



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



Department  
for International  
Development

21 March 2018

Our reference: MIN/117025/2018

Tareq Shrourou and Natalie Sedacca  
Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights  
c/o Bates Wells Braithwaite  
10 Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1BE

*Dear Ms Sedacca, and Mr Shrourou,*

Thank you for your letter of 16 February about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

The UK is a strong supporter of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and was proud to be re-elected as a member in 2016. It remains in all our interests to strengthen the rules-based international system.

We recognise that the trend of Israeli conduct in the OPTs over the past year has been sharply negative. We continue to press the relevant parties to refrain from actions which make peace more difficult.

The UK is firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and compliance with international law in the OPTs. Peace will only come through negotiations between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress. We have long supported balanced United Nations (UN) resolutions. This includes UN Security Council Resolution 2334 that addressed incitement and settlements.

Resolutions that politicise neutral UN bodies or risk hardening positions on both sides, do little to advance peace or mutual understanding. The pattern of bias seen through

Item 7 in the HRC is unacceptable, and makes the prospect of a negotiated two-state solution harder to achieve. Reform is needed and we continue to stress the need for the HRC to tackle bias. We are in active discussions with like-minded partners to support the HRC in this regard.

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