

Working towards a two-state solution

- UK calls on Government of Israel to end demolition of Palestinian homes and allow delivery of humanitarian aid
- UK welcomes progress made in discussions of Ad-hoc Liaison Committee as well as progress towards elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- UK reaffirms commitment to a two-state solution and calls for “work towards a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike”

Remarks by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on the Middle East (Israel/Palestine), 26 February 2021

Let me start by thanking the Special Coordinator for his briefing, and thanking Malak and Oren for sharing their personal reflections with us today – including on how to help foster peace and understanding among new and older generations alike.

In order to build trust between the parties and populations, unilateral acts must also cease. The UK has called on the Government of Israel to end the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The latest demolitions in Humsa Al-Baqai'a have again made this vulnerable Palestinian community, including children, homeless. We urge the Government of Israel to allow the unimpeded delivery of vital humanitarian aid. We also call on the Government of Israel to refrain from the destruction or confiscation of such aid once it's delivered.

The UK will continue to champion the rights and freedoms of women, young people and marginalised groups. We join Palestinian women, and all Palestinians, in rejecting the recent changes made by Hamas – the de facto authorities in Gaza – to travel arrangements from Gaza, which will limit Gazan women's independence and liberty. We call for this decision to be fully reversed, and for all parties to ensure greater freedoms and protections for women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We are clear that the parties must work together to deliver meaningful improvements for Palestinians and Israelis. In this context, I'd also like to welcome, as others have done, the constructive discussions held this week at the Ad-hoc Liaison Committee. We must now drive progress on measures that can alleviate the health and economic challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We welcome cooperation on vaccine access, and encourage the Government of Israel to facilitate the transfer of vaccines to the Palestinian Authority when required. We also need to see tangible and time-bound commitments from the parties to address long-standing barriers to development of the Palestinian economy. Progress against these issues will

help foster an environment conducive to future peace negotiations.

Finally, I'd like to welcome the continued progress towards legislative and Presidential elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As we have heard today, Palestinians need free and fair elections, as a pathway to accountable institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights.

The UK remains committed to a two-state solution. We will continue to work with the parties to the conflict, to build the conditions for a permanent agreement. As our briefers today have made clear, we must work towards a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike. A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace is the best way to achieve such a future.