

**The Rt. Hon. Alister Jack MP**  
Member of Parliament for Dumfries and Galloway



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Stuart Littlewood  
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Our Ref: AJ2882

14 August 2020

Dear Mr Littlewood,

Thank you for your emails of 10 July and 7 August regarding the West Bank.

I appreciate your concerns about the situation in the region. That is why I firmly support the UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process.

There should be 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 fair and realistic settlement for refugees. The UK Government consistently calls for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

The UK's position has not changed, including towards the West Bank and the 1967 borders. I am glad that the UK repeatedly reaffirms this commitment, including most recently at the UN Security Council, and will continue to do so.

I am concerned by reports of possible Israeli moves towards annexation and believe that any such unilateral moves would be damaging to the renewed efforts to restart peace negotiations, and contrary to international law. No changes to the status quo can be made without an agreement negotiated by the parties themselves and I join my colleagues in Government in calling for a meaningful return to negotiations by all concerned parties.

The UK continues to urge Israel not to take steps towards annexation. The Prime Minister has conveyed the UK's opposition to unilateral annexation to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on multiple occasions, including in a phone call on 6 July and a letter in June. The Prime Minister also urged Israel not to proceed in an article in Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth on 1 July. The Foreign Secretary reiterated this message in his calls with Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Gantz and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi.

The UK's position on Israeli settlements is clear. Settlements are illegal under international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations. That being said, the UK, along with a number of other European countries opposed the creation of the UN's business and human rights database. The UK Government neither encourages nor offers support to individuals or companies who operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Gaza's humanitarian situation remains deeply concerning, especially with the additional pressures of Covid-19. I am proud that the UK has been a long supporter of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides primary healthcare to more than 1.2 million people in Gaza and stability in the wider region. In 2020/21, the UK is providing £34.5 million of funding to the UNRWA.

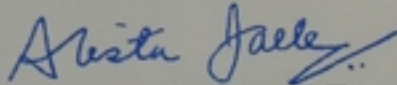
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I will of course be monitoring developments over the coming weeks closely.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alister Jack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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