

11th November 2015

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the recent violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I know that Ministers are aware of the concerns you raise.

The recent clashes are deeply concerning and highlight that there can be no solution to the underlying tensions in the region through violence. It is saddening that the violent clashes have resulted in a number of deaths and hundreds of injuries.

The Government is vocal in its condemnation of all acts of violence, including attacks by both Palestinians and Israeli settlers. I welcome that Ministers have strongly urged all sides to take immediate steps to de-escalate the tensions and avoid actions that threaten to exacerbate the situation. I can assure you that the UK has repeatedly raised concerns about incidents of settler violence and intimidation with the Israeli authorities and stressed the importance of bringing the settlers responsible to justice.

The UK enjoys a productive relationship with Israel which enables us to express our views at senior levels very frankly. It is the UK's assessment that imposing sanctions on Israel would lessen this influence, not increase it, and would not promote the urgent progress towards a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that I would like to see.

The UK Government's position on 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. Ministers consistently urge the Israeli authorities to cease all settlement building and to remove illegal outposts, as required under international law and in fulfilment of Israel's obligations under the Roadmap.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP