

Welcoming support for a peaceful two-state solution by Israeli and Palestinian leaders

Thank you President, and I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his helpful but sobering briefing.

Let me start by welcoming both Prime Minister Lapid and President Abbas' support for a two-state solution, during their speeches to the General Assembly last week. The UK firmly believes that a two-state solution, based on 1967 lines, with Jerusalem as a shared capital and a just solution for refugees is the best way to deliver long-term peace.

The challenges facing a two-state solution however remain significant. We share deep concerns about the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank. And we urge all parties to reduce tensions and avoid de-stabilising unilateral actions.

We urge Israel not to proceed with demolitions at Masafer Yatta, which would cause unnecessary suffering, and are against international law in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

We unequivocally condemn the execution of five Gazans by Hamas this month. The UK opposes the death penalty in all circumstances.

In the West Bank, in 2022 more Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces since the UN started recording fatalities in 2005. The UK remains fully supportive of Israel's right to self-defence, but where there are accusations of excessive use of force, we advocate swift, transparent investigations.

We are appalled too by terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens. Such attacks cannot be justified.

We appreciate Norway's leadership in convening the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee this month. We welcome progress on economic measures, including the electronic payment of Palestinian workers in Israel, and work ensuring the continued success of E-Vat. However, bolder and faster action is needed to deliver real economic change in the OPTs. The UK is committed to supporting another meeting of the Joint Economic Committee as soon as possible.

We also thank Jordan and Sweden for hosting a Ministerial meeting in support of UNRWA. The UK is a long-standing financial and political supporter of UNRWA, and we welcome UNRWA's continued support to Palestinian refugees across the region. We encourage further dialogue among partners to ensure delivery on UNRWA's mandate.

In conclusion President,

Peace will only be achieved only through meaningful dialogue between the parties, which tackles the drivers of instability and violence in the immediate term. We encourage further and deeper engagement towards this goal.

Thank you.