



**Craig Whittaker MP**

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## **Demolition of Palestinian Houses and Children in Custody in Israel**

Thank you for contacting me about human rights issues raised in relation to Palestinians.

The UK Government remains focussed on achieving a two-state solution to the conflict in the region. It is the only way to ensure a safe and secure Israel coexistent with a viable, sovereign Palestinian state. A long term political settlement, one that ensures a safe future for all, is the only way to resolve the conflict so that the Israeli and Palestinian people can live in peace.

I would like to assure you that it has long been the UK Government's position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal under international law and that settlement activity by Israel undermines the viability of the principle of two states for two peoples.

It is also the UK Government's view that demolition of houses and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering, call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution, and, in all but exceptional cases, are contrary to international humanitarian law.

While I cannot, as a Government whip, sign EDMs, I do know that my colleagues in Government remain particularly concerned about the treatment of Palestinian children detained in Israeli prisons. In 2012, the Foreign Office funded and facilitated the independent report on Children in Military Custody by leading British lawyers. Since its publication, Ministers and our Ambassador to Israel have strongly urged the Israeli Government to implement the recommendations of the report. The Minister of State, Alistair Burt, raised the issue of children in detention with Israeli authorities when he visited the region in August.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP