

**From:** [BCG Jerusalem]  
**Sent:** 20 May 2016 07:13  
**To:** [Near East Dept, FCO]  
**Subject:** FW: jabal al baba demolitions

[Near East Dept, FCO]

EEAS statement on Jabal Al Baba FYI:

“The regrettable trend of confiscations and demolitions since the beginning of the year, including of EU-funded humanitarian assistance, was confirmed once again this week by demolitions of temporary shelters in Jabal al-Baba, a Bedouin community in the so-called E1 area. Bedouin communities in the central West Bank have faced repeated confiscations and demolitions in recent years, as part of the plans which have put them in grave humanitarian need and risk ending in forced transfers.

The EU is strongly opposed to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context, including demolitions and confiscations, building the separation barrier beyond the 1967 line, evictions and forced transfers. Such developments in the so-called E1 area call into question Israel's commitment towards the two-state solution.”

[BCG Jerusalem]

**From:** [Near East Dept, FCO]  
**Sent:** 17 May 2016 17:50  
**To:** [Near East Dept, FCO]

**Subject:** RE: Home demolitions at Jabal Baba

[Near East Dept, FCO]

Below is a draft response to send to CAABU.

The British Government's position on demolitions in the OPTs is clear: demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary people; are harmful to the peace process; and are, in all but the most exceptional of cases, contrary to international humanitarian law. We support the Fourth Geneva Convention which states that the destruction of any property in occupied territory is not justified unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. The Fourth Geneva Convention also makes clear that forced transfer of protected persons from occupied territory is prohibited.

We are extremely concerned by reports of a significant increase in demolitions since the start of 2016, compared with the monthly average in 2015. We are also concerned at the increase in the demolition of structures funded partly or fully by international donors. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has raised our opposition to demolitions with the Israeli authorities repeatedly. Most recently, on 15 May, our Ambassador raised strong concerns and urged the Israeli authorities to provide a legal route for Palestinians to obtain building permits.

We support Bedouin communities and Palestinians in Area C facing demolition or eviction through our funding to Rabbis for Human Rights and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) legal aid programme. This helps residents challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system. The NRC has successfully suspended demolitions and evictions in 99% of the cases they represent.

I'll get you some advice tomorrow on whether to comment publically or not. We're going to discuss with [Near East Dept, FCO].

[Near East Dept, FCO]

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[Type text]

June 2014

Our reference: MIN/67334/2014

Tom Brake MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Thank you for your letter of 6 June to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of your constituent [name redacted] about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

I share your constituent's serious concerns about demolitions in Jabal al Baba and Hanina, including structures funded by the international community. Such demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; are harmful to the peace process; and, in all but the most limited circumstances, are contrary to international humanitarian law. Whilst the UK Government does not directly fund the building of houses in for Palestinians in the OPTs, reports suggest that \$66m of European-supported development and humanitarian projects in the OPTs were destroyed by Israel from 2001-2011. The UK contributes around 15% of the European development budget.

We repeatedly make clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concerns about continued demolitions of Palestinian property and the need to abide by their other obligations under international law. For example, officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the issue on 28 May with Prime Minister Netanyahu's office and in recent months have also raised concerns with the head of the Israeli Office for the Co-ordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT).

During my recent visit to the OPTs I went Area C. I saw the impact of UK efforts to provide support to villages currently threatened with demolition action. In the village of Jiftlik I saw how technical assistance to provide mapping is helping Palestinians meet the requirements of the Israeli planning system.

In addition we continue to support Palestinians facing demolition or eviction through support to the Norwegian Refugee Council legal aid programme which helps individuals to challenge these decisions in the Israeli legal system. We are also funding the International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPCC), an independent Palestinian non-profit organisation, to support long-term planning for Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

**THE RT HON HUGH ROBERTSON MP**  
**Minister of State**

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