

Improving Israeli-Palestinian economic cooperation as a path to peace: Lord Ahmad statement at UNGA

I am sincerely grateful to Norway for bringing us together and to the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority for their participation.

Let me begin by expressing our deep concern over the grave economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

If we are to achieve peace and stability in the region, it is of course vital that the Palestinian Authority and UNWRA are on a stable financial footing.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting this.

We will continue to work directly with both parties to help boost economic development, trade and investment.

This includes offering technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority and supporting Palestinian companies to boost exports, among other things.

We were pleased to hear about the success of the E-VAT pilot and welcome Israel's commitment to rolling out the system to all Israeli businesses.

As we know, this has the potential to raise more than \$100 million per year for the Palestinian Authority.

It is a clear signal of the value of cooperation between the parties and the donor community.

We also welcome the Government of Israel's efforts to enable electronic payments to Palestinians working in Israel.

And we are glad to see the positive steps taken by the Palestinian Authority, as outlined by Finance Minister Bishara, to reduce the public sector wage bill.

Madame Chair,

While we welcome commitments made by the parties and the spirit of cooperation they bring today, progress has not been as fast as we would have liked.

We need much quicker progress on fiscal reforms, and efforts to reduce barriers to trade and investment in the West Bank, if we stand any hope of reviving economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We call on the Government of Israel to undertake reforms to the clearance revenue mechanism and to renew efforts to tackle the restrictions and costs

facing Palestinian businesses.

We would also like Israel to take a decision on the handling fee on Palestinian Authority fuel purchases – which is disproportionate, in our view.

We urge the Palestinian Authority to bolster work with partners, including the International Monetary Fund, on the reforms necessary to address the fiscal crisis and build a more stable future.

We must also retain focus on the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the need for economic recovery and reconstruction.

Only last month, we saw yet another escalation of violence on the strip.

We welcome the increase in permits for Gazans to work in Israel but unemployment remains unacceptably high.

We urge Israel to continue increasing work permits and reducing restrictions in order to create more jobs.

Madame Chair,

There is no hope of making progress on these issues without ministerial level engagement and dialogue, and we would like to see this stepped up.

We welcome the parties' commitments to re-establishing the Joint Economic Committee as the key body for decision-making, and call for this meeting to take place urgently.

The UK will do all we can to support the parties to work together to address challenges and strengthen Palestinian Authority institutions for the future.

Madame Chair,

While we have rightly focussed on the economic situation today, I must also address the bigger picture. We are gravely concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank and the risk of instability.

The UK calls on both parties to refrain from taking actions that undermine the prospect for peace.

This includes all unilateral and provocative acts, and breaches of international law.

These take us further from a negotiated two-state solution, and the long-term peace and stability that Israelis and Palestinians so deserve.

The UK will do all we can to support progress towards that goal.

Abusive partner receives increased prison sentence for blackmail and assault

News story

An abusive partner has had his prison sentence for blackmail and assault doubled



A Cornwall man who abused his partner has received an increased prison sentence after his case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the then Solicitor General Edward Timpson CBE KC MP.

Ben Solomon, now 35, was in a relationship with the victim for approximately nine months. Following a breakdown in their relationship, Solomon threatened to disclose videos of them having sex to the victim's family, friends and work colleagues, the offender was arrested and released on bail.

While on bail, Solomon and the victim rekindled their relationship. He visited her home one night, where he acted violently towards her, including slapping her, pulling her hair and strangling her twice.

On 8 July 2022, Solomon was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for blackmail and assault occasioning actual bodily harm. The sentencing took place at Plymouth Crown Court.

Following the sentencing, Solomon's case was referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme because the then Solicitor General felt that Solomon's offending was serious enough to warrant a longer prison term.

On 23 September 2022, the Court found Solomon's original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 3 years' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the newly appointed HM Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP said:

Ben Solomon's shameful and abusive behaviour warranted a stronger punishment. I am glad that the Court agreed and hope that the decision to sentence Solomon to a longer prison term will send the message that physical and mental abuse will never be tolerated.

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[Securing sustainable funding for the UN's vital work to support Palestinian refugees: Lord Ahmad statement at UNGA](#)

I am grateful to Sweden, Jordan and the UN Secretary-General for bringing us together.

Let me begin by thanking UNRWA for your tireless work to support Palestinian refugees.

You play an important role in helping to maintain stability in an increasingly fragile region, and the UK will continue to support you in every way we can.

We announced a new multi-year funding agreement with UNRWA earlier this year.

This year, we will provide £15m of funding to help you continue delivering high-quality services.

I hope that all donors will consider similar predictable multi-year funding so that UNRWA can continue its vital work.

We are, however, alive to the real financial challenges the agency faces.

We commend your efforts to get on to a more viable financial footing and address the chronic funding shortfall.

But these efforts alone will not be enough.

We urge UNRWA to continue work on a robust and realistic plan for resource mobilisation, and on clear contingency plans to manage future financial challenges.

Member States should continue to think creatively about opportunities to support UNRWA to resolve its perennial financial crisis and deliver on its mandate. This includes reviewing opportunities outlined in the 2017 paper by the UN Secretary General.

Let me finish by reiterating that a negotiated, two-state solution is the only viable means of bringing the peace and stability that both Palestinians and Israelis deserve.

Until that day, the UK will continue to support UNRWA and its vital work.

Net zero economic opportunities

Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here representing the United Kingdom.

I want to thank our hosts for organising this important gathering – and Pittsburgh for welcoming us all.

This city is a shining example of re-invention and innovation. We can all learn from its approach.

Nearly a year ago at COP26 the then Prince of Wales, now our new King Charles III, implored the world to act – and act fast.

Today, over 90% of global GDP is covered by some form of net zero target, up from just 30% when we first took on the COP Presidency.

But targets are all well and good.

The big question is how we deliver on them.

The UK has always been a clean energy leader. We were among the first to make a legislative commitment to net-zero and I want to re-affirm my government's commitment to deliver on that.

We intend to get to carbon neutrality in the most efficient and business friendly way possible.

Just recently the world's largest offshore windfarm opened off the coast of Yorkshire, where my own constituency is.

We've got the kit; we've got the capability.

But we know that unilateral action is not enough. To meet our goals, we must harness the full power of collective action.

That's why, at COP26, 45 world leaders launched the Breakthrough Agenda. A commitment to strengthen international collaboration, so that clean technologies become the most affordable and attractive option in all regions by 2030.

I am thrilled that this Agenda will continue under the Clean Energy Ministerial and Mission Innovation after COP27.

And I want to thank the Breakthrough report authors for their clear analysis and firm recommendations for urgent coordinated international action.

So how to respond?

I'd like to pick out 4 key areas.

Firstly, standards.

Shared international standards, such as emission standards for clean hydrogen or steel or sustainability standards for battery supply chains, are vital for unlocking trade and investment.

Secondly, market creation.

Governments need to send clear policy signals and companies need to commit to procuring clean technologies to give suppliers the confidence to invest and scale production. We look forward to continuing this important work through the Industrial Deep Decarbonisation Initiative and First Movers Coalition.

Thirdly, research, development and demonstration.

We must coordinate our efforts to deliver transformational projects that showcase innovations, such as the 5 flagship projects under the Green Powered Future Mission.

To signal our intent, I am pleased to announce a UK contribution of at least £1.5 billion to the US-led global Clean Energy Technologies Demonstration Challenge.

Lastly, we must strengthen our collective offer of assistance to the Global South.

By aligning, coordinating and reinforcing our assistance efforts, we can ensure clean technologies are affordable and accessible for all.

So I want to invite every country here today to join me in responding to the recommendations in the Breakthrough Report by COP27.

By doing so we can use the weight of collective action to accelerate a just and global transition for the benefit of everyone, driving jobs, growth and opportunity.

The UK looks forward to working with you all to turn clean energy ambition into action.

Deadline set for schemes compensating victims of WWII property confiscation

- Final claims for compensation under the Enemy Property and Baltic States Schemes must be lodged by 31 March 2023
- since 1999, the schemes have considered over 1,300 claims, paying out over £23 million to successful claimants
- after decades in operation, the schemes now only receive a very small number of claims each year and have reached their natural conclusion

Today (Friday 23 September), the UK government has announced a deadline for making claims under 2 schemes compensating people who had assets confiscated during World War II.

Under the Trading with the Enemy Act 1939, the UK government confiscated assets in British territories owned by residents of enemy countries during World War II. This included residents of the former Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan and countries occupied by them.

Under the Enemy Property Payment Scheme, the Enemy Property Claims Assessment Panel (EPCAP) has been compensating individuals who suffered Nazi persecution and had their assets confiscated. The Panel also oversees the Baltic States Scheme, which compensates asset owners who resided in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania.

For both schemes, final compensation claims must be lodged with the EPCAP Secretariat by 31 March 2023.

Compensation under the schemes was intended for people directly affected by the Trading with the Enemy Act 1939 or their close heirs. The Enemy Property Payment Scheme now only receives a small number of claims each year and there have been no claims under the Baltic States Scheme since 2013. Other comparable compensation schemes across Europe concluded their operations many years ago.

Today's announcement follows a [consultation launched last January to determine the appropriate date for the closure of the schemes](#).

To be eligible under the Enemy Property Payments Scheme, the owner of the UK asset at the time of confiscation or the claimant (who must prove their relationship to the owner) must have suffered Nazi persecution.

The Baltic States Scheme applies to any resident of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania who had deposited assets in the UK before the War. Under this scheme, Nazi persecution is not essential for the return of the original confiscated asset.

Individuals who believe that they or a direct relation may have held or deposited assets in the UK that were then confiscated by the UK government

are encouraged to contact the EPCAP Secretariat at epcap.secretariat@beis.gov.uk.

- For more information and to make a claim please refer to the EPCAP publicity notice or via the [Make a claim under the enemy property compensation schemes](#) page
- following the previous worldwide notification in 2016 a further 24 claims have been lodged under the Enemy Property Payments Scheme, an average of 4 per year.
- the government recognises the problems faced by some potential claimants in obtaining evidence to support claims due to COVID-19, including backlogs caused at National Archives across Europe. To enable claimants to substantiate their claims, the Department will accept partially completed claims as at 31 March 2023 where an asset has been identified as being available for release, where a claimant has been identified and evidence provided of their identity and legal entitlement to the asset, and if claimants are represented by a third party, a power of attorney must have been granted to the representative
- all claims received by 31 March 2023 will be assessed by the existing EPCAP Panel through to their conclusion. Terms of reference for the schemes are available