



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

3 September 2025

Dear Hamish,

I welcome that the Government took strong action in May to sanction some of the actors involved in establishing and expanding illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Despite this, illegal settlements continue to expand at an alarming rate that seriously imperils the viability of the two-state solution, to which the UK and the wider international community have a longstanding commitment.

Most notably, Israel's Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich, whom the UK has already sanctioned, gave approval in August for a new illegal settlement in the E1 area, adjacent to East Jerusalem, with plans for around 3,400 homes. Experts have warned that this could make a viable Palestinian state almost impossible, with the Foreign Secretary labelling the plan 'a flagrant breach of international law'.

This is just the latest and most brazen illegal settlement plan after many years of continual settlement expansions that fly completely in the face of the basic tenets of international law and directly undermine the heart of a two-state solution and the viability of a Palestinian state.

I therefore urge the Government to take bold action commensurate to the existential threat posed by these illegal settlements:

- 1. Comprehensively sanction illegal settlements.** The Government's recent sanctions against some individuals and organisations involved with illegal settlements is welcome, but these sanctions should be made comprehensive, targeting all individuals and organisations involved in developing illegal settlements, so that there is a clear and evident cost to their continued illegal activity.
- 2. Ban trade with illegal settlements.** The Government's suspension of trade talks with Israel sends an important message, but trade continues to take place with illegal settlements under existing trade regulations and agreements. All trade with these settlements should stop, to send a truly strong message that illegal settlements must stop.

I would be grateful for the Government to review these options and outline the further measures it will take to stop illegal settlements and preserve the viability of the two-state solution.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Hayes".

**Tom Hayes MP**  
**Labour Member of Parliament for Bournemouth East**