

I share the frustration and disappointment expressed by many at the lack of progress on the Middle East peace process. I believe a two-state solution that recognises the importance of security and stability, and guarantees a viable and secure future for both Israelis and Palestinians, must remain the goal of the international community.

However, a report by the Middle East Quartet last summer expressed that continuing on the current course will make the prospect of two states living side by side in peace and security "increasingly remote". It is therefore essential that the United Kingdom continues to support dialogue and fully backs all initiatives to keep the two-state solution alive.

The UK supported UNSCR 2334 on 23 December 2016, which the British Ambassador to the UN described as "a clear reinforcement" of the view that a two-state solution remains the only viable route to a sustained peace. As you are aware, the resolution reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is illegal. The recent announcement of 3,000 new settlement units in the West Bank undermines still further the prospect of a two-state solution to this conflict.

While I believe that the policy of illegal settlement construction and expansion must cease, it is clear that all sides need to avoid acts that are harmful to the peace process. UNSCR 2334 also calls for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation. It calls on all parties to observe calm and restraint, and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. As such, I believe the Palestinian Authority must act decisively and take all steps within its capacity to stop incitement to violence and strengthen ongoing efforts to combat terrorism.

Thank you once again for writing to me and for sharing your thoughts.

Yours sincerely

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Labour MP for Bristol South