

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2017

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

The UK Government's position on this issue 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.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the OPTs, about one third of land within the outer limits of settlements is privately owned Palestinian land. Illegal settlements are therefore reducing the amount of land, including agricultural land, available for Palestinian use, and restrict access to water sources. Settlements also contribute to the fragmentation of the West Bank and impede movement and access around the West Bank, making it difficult for Palestinians, particularly those who live close to settlements, to move around and to access agricultural land, or to travel for employment purposes.

There are currently no plans for legislation to ban the import of settlement products.

The UK introduced voluntary guidelines in 2009 to enable produce from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories to be specifically labelled as such. This was in order to enable consumers to make a more fully informed decision concerning the products they buy. In addition, the Government recently updated its online guidance for citizens and businesses on overseas markets, including Israel and the OPTs, in line with the UK Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. This guidance is available here:

http://www.uktiofficefinder.ukti.gov.uk/en_hk/export/countries/asiapacific/neareast/palestina/nterritories/overseasbusinessrisk.html



I firmly believe that the UK Government's determination to support a two-state solution is the only way to give the Palestinian people the state that they need and deserve, and the Israeli people the security and peace they are entitled to.

Once again, thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY