*\*](#)

Commons Briefing paper CBP-7689

21 December 2016

UN Security Council

### [\*\*Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms\*\*](#)

UN Security Council Press Release SC/12657

23 December 2016

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### [\*\*Occupied Palestinian Territories\*\*](#)

Providing a range of reports and articles on UN and related activities in the OPTs.

- This page includes the report: [\*\*Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, October 2016\*\*](#)

Amnesty International

### [\*\*Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories\*\*](#)

Amnesty International's homepage on Israel and the OPTs; providing an overview, news, commentary and research.

- This page includes the report: [\*\*Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2015/16\*\*](#)

Oxfam

### [\*\*What is Oxfam's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict?\*\*](#)

Outlining Oxfam's position on the conflict and what the organisation does in Israel and OPTs.

Middle East Quartet

### [\*\*Office of the Quartet\*\*](#)

The work of the Office of the Quartet is organized around the following five pillars: Movement and trade; Effective government; Unlocking the value of land; Reliable infrastructure; Investment promotion.

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