



## DEBATE PACK

CDP 2017-0246 | 1 December 2017

# Effect of Israeli demolitions on Palestinian communities

**Westminster Hall**  
**Wednesday 6 December 2017**  
**2.30pm – 4.00pm**  
**Debate initiated by Stephen Kinnock**

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

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# 1. Summary

There are two primary reasons why Israel demolishes homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The first is that these homes, according to the Israeli authorities, don't have the correct planning permissions. The second is that these homes allegedly belong to perpetrators or suspected perpetrators of attacks on Israeli civilians or military personnel. The demolitions are often referred to as "punishment" or "punitive demolitions".

The rate of demolitions by the Israeli authorities of Palestinian buildings in the West Bank reached a record peak in 2016, when 1093 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were demolished or seized by the Israeli authorities.<sup>1</sup>

According to the OCHA, the UN Humanitarian Agency, there has been an overall decline in the number of demolitions and seizures across the West Bank since the beginning of 2017. In East Jerusalem, however, demolitions have continued at nearly the same rates recorded in 2016, which were the highest figures since 2000.<sup>2</sup>

Israel claims that demolitions are conducted in order to uphold planning laws and zoning regulations in Area C – the part of West Bank for which Israel was given full civil and security authority under the Oslo Accords - and that demolitions are often accompanied by the construction of new housing providing upgraded accommodation and modern amenities, utilities and transport infrastructure for previously deprived communities.

In 2005 Israel decided to suspend its policy of 'punitive demolitions.' The decision was based in part on the findings of a report commissioned by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), to look into the effectiveness of the policy. The report, according to the Haaretz newspaper, found that:

No effective deterrence was proven, except in a few cases, and that the damage to Israel caused by the demolitions was greater than the benefits because the deterrence, limited if at all, paled in comparison to the hatred and hostility toward Israel that the demolitions provoked among the Palestinians.<sup>3</sup>

Israel reinstated the policy in 2014, after three Israeli students were kidnapped and killed in the West Bank. Israel's High Court of Justice did not block this move. According to B'TSELEM (the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories) up to October 2017, 5 apartments had been demolished as part of punitive actions,

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Library, '[Recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)', 20 March 2017, p 23

<sup>2</sup> OCHA, '[Demolition and seizure of service infrastructure in Palestinian communities in Area C exacerbates risk of forcible transfer](#)', 11 October 2017

<sup>3</sup> [IDF Panel Recommends Ending Punitive House Demolitions for Terrorists' Families](#), Haaretz, 17 February 2005

leaving 21 people homeless. This compares to 23 apartments destroyed in 2016, leaving 118 homeless.<sup>4</sup>

In January 2016 Gilad Erdan, Israel's public security minister, when asked about such punitive demolitions told the Washington Post:

Home demolitions are not something that we want to do, but we are trying to save innocent people's lives and stop the terror. We believe in human rights, but in every democracy you have to find a balance between those freedoms and the biggest freedom, which is staying alive.<sup>5</sup>

The human rights NGO Human Rights Watch, in their 2017 report on the region, described the difficulties Palestinians face in building homes in the West Bank:

Building permits are difficult, if not impossible, for Palestinians to obtain in East Jerusalem or in the 60 percent of the West Bank under exclusive Israeli control (Area C). This has driven Palestinians to construct housing and business structures that are at constant risk of demolition or confiscation by Israel on the grounds of being unauthorized. Palestinians in these areas have access to water, electricity, schools, and other state services that are either far more limited or costlier than the same services that the state makes available to Jewish settlers there.<sup>6</sup>

Responding to criticisms of Israeli policy by the OCHA in July 2016, a Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Times of Israel newspaper

Israel is a country of law and it is only reasonable to request that housing and building projects be conducted according to general regulations and building permits. Just as an American or British citizens would not be allowed to build without a permit, so do we expect of Palestinians living in Area C, and of foreign countries and donors assisting those Palestinians.<sup>7</sup>

Asked by the Times how it was possible that only one housing permit was granted to Palestinians in Area C in 2014 and 2015, the spokesman answered:

One has to take into account the particular condition. We see a lot of activity that is not really meant for the welfare of the population but rather as a political statement, and we have the clear impression that the Palestinians are being instrumentalized by the Palestinian Authority in order to create situations of conflict and friction.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> B'TSELEM, '[Statistics on punitive house demolitions](#)', last updated 8 October 2017.

<sup>5</sup> '[Israel steps up home demolitions to punish Palestinian attackers](#)', The Washington Post, 17 January 2017.

<sup>6</sup> '[2017 World Report: Israel/Palestine](#)', Human Rights Watch, accessed 1 December 2017.

<sup>7</sup> '[UN: Israel 'systematically' emptying Area C of Palestinians](#)', Times of Israel, 28 July 2016

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

## 2. Press Articles

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

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

### **EU to Israel: halt razing of Palestinian structures**

Jerusalem Post  
27 November 2017

### **How EU encourages Israel to destroy Palestinian homes**

Electronic Intifada  
27 November 2017  
Ali Abunimah

### **Israeli Army Prepares to Demolish Hundreds of Palestinian Homes in Northern Jordan Valley**

Haaretz  
13 November 2017  
Amira Hass

### **How a Palestinian man watched his Israeli friend bulldoze his house**

TRT World  
27 October 2017  
Bilge N. Kotan

### **Israel demolishes two Palestinian homes in occupied East Jerusalem**

The New Arab  
18 October 2017

### **British MPs urge intervention to stop Israeli demolition of Palestinian village**

Middle East Monitor  
22 September 2017

### **Belgium demands compensation from Israel for demolition of donated school equipment in occupied West Bank**

The Independent  
25 August 2017  
Bethan McKernan

### **The Dubious Demolition Policy Israel Just Can't Quit**

Bloomberg  
15 August 2017  
Daniel Gordis

### **Israel breaks ground on first new settlement in 20 years**

Daily Telegraph  
20 June 2017  
Raf Sanchez

**Concern about collective punishment: new measures targeting the residency rights of East Jerusalem Palestinians**

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)  
13 April 2017

**Jabal Mukaber faces Israel's collective punishment**

Al Jazeera  
26 February 2017  
Ylenia Gostoli

**Palestinians and Israelis are paying for the stalled peace process with their lives**

The Guardian  
26 January 2017  
Issam Aruri

**First Week of 2017: Israel Demolishes Homes of 151 Palestinians, Almost Four Times Last Year's Average**

Haaretz  
7 January 2017  
Amira Hass

## 3. Press releases

### **Minister for the Middle East visits the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**25 August 2017**

On his first visit to the region since being re-appointed as a Foreign & Commonwealth Office Minister, Mr Burt laid a wreath at a Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Gaza and heard from Gazans about current humanitarian challenges, before visiting Susiya village in Area C of the West Bank and Hebron to understand recent developments on the ground. While in Ramallah Mr Burt met with a number of representatives from the Palestinian Authority including Foreign Minister Malki and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to the working with the Palestinian leadership to achieve a two-state solution.

Speaking after his visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories Minister Burt said:

I was delighted to return to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) following my re-appointment to the Foreign Office as Minister of State for the Middle East.

I came to see and hear what has changed since my last official visit in 2013 and to reaffirm the UK's strong support for a two-state solution to secure peace and prosperity for both Palestinians and Israelis.

I am grateful for the hospitality and warmth shown to me across the OPTs, in Gaza, Susiya, Hebron, Jerusalem and Ramallah, and for very constructive meetings with Foreign Minister Malki, Finance Minister Bishara, Education Minister Saidam and PLO Chief Negotiator Erekat.

The UK will continue to support efforts to improve conditions on the ground for ordinary people and to enable negotiations to resume. I look forward to working with the parties and the wider international community, including the UN and the US, to make progress in the months ahead.

Minister Burt then travelled to Jerusalem and met a number of government officials and political figures to discuss wide-ranging issues affecting the UK's relations with Israel. He emphasised the UK's strong relationship with Israel and its commitment to the Middle East Peace Process.

**Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement plans in East Jerusalem**  
**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**7 July 2017**

Following the recent decision of the Israeli authorities (4 and 6 July) to advance plans for 1,600 new settlement units in the illegal settlements in Pisgat Ze'ev, Ramat Shlomo and Ramot in East Jerusalem, Foreign Office minister Alistair Burt said:

I strongly condemn these plans, which are the latest example of an accelerating policy of illegal settlement expansion. I call on the Israeli authorities to reconsider plans to construct further settlement units in East Jerusalem in the coming days, including construction in Sheikh Jarrah involving the demolition of Palestinian homes and displacement of Palestinian residents.

While settlements are not the only obstacle to peace, these actions take us further away from a two-state solution and the shared vision of a safe and secure Israel living side-by-side with a viable, independent and contiguous Palestinian state.

As a strong friend of Israel, we urge the Israeli government to avoid steps that reduce the prospects for peace and security and make it harder to achieve a different relationship between Israel and the Arab world.

**Tobias Ellwood statement on plans to demolish Bedouin village in Israel**  
**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**23 November 2016**

The issue was also discussed during Foreign Office oral questions in the House of Commons on Tuesday 22 November.

Tobias Ellwood said:

I have raised with the Israeli Ambassador the concerns expressed in the House of Commons about plans to demolish the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in the Negev. Demolition orders delivered to residents had stated that initial demolitions would occur on 22 November. Although the demolition did not happen yesterday, the threat remains.

The UK calls on the Israeli authorities and Bedouin community to work together to find a solution that meets the needs and respects the rights of the people affected. This should include a robust planning process that adequately consults and addresses the needs of Israel's Bedouin communities.

## 4. PQs

### West Bank

21 Nov 2017 | 631 cc848-49

**Asked by: Julie Elliott**

10. What recent discussions he has had with the Government of Israel on the status of Palestinian communities in area C of the west bank threatened with demolition. [901949]

**Asked by: Alan Brown**

13. What recent discussions he has had with the Government of Israel on the status of Palestinian communities in area C of the west bank threatened with demolition. [901952]

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Minister for the Middle East**

We are seriously concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities, which causes unnecessary suffering and is harmful to peace. We regularly raise this issue, and our embassy in Tel Aviv most recently raised our concerns with Israel in a joint démarche with European partners on 2 November.

**Asked by: Julie Elliott**

I thank the Minister for his answer. As we know, we have recently seen a very clear indication from Israel's Defence Minister about the intention to demolish the communities of Khan al-Ahmar and Susiya, and the military has issued a demarcation order signalling the intention to evacuate communities in the Jordan valley and E1 areas. Does the Minister agree that Israel must be held to account if those things actually take place?

**Answering member: Alistair Burt**

This is the subject of a continued conversation with the Israeli authorities in which we make it clear, as do others, that the threat to settlements is unacceptable. I have visited both places—Khan al-Ahmar some years ago, and Susiya quite recently—as have representatives from the embassy. We wait to see further developments. There is a lot of talk about further demolitions, but then the legal process holds them back. However, Israel can be in no doubt of our concerns about the demolition of Palestinian properties and the damage that that does for the prospects of a peaceful settlement.

**Asked by: Alan Brown**

The reality is that 100,000 hectares of Palestinian land have been taken for settlements and 50,000 homes have been demolished. Will the Minister at least call on the Israeli Government to lift the demolition order on the Bedouin village of Susiya, to which he referred? Will he put in place measures, such as guidance to UK businesses that they stop trading with illegal settlements, in a bid to break this cycle?

**Answering member: Alistair Burt**

We will keep our existing trade relationships, which allow customers to make their own decisions about where the goods they buy come from.

We are making our position on settlements extremely clear, and we will continue to do so.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**20 Nov 2017 | HL3162**

#### **Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the future for Palestinians following the report by the General Assembly Fourth Committee that a sharp increase in settlement construction activity fuelled by the passing of a regularisation law, combined with the demolition of Palestinian homes, has led to an atmosphere of despair and hopelessness among Palestinians in the occupied territories.

#### **Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Government is clear that settlement expansion and demolition activity is illegal and harmful to the peace process. When the Prime Minister met Prime Minister Netanyahu on 2 November she reiterated the UK's continued opposition to settlement activity and our firm commitment to a two-state solution as the best way to bring about stability and peace. Former Minister for the Middle East, Tobias Ellwood MP, issued a statement on 7 February condemning the passing of the Land Regularisation Law by the Knesset. The law is currently being challenged in Israel's High Court of Justice. We understand frustration at the lack of progress in the Middle East Peace Process. We believe that peace will only come through negotiations between the parties, and we are committed to supporting progress towards a two-state solution.

### **Israel: Bedouin**

**06 Nov 2017 | HL2405**

#### **Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that a letter will be sent from the governments of Belgium and seven other EU countries to the government of Israel demanding compensation from Israel for the demolition of new school facilities for Bedouin communities in the occupied West Bank; whether they (1) were asked, and (2) considered, signing that letter; and what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel concerning that demand.

#### **Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK was not asked to sign a letter requesting compensation for Israeli demolition of school facilities for Bedouin communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We understand from press reports that the letter relates to a group of international donors to the Occupied Palestinian Territories Humanitarian Pooled Fund, of which the UK is not part. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have, however, repeatedly raised our concerns about demolitions with Israeli Ministers and senior officials, and urged them to cease this counter-productive policy. We

remain gravely concerned by Israeli proposals to relocate Bedouin population from the E1 area of the West Bank.

**Israel: Bedouin**

**06 Nov 2017 | HL2403**

**Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the letter dated 27 September from Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights to Alistair Burt MP, Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, concerning the forcible transfer of two Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa wrote to the Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights on 11 October. He informed them that the Government is gravely concerned about continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities including proposals to demolish the Bedouin villages of Khan al-Ahmar and Susiya. The UK has repeatedly called on Israeli authorities to halt proposals to demolish these communities.

**Israel: West Bank**

**27 Oct 2017 | 108779**

**Asked by: Julie Elliott**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Palestinian structures demolished by Israel in Area C of the West Bank that have received funding from the (a) UK, (b) EU and (c) UN.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK has not directly funded any structures in recent years that have been demolished by the Israeli Government.

According to the EU, 155 Palestinian structures, including 67 in Area C, were demolished or seized in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) over the period 1 March to 31 August 2017.

39 structures funded by the EU or its member states were demolished or seized throughout the West Bank in the same period. A further 34 EU funded structures were demolished in January and February. We have no numbers for how many UN funded structures have been demolished or seized in the same period of time.

**Israel: West Bank**

**27 Oct 2017 | 108778**

**Asked by: Julie Elliott**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterparts on

compensation for the demolition of UK-funded Palestinian structures in Area C of the West Bank.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK has not directly funded any structures in recent years that have been demolished by the Israeli Government. We are keeping the case for compensation under review. The UK is focused on preventing demolitions from happening through our funding to the Norwegian Refugee Council legal aid programme which helps residents challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system.

**Israel: West Bank**

**26 Oct 2017 | 108777**

**Asked by: Julie Elliott**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the level of funding from the public purse that had been spent on Palestinian structures in Area C of the West Bank that have been demolished by Israel.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

No structures directly funded by the UK in recent years have been demolished. A number of structures funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) have been demolished in recent years. The UK's financing share of EU expenditure varies year on year but has been approximately 15%. The UK regularly raises demolitions with the government of Israel.

**Israel: West Bank**

**20 Oct 2017 | 107485**

**Asked by: Dr David Drew**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to make representations to the Government of Israel on the demolition of the two Palestinian West Bank villages at Khan Al Ahmar and Susiya.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Government remains gravely concerned about continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities including proposals to demolish the Bedouin villages of Khan al-Ahmar and Susiya.

The UK continues to call on the Israeli authorities to halt proposals to demolish Khan al-Ahmar and Susiya. Prior to the most recently scheduled Israeli High Court hearing about Khan al-Ahmar on 25 September –subsequently postponed - our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on 24 September. The Foreign Secretary expressed our concern about the proposals when he met Prime Minister Netanyahu in Israel on 8 March.

**Israel: Bedouin**

**19 Oct 2017 | HL1798**

**Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the planned demolition of the Palestinian communities of Susiya and Khan Al Ahmar.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Government remains gravely concerned about continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities including proposals to demolish the Bedouin villages of Khan al-Ahmar and Susiya. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa visited Susiya in August 2017.

The UK has repeatedly called on the Israeli authorities to halt proposals to demolish Khan al-Ahmar. Prior to the most recently scheduled Israeli High Court hearing on the matter on 25 September – subsequently postponed - our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on 24 September. The Foreign Secretary expressed our concern about the proposals when he met Prime Minister Netanyahu in Israel on 8 March.

**Topical Questions**

**18 Oct 2017 | 629 c830**

**Asked by: Alan Brown**

The village of Khan al-Ahmar and its aid -funded school remain under the threat of demolition. The international community has stood by while other aid-funded structures have been demolished. When will action be taken—when will Israel be billed for the demolitions?

**Answered by: Alistair Burt | International Development**

The UK continues to make representations on demolitions in the west bank and ensures that Israel understands the relationship between the UK and funding. We support efforts to bring to the notice of the Israeli authorities the legal arguments against demolitions, and we will continue to do so.

**Israel: Bedouin**

**17 Oct 2017 | HL1683**

**Asked by: Baroness Sheehan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel regarding the possible demolition of Khan al-Ahmar.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Government remains gravely concerned about continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities including proposals to demolish the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar. Such demolitions could pave the way for settlement building in E1,

threatening the possibility of a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital. The UK has repeatedly called on Israeli authorities to halt proposals to demolish Khan al-Ahmar. Prior to the most recently scheduled Israeli High Court hearing on the matter on 25 September – subsequently postponed – our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on 24 September. The Foreign Secretary expressed our concern about the proposals when he met Prime Minister Netanyahu in Israel on 8 March.

**Israel: Palestinians**  
**25 Sep 2017 | HL1500**

**Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding reports of the demolition by Israeli forces of school buildings which were built using EU funds from the village of Jub-Ad Dhib.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I raised the UK's concerns about the demolitions of schools in Area C when I met the Israeli Ambassador on 29 August. The EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah issued a local statement expressing strong concern over recent confiscations, by the Israeli authorities, of Palestinian school structures in Bedouin communities in the West Bank. The statement referred to confiscation of solar panels in Abu Nuwar (9 August), a kindergarten in Badu el Baba (21 August), and the dismantling of an elementary school in the village of Jubbet Adh Dhib close to Bethlehem (22 August). 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.

**Occupied Territories: Demolition**  
**23 Mar 2017 | 68542**

**Asked by: John Glen**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Israel to reverse demolition orders relating to the village of Khan Al Ahmar in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

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

The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), raised the UK's concerns about demolitions, including the village of Khan Al Ahmar, with Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. The Israeli High Court has approved a temporary injunction extending the deadline for the demolition order against the structures in Khan Al Ahmar to March 30.

**Israel: West Bank**

**21 Mar 2017 | HL5891**

**Asked by: Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the fact that approximately half of the structures in Susiya in Area C of the West Bank were funded by the EU, what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the pending demolition orders and about possible forced transfer of the residents to another location.

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

The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) expressed UK concern over demolitions in Area C to Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has repeatedly raised our opposition to demolitions with the Israeli authorities, and urged them to provide a legal route for Palestinian construction.

**Occupied Territories: Demolition**

**16 Mar 2017 | 67285**

**Asked by: Ruth Cadbury**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans are in place to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinians who will be made homeless by demolitions in the near future.

**Answering member: Rory Stewart | Department for International Development**

DFID's core contribution to the European Union includes support to emergency humanitarian work in Area C. The UK also supports the Norwegian Refugee Council to provide legal advice and representation to Palestinian communities at risk of losing their homes to demolition or eviction. The UK continues to raise with Israeli authorities at the highest level our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, most recently when the Foreign Secretary met Prime Minister Netanyahu on 8 March 2017.

**Israel: Bedouin**

**13 Mar 2017 | HL5661**

**Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the call by the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities for the occupied Palestinian territory, what action they are taking to (1) protect the occupants of, and (2) prevent demolition of buildings in, the Bedouin village of Khan al Ahmar.

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

The UK Government is gravely concerned about continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities, including plans to

demolish the Bedouin village of Khan al Ahmar. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) raised this issue with the Israeli Ambassador to London on 1 March. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on 28 February.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**08 Feb 2017 | HL5094**

#### **Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel following reports that Israel's High Court of Justice has decided to allow the Civil Administration in the occupied West Bank to demolish eight Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills affecting around 1,500 Palestinians.

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

While we have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, our Embassy in Tel Aviv has previously raised our concerns on demolitions and has repeatedly urged the Israeli authorities to provide a legal route for Palestinians to obtain building permits.

The UK's position on demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is clear: demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; are harmful to the peace process; and are, in all but the most exceptional of cases, contrary to international humanitarian law. The Fourth Geneva Convention is clear that the destruction of any real or personal property in Occupied Territory is not justified unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.

## 5. Other Parliamentary material

### 5.1 Debates

#### **Balfour Declaration Centenary**

**5 July 2017 | 783 cc948-72**

#### **Israel and Palestine**

**13 October 2016 | 774 cc2084-108**

### 5.2 Early Day Motions

#### **Palestinian village of Susiya – announced demolition by Israeli authorities**

**EDM 616 (session 2017-19)**

**29 November 2017**

**Ben Lake**

That this House notes with extreme concern the plight of the Palestinian village of Susiya, a fifth of which the Israeli State has announced will be demolished; further notes that the Israeli State claims that this village was constructed in violation of judicial order, yet has repeatedly refused to regulate the land or provide permits; condemns the imminent demolition of these 20 buildings which will leave 100 people, half of them children, without shelter in winter, contrary to Israel's obligations under international law; and urges the Government to condemn the aggressive actions of the Israeli Government and engage in diplomatic talks to achieve peaceful solutions in accordance with international law and the protection of human rights.

## 6. Further reading

**October 2017 Demolitions and Displacement summary**, Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHD), 15 November 2017

**Home Demolition as Collective Punishment**, Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), 11 November 2017

**Statistics on punitive house demolitions**, Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), Updated 8 October 2017

**The effects of house demolitions on the family**, Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHD), Undated

**Judaizing Palestine: a campaign against house demolitions in a single state**, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), 15 September 2016

Orly Rachmilovitz, *The Israeli Supreme Court on Military Demolition of Palestinian Homes*, Versa (Opinions of the Supreme Court of Israel), 17 January 2016

Mordechai Kremnitzer and Lina Saba-Habesch, *House Demolitions*, Laws 2015, 29 May 2015

This article discusses the nature of “house demolitions” as used by the State of Israel in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

**Israel Destroys Homes to Deter Terrorists. A New Study Says It Works—But Is It Moral?** New Republic, 9 December 2014  
(\*Study available below)

Benmelech, Berrebi and Klor, **Counter-Suicide-Terrorism: Evidence from House Demolitions**, Public Policy, May 2014

**Britain-Palestine All-Party Parliamentary Group**

**All-Party Britain-Israel Parliamentary Group**

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