

Response to “Support the Palestinians – Not the Occupation”

The UK supports long-term planning for Palestinian communities in Area C by helping them develop quality Outline Plans and we have intensive dialogue with Israel in order to obtain approval for the implementation of plans. We are also working with the Palestinian Authority and the donor community to develop a coherent Area C strategy, which will increase the chances of a unified international voice to lift current restrictions and result in the positive development of Area C.

By providing technical assistance to help deliver high quality Outline Plans for submission to the Israeli planning system, we are helping Palestinians to design the right sort of infrastructure for their communities in line with what they want and need. Outline Plans are important because where plans have been produced the Israeli authorities have refrained from implementing existing demolition orders. Technically competent plans are also more likely to meet requirements and move more smoothly through the planning system. Two UK-supported Outline Plans were approved by Israel in March 2014 and we continue to work with the PA, national and international partners to encourage the approval of further plans. We also encourage the Israeli authorities to expand the scope of the planning regime, currently restricted to built-up areas, to incorporate the essential agricultural and herding livelihood needs of many of the most vulnerable Palestinians in Area C.

We recognise that the issue of building in Area C is both complex and sensitive. We want to see sustainable development in Area C and better cooperation between the PA and Government of Israel. DFID’s support in Area C seeks to deliver both tangible benefits for Palestinian communities and value for UK taxpayers. Our core support to multilateral agencies such as UNWRA and the EU provides emergency humanitarian support to Area C and we are supporting access to water for agriculture, the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure in Area C, and legal assistance to Palestinian communities at risk of forced eviction, demolition and displacement. As part of our broader package of support to the Palestinian Economic Initiative and Area C, we also have secondees in the Office of the Quartet Representative.

Alan Duncan