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*Tareq Shrourou*

Thank you for your letter of 11 June about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

You ask that the Government urgently call on Israel to immediately cancel the demolition order of Khan al-Ahmar and use the precise terminology of "forcible transfer". As the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement of 1 June, the UK is deeply concerned by the proposed demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar which the UN has said could amount to 'forcible transfer' in violation of International Humanitarian Law. The Foreign Secretary called on Prime Minister Netanyahu to reconsider plans to demolish the community when they met in London on 6 June.

I visited Khan al-Ahmar on 30 May, and on 12 June issued a video message emphasizing the UK's concern at the village's imminent demolition. I reiterated these concerns to the Israeli Ambassador on 20 June.

Regarding planning permission, when I visited Israel and the OPTs at the end of May I stressed concerns about the impact of the court case on Khan al-Ahmar and in my meetings with the Israeli Government urged reconsideration of options so the community did not have to move. I also pressed for more Palestinian planning applications to be approved. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv also joined a demarche alongside European partners on 29 May to stress to the Israeli authorities our strong concern about the fate of Khan al-Ahmar and to encourage the approval of the master plan for the community's development.

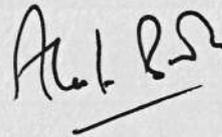
We are keeping the case for compensation under review. No decision has been made yet as to whether to claim compensation in the future. The UK is focused on preventing

demolitions from happening in the first place through our funding to a legal aid programme which helps supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or eviction to challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system.

Additionally the UK has also allocated £1.1 million to support essential infrastructure for vulnerable Palestinians in Area C. We are supporting four communities comprising nearly 500 Palestinian families living in Area C to remain on their land. Our work focus on improved infrastructure and access to community services, including education and health, in areas which have an outline plan in the Israeli approval process.

We will continue to urge Israel both bilaterally and in international fora to cease its policy of demolitions and provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

*Yours sincerely*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alistair Burt', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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