



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for International Development
Department for International Development
22 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2EG

06 September 2016

Dear Priti,

Many thanks for publishing the Memorandum of Understanding between your department and the Palestinian Authority and the amendment letter to that memorandum of March 2015.

I would like to ask if you would be prepared to meet me and a small group of colleagues to discuss your department's work in relation to the Palestinian Authority.

In the meantime, I'd like to ask a few related questions.

My understanding is that the MOU was extended until March 2016. Can you confirm whether it has been further extended and/or what arrangements govern current DfID aid to the PA, please?

As you will be aware, Sections 2.1 and 6.4 of the MOU make clear the importance of 'the principle of non-violence'. In light of the repeated instances of incitement to violence perpetrated by the PA – including, for instance, those on official PA TV, the naming by the PA of sports tournaments and summer camps after terrorists, and the planting of olive trees by the Ministry of Education in honour of so-called 'martyrs' who have carried out attacks on Israeli civilians – I would appreciate your response to the following questions:

- Does your department assess that the PA continues to uphold the principle of non-violence and when was a formal assessment of this last made?
- During the annual partnership talks (section 6.1) has your department discussed with the PA any potential breaches by the PA of the principle of non-violence and, if so, at which of those partnership talks was this issue discussed?
- With regard to Section 6.5, has DfID at any point sent a 'clear, transparent signal' that the PA's actions with regard to potential breaches of the principle of non-violence are being taken seriously by the department?

Section 4.1(ii) commits the PA to 'ensuring that the human rights of all citizens are respected without exception'. I would appreciate your response to the following questions:

- Does your department assess that the PA continues to ensure that 'the human rights of all citizens are respected without exception' and when was a formal assessment of this last made?

- During the annual partnership talks (section 6.1) has your department discussed with the PA any potential breaches by the PA of the principle that 'the human rights of all citizens are respected without exception' and, if so, at which of those partnership talks was this issue discussed?
- With regard to Section 6.5, has DfID at any point sent a 'clear, transparent signal' that the PA's actions with regard to potential breaches of the principle that 'the human rights of all citizens are respected without exception' are being taken seriously by the department?

As you know, your ministerial colleagues have given repeated assurances that no UK aid money is being used to pay the 'salaries' of convicted terrorists. The 2015 amendment letter to the MOU suggests that the PA Ministry of Finance will make available to DfID information 'detailing the approximate number of salaries supported in each Ministry' and that 'eligible beneficiaries will be those listed by the EU for the PEGASE programmes of support to Civil Servants and Pensioners (CSP) and support to Civil Police and Defence (CPD) employees. Please can you confirm whether your department has a copy of, or has access to and has viewed, the list of names referred to above.

As you will know, both Labour Friends of Israel and Conservative Friends of Israel were asked to provide your predecessor with a list of people-to-people projects, which bring together Israelis and Palestinians and thus could help provide a basis for fostering greater coexistence and peace between the two peoples. I hope you will give swift consideration to DfID increasing substantially its commitment to such projects. Currently, the department funds none of these directly, although a small, but very modest, contribution is made via the Conflict Security and Stability Fund. I have enclosed a copy of the list previously provided by LFI and would be grateful if you could let me know what assessment your officials have made of these and against what criteria those assessments are being carried out.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks again,

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Austin'.

Ian Austin
MP for Dudley North