

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th November 2020

New Content,

RE: RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL, BAHRAIN AND THE UAE & THE PALESTINIAN STATE.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding relations between Israel and Bahrain and the UAE, as well as your concerns regarding the illegal annexation of Palestine; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

The normalisation of Israel's relations with Bahrain and the UAE, that are both great friends of the UK, is a historic step and it was encouraging to see that the normalisation between Israel and the UAE in August also resulted in the suspension of Israel's plans to annex the West Bank, which the UK has consistently opposed.

I pay tribute to the work of the US in brokering these agreements, which are a much-needed boost for peace in the region and I urge others across the region to follow the example of the UAE and Bahrain.

The Government maintains its position that any unilateral move towards annexation of the Palestinian State would be damaging to the renewed efforts to restart peace negotiations, and contrary to international law. No changes to the status quo can be made without an agreement negotiated by the parties themselves and I join my colleagues in Government in calling for a meaningful return to negotiations by all concerned parties. The UK repeatedly urged Israel not to take steps towards annexation and the Prime Minister conveyed the UK's opposition to unilateral annexation to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on multiple occasions, including in a phone call on the 6th July and in a letter in June. The Prime Minister also urged Israel not to proceed in an article in Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* on the 1st July.

I appreciate your concerns about the situation in the region and that is why I firmly support the UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process. There should be a negotiated agreement leading to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a fair and realistic settlement for refugees. The UK Government therefore consistently calls for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
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CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE