

Palestinians and Israelis deserve equal measures of peace, security and prosperity

Thank you, President. And, I thank also Deputy Special Coordinator Hastings for her briefing. I'd also like to thank the United States for the update. We were pleased to see President Biden's visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories this month, and the announcement of US funding for East Jerusalem hospitals and UNRWA.

We welcome Israel's commitment during this visit to restart the Joint Economic Committee and accelerate transition to 4G in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These are important steps that have the potential to bolster the Palestinian economy. We echo President Biden's calls for urgent progress in both cases, and the UK stands ready to provide support.

Recent direct discussions between Prime Minister Lapid, President Herzog and Defence Minister Gantz, and President Abbas and other PA leaders, are similarly welcome. Such cooperation and dialogue are essential to tackling shared challenges.

However, the situation on the ground remains fragile. We note, with concern, UN OHCHR's report on the increase in fatalities. In the first six months of 2022, 60 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces during law enforcement operations in the West Bank. In the same period, 19 Israelis were killed in terror attacks. Terrorist attacks against civilians are abhorrent and unacceptable. We call on all parties to de-escalate tensions and stop the continued loss of life.

We welcome US engagement with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to seek the truth surrounding Shireen Abu Aqleh's death, and we now urge accountability for those responsible.

We continue to be deeply concerned about the imminent risk of forcible transfer of over 1000 Palestinians at Masafer Yatta and recent detention of staff of humanitarian organisations seeking to aid the community.

This month we saw the disbandment of the community at Ras al Tin, following the demolition of their homes and settler attacks. We urge Israel to abide by its obligations under international law to ensure the residents of Masafer Yatta, and other communities in Area C, are protected, that humanitarian access is permitted and to refrain from further evictions and demolitions.

We also call on Israel to halt plans to progress 1900 settlement units in East Jerusalem on 25 July. Settlements are illegal under international law and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

The UK believes that Palestinians and Israelis deserve equal measures of

peace, security and prosperity. A negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, remains the best means of achieving that outcome.

Thank you, President.