



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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Cllr Edgar Owens
Chairman of the Council
Gwynedd Council
By email: eirianroberts3@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Dear Cllr Owens,

Thank you for your email of 19 February with a letter attachment, to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of Gwynedd Council, about Israel and Palestine. The Central Correspondence Unit in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has been asked to reply.

The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process 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, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

It has long been our position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal. The increased pace of settlement advancement, plans for the first new settlement deep in the West Bank in over 25 years and the retroactive approval of unauthorised settlement outposts all undermine the physical viability of two states for two peoples.

However the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is deeply complex. Settlements are not the only obstacle to peace. The people of Israel deserve to live free from the scourge of terrorism and anti-Semitic incitement which gravely undermine the prospects for a two-state solution.

The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community.

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

We urge Israel and the Palestinian Authority to work together to meet their obligations under the Oslo Accords. We also call on all parties to abide by International Humanitarian Law and to promote peace, stability and security.

Peace will only come through negotiations between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress. We have long supported balanced UN resolutions. This includes United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 that addressed incitement and settlements. But resolutions that politicise neutral UN bodies or risk hardening positions on both sides, do little to advance peace or mutual understanding.

The occupation will not end and peace will not be achieved by symbolic measures, but by real movement towards renewed peace negotiations which create a viable Palestinian state, living in peace and security side-by-side with Israel.

Yours sincerely,

**Central Correspondence Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office**