

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan
Secretary of State for International Trade
Department for International Trade

April 5, 2022

Dear Ms. Trevelyan,

I am writing on behalf of the British Palestinian Council on the subject of a future trade agreement between the UK and Israel, which would directly impact Palestinians - and British citizens - in a variety of ways.

In this post-Brexit era, Britain has an opportunity to lead the way in negotiating trade agreements that are fit for the 21st century, reflecting the broader global trend towards trade and business based on respect for human rights. Through a specific [National Action Plan](#), the UK has committed to upholding the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. And, as demonstrated with regard to recent events in other parts of the world, trade and diplomacy are important tools in promoting accountability in response to grave violations of international law.

It is well established that Israel's continued occupation and de facto annexation of the occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), including the de jure annexation of East Jerusalem, violates numerous provisions of international law and has severe impacts on Palestinian lives and livelihoods. In service of an ongoing project settler colonialism, successive Israeli governments have established a fully integrated economy, encompassing the approximately 700,000 Israeli citizens living illegally throughout occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, as well as the technology services, manufacturing industries, financial institutions, food producers and many other types of business that either profit from, or have links to, the exploitation of Palestinian land and resources.

At the same time, successive Israeli governments have established a complex system of discriminatory laws, policies and practices through the entirety of the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, which have been found by Palestinian, Israeli, and international human rights organisations (most recently [Amnesty International](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#)), and the [UN Special Rapporteur](#) to have met the legal definition of apartheid. Israeli laws such as the Nation State law of 2018 have confirmed unequivocally that Israel is not a state of all its citizens, while its continued military rule over millions of Palestinians contradicts any claim of being a democracy.

The State of Israel's persistent violations and widespread human rights abuses cannot be separated from its trading relationships, especially if the UK's commitments through the National Action Plan are to mean anything. An enhanced UK-Israeli trade agreement would:

- help to maintain a situation of discrimination and persecution against millions of Palestinians within the State of Israel, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, West Bank, and in exile, while taking all parties further from the prospects of any just solution in the region.
- stand to make the UK, including British businesses and citizens, complicit in Israeli violations and human rights abuses.
- call into question the UK's stated commitment to international law and human rights, as well as its consistency in the application of the rule of law.
- send precisely the wrong message to the Israeli government: that continued settlement expansion, annexation and apartheid is not only supported by the British government, but materially rewarded.

As an organisation with significant experience in matters related to Palestine-Israel - and a constituency directly and materially affected by this proposed trade deal - we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns in more depth. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



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Cc: The Rt Hon Amanda Milling
Minister of State for Asia and the Middle East
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office