

The Rt Hon James Cleverly
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

9th January 2023

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the British Palestinian Committee regarding the recent formation of Israel's 37th government, the most extreme right-wing Israeli government in the state's 74-year history.

The new governing coalition in Israel includes a range of parties who are unequivocally opposed to any form of Palestinian self-determination. As Palestinians, we are deeply concerned about what this will mean for the millions of Palestinian women, men and children living under imposed Israeli rule, and the now even greater threat to their safety. As British citizens, we would like to hear how the British government intends to respond to the coalition's extremist positions ([summary enclosed](#)), which stand at stark odds with the UK's stated positions, commitments, values, and international obligations.

As already documented, 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank in decades, claiming [231 lives](#) at the hands of Israeli forces and extremist settlers. The formation of this new government points to an even worse outlook in 2023, through a number of aggressive, annexationist, and explicitly racist laws, policies, and practices - both existing and new. Within the first few days of 2023, Israeli forces have already killed four Palestinians, including 15-year old Adam Ayyad and 16-year old Amer Abu Zaytoon.

The fundamental intention of this Israeli government is laid out in its [first "guiding principle"](#): **"the Jewish people have an exclusive and unquestionable right over all areas of the land of Israel. The government will develop the settlement of all parts of the Land of Israel — in the Galilee, the Negev, the Golan and Judea and Samaria [the occupied West Bank]"**. In explicitly asserting Israel's expansionist aims, this statement confirms the rejection of any form of Palestinian self-determination and Israel's configuration as a permanent occupier, and perpetrator of apartheid, as confirmed by an increasing number of human rights organisations, UN bodies, experts, and international lawyers. It also betrays the deep sense of impunity Netanyahu and his government currently enjoy.

In light of this, we are all the more concerned about discrimination and denial of entry of British citizens visiting the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), particularly given

[procedures](#) introduced under the previous Israeli government, and in force as of October 2022, which severely infringe upon the rights and privacy of Palestinians with foreign citizenship.

The present juncture reflects the complete failure of international approaches towards Palestine-Israel, shoring up decades of unlawful behaviour, and even opposing international mechanisms in order to shield Israel from accountability. The UK's recent decision to vote against an International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the nature of the occupation is particularly baffling, given the current situation.

We are therefore keen to know how the UK government:

- intends to uphold its third party obligations to protect the lives and individual and collective rights of Palestinians
- will act in response to further and accelerated settlement, population transfer, annexation, dispossession, associated war crimes and violations of international law
- will respond to the racism and incitement to violence promoted by this new governing coalition
- will ensure that we, and other British passport holders, are not subjected to discriminatory procedures or denied entry when traveling to Palestine
- intends to uphold its own *erga omnes* obligations as a third party state, ensuring that the UK, and by extension its citizens, are not made complicit in Israel's long-standing and crimes and violations

Language describing the State of Israel as having a "long-standing commitment to democratic values" - already deeply questionable in the eyes of millions of Palestinians living under military occupation, exile, or as second-class citizens in their own homeland - can surely no longer be put to paper with any shred of conviction or credibility.

We trust that you will appreciate the gravity of this situation and the importance of hearing from those directly affected by these worrying developments. We look forward to hearing from you and welcome a meeting to discuss in more detail at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



On behalf of the British Palestinian Committee
Dr. Sara Hussein
Director