

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Minister of State
Foreign Office
By email

18 May 2020

Dear Minister

We write to urge you to continue the UK's support for a negotiated agreement between Israel and the Palestinians for a two-state solution, and to continue your opposition to the new Israeli government's plans to annex parts of the West Bank. We believe that it is important for Israel's closest allies around the world to send a strong message against annexation and other threats to Israel's democracy.

The New Israel Fund is the leading UK charity advancing democracy and equality in Israel. We are dedicated to the vision enshrined in Israel's Declaration of Independence of a homeland for the Jewish people that ensures complete equality for all its inhabitants. We achieve our charitable mission through funding Israeli civil society organisations and educating about their work here in the UK. We have been doing this for over 25 years.

We are listening carefully to what our grantees in Israel are telling us about the proposal to annex unilaterally territory held by Israel since 1967. Our grantees fear that annexation would make the unequal and discriminatory legal system in the West Bank formal and permanent, irrevocably harming Israel's democratic character. Our grantees also tell us that annexation of only a portion of the West Bank would further diminish the already fragile chances of a negotiated agreement between Israel and her Palestinian neighbours.

We believe, therefore, that the consequences of the proposed unilateral moves are grave – for the Palestinian people, but also for Israel; for its democratic character, its security and its international standing. Our alarm at these consequences is shared by many others in the UK Jewish community who, along with the New Israel Fund, have a track record of supporting and associating themselves with Israel.

The New Israel Fund in the UK therefore urges Her Majesty's Government to continue to oppose any attempts towards unilateral annexation. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you.

Yours sincerely

Clive Sheldon QC, Chair of Trustees

Adam Ognall, Chief Executive