



## Craig Whittaker MP

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### **Response to Stand up for Palestine - 9th February debate – Feb 2017**

Thank you for contacting me about the Backbench Business Committee debate on illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) on 9 February.

You are absolutely right that it is long standing UK Government policy that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are illegal under international law, an obstacle to peace and make a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, harder to achieve and that is why the UK supported resolution 2234 at the UN on before Christmas. This is a view I support.

I am encouraged that Government Ministers consistently urge the Israeli authorities to cease all settlement building and to remove illegal outposts, and I know the Israeli authorities are well aware of the UK's long standing position.

While I understand that there are currently no plans for legislation to ban the import of settlement products, I know that the Government works with the EU to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. This work includes measures to ensure that settlement produce does not enter the EU duty-free, under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and steps to ensure that EU-wide guidelines are issued to make sure that settlement products are not incorrectly labelled as Israeli produce, in violation of EU consumer protection regulations. I think that consumers should be in a position to make informed decisions about companies they choose to engage with.

I am pleased that the issue of illegal settlements will be debated in Parliament on 9 February and I will be attending that debate with a prepared speech.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP