



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

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The Rt Hon. George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 12 September on behalf of a number of your constituents, about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

On 31 July, the Foreign Secretary wrote to Prime Minister Netanyahu alongside the French, German, Italian and Spanish Foreign Ministers urging reconsideration of the Israeli Government's decision. As the previous Foreign Secretary's statement of 1 June made clear, the UK is deeply concerned by the proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar, which the UN has said could amount to forcible transfer in violation of international humanitarian law.

Following the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court on 5 September, officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 6 September, stressing that the demolition, which was enabled rather than mandated by the Israeli Supreme Court's judgement, called into serious question Israel's commitment to a fair and lasting solution to the conflict. We issued a statement on 10 September along with France, Germany, Spain and Italy reiterating our call to the Israeli Government not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village – including its school – and displace its residents.

The British Consul-General to Jerusalem visited the community on 11 September to express our concern and demonstrate international support for the community.

I visited Khan al-Ahmar on 30 May and on 12 June issued a video message emphasising the UK's concern at the village's imminent demolition.

I reiterated UK concerns about the proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar to the Israeli Ambassador most recently on 9 July and called for the Israeli authorities to reconsider

these plans. In my conversations with the Israeli Ambassador I mentioned the strength of opinion against the proposed demolition felt by many in the UK Parliament, as demonstrated by the recent cross-party letter and the debate during the urgent question on 4 July.

The previous Foreign Secretary raised this most recently with Prime Minister Netanyahu on 6 June. On 3 July the British Ambassador to Israel raised the issue with the Israeli National Security Adviser. On 5 July he joined a demarche alongside European partners to urgently request that the Israeli authorities halt demolition plans.

The UK and international partners will continue to call bilaterally, and in international fora, for Israel to abandon demolition plans entirely, and instead provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

The UK remains concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. While Minister Burt was in Gaza, he announced new humanitarian support of £1.5 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross appeal. This will help treat patients in 11 hospitals under pressure in Gaza, by restocking vital medical supplies including surgical equipment, bandages and medicines and help provide physical rehabilitation services for around 4,000 people. The UK will also help provide Palestinians in Gaza with clean water, through £2 million of support to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The UK will urge the parties to prioritise progress towards a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps for Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

Yours ever
Alistair

THE RT HON. ALISTAIR BURT MP
Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa