

Thank you for writing to me regarding Palestine.

I share the frustration and disappointment expressed by many at the lack of progress on the Middle East Peace Process, and I strongly believe that a negotiated two-state solution is in the interests of both Israel and the Palestinians.

A report by the Middle East Quartet expressed that continuing on the current course will make the prospect of two states living side by side in peace and security "increasingly remote". This is why all sides need to avoid acts that are harmful to the peace process. Israel should cease the policy of illegal settlement construction and expansion, and the designating of land for exclusive Israeli use.

The Palestinian Authority should also act decisively and take all steps within its capacity to stop incitement to violence and strengthen ongoing efforts to combat terrorism. A two-state solution that recognises the importance of security and stability, and guarantees a viable future for both Palestinians and Israelis must remain the goal of the international community.

It is therefore essential that the UK continues to support dialogue and fully back all initiatives to keep the two-state solution alive, while ensuring that the human rights of all parties involved are protected. I know from the many letters and e-mails I receive that there are very strong views on this matter.

The UK must now lead the way amongst the international community by showing bold and decisive leadership as Parliament did when we voted overwhelmingly in favour of recognising Palestinian statehood. We must do everything possible to help broker an immediate return to serious and substantial negotiations. Both sides need to avoid acts that are harmful to the peace process. I feel very strongly about this issue and it is clear that this is shared across the country.

I have also made contributions to the Westminster Hall debate on Gaza during which I questioned the Government on the rebuilding of vital infrastructure such as homes and hospitals.

Thank you once again for sharing your views with me on this important matter. I hope I can count on your support tomorrow.