



Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
King Charles Street
London
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7 June 2026

Dear Yvette,

We are writing to ask you to take urgent, concrete action to counter the escalation of violations against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, in particular by ending trade with illegal Israeli settlements.

As you know, on 19 May 2026 Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich instructed the Israeli Civil Administration to initiate proceedings for the displacement of the Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar in the occupied West Bank, and the destruction of their property, which would constitute the war crime of forcible transfer. The community of Khan al-Ahmar has been embroiled in a gruelling struggle against erasure, displacement and state-backed settler violence as part of Israel's E1 plan, which as you know seeks to bisect the West Bank and will make the two-state solution that we all want to see an impossibility.

Settlement expansion and annexation in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem has escalated exponentially. Israel is reported to have approved 34 new settlements in April 2026 alone, which is half the number approved in the previous record-setting year of 2025. The UN reported in March that settlement expansion and annexation of the West Bank is driving mass forced displacement; with that comes settler violence which is also out of control.

We welcome the sanctions against specific individuals that the UK has imposed, including against Ministers Smotrich and Ben-Gvir. But it is abundantly clear that those sanctions are not enough. Individual settlers and even individual Ministers are only implementing what the Israeli government is supporting. Settlements – and all the violations which come with them – are sanctioned, incentivised and financially enabled by the Israeli government. In February 2026, it was stated that our UK Labour government “will take concrete steps in accordance with international law to counter settlement expansion and to challenge policies and threats of forcible displacements and annexation.” But since then, the situation has worsened considerably and the government has taken no further action. This is unacceptable.

The case for ending trade with settlements is clear. The International Court of Justice has directed third States not to enter into “trade dealings with Israel concerning the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, which is widely interpreted as meaning states must not trade with settlements. There is a precedent in UK law and policy of not trading with illegally occupied lands i.e. Crimea and other illegally occupied parts of Ukraine, which also means the UK would not need primary legislation to enact a ban.

Finally, as we are sure you know, other European countries are moving ahead with their own bans. While at least eleven EU countries, including recently France and Sweden, have called on the EU



Commission to end trade with settlements, several countries are moving forward unilaterally in lieu of a common position, despite the challenges of being members of the common market. Spain is already implementing a ban and Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium are in the process of legislating for bans. The UK need not wait for a common EU position and can implement a ban unilaterally, as it has done with other illegally occupied lands.

There is an urgent need for accountability and concrete consequences in response to Israel's violations against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, which are spiralling by the day. We believe ending trade with settlements is a vital next step and urge you to initiate proceedings to put such a ban into place as soon as possible. If you are not able to do this, please set out why not, with specific reference to i) why the UK's position is not to implement the direction of the International Court of Justice and ii) why the government does not feel it could implement a ban under the Sanctions and Anti-money Laundering Act 2018, as it has done with other illegally occupied lands.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Ward MP
Debbie Abrahams MP
Dr Zubir Ahmed MP
Dan Aldridge MP
Sadik Al-Hassan MP
Tahir Ali MP
Rushanara Ali MP
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP
Fleur Anderson MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Dr Scott Arthur MP
James Asser MP
Jas Athwal MP
Lewis Atkinson MP
Richard Baker MP
Alex Ballinger MP
Paula Barker MP
Lee Barron MP
Lorraine Beavers MP
Apsana Begum MP
Clive Betts MP
Polly Billington MP
Olivia Blake MP
Chris Bloore MP
Richard Burdon MP
Maureen Burke MP
Dawn Butler MP
Liam Byrne MP
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Dr Allison Gardner MP
Alan Gemmell MP
Tracy Gilbert MP
Mary Glendon MP
John Grady MP
Sarah Hall MP
Paulette Hamilton MP
Helen Hayes MP
Dame Meg Hillier MP
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Andy McDonald MP
John McDonnell MP
Alex McIntyre MP
Gordon McKee MP
Navendu Mishra MP
Abtisam Mohamed MP
Grahame Morris MP
Joe Morris MP
Margaret Mullane MP
Chris Murray MP
James Naish MP
Connor Naismith MP
Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Dr Simon Opher MP
Kate Osamor MP
Kate Osborne MP
Sarah Owen MP
Toby Perkins MP
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Tony Vaughan MP
Valerie Vaz MP
Chris Webb MP
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Steve Witherden MP
Yuan Yang MP
Mohammad Yasin MP

cc Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade

cc Hamish Falconer MP, Minister for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan