



Rt. Hon Joan Ryan MP and Ian Austin MP

House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

23 February 2018

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Our Ref: JR11382

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you to express our growing concern that UK aid to the Palestinian Authority is not meeting the UK's goal of promoting peace and a two-state solution, a goal we fully endorse.

In the period to 2021, £125m of taxpayers money will be sent to the PA. This funding, quite properly, does not come without strings attached. These are laid out in the agreement between the PA and the Department for International Development. Among the "Partnership Principles" the PA are supposedly committed to is respecting the principle of non-violence and respect for human rights.

The PA's compliance with these principles is reviewed annually by DfID. Sadly, this process is clouded in secrecy. Despite previous requests, DfID has repeatedly refused to publish these reviews. At a time when UK aid is under considerable scrutiny, the government's continued dismissal of any request to provide transparency is an affront to UK taxpayers.

We are strong supporters of international aid, but, as the people who foot the bill, the public have an absolute right to know that money is being spent appropriately and that it is achieving its intended purpose.

Over the past year, we've asked the government about numerous specific examples of incitement to violence perpetrated by the PA. We've asked about its decision to increase salaries to terrorists serving time in jail for murdering Israelis, its policy of glorifying terrorists, its funding of summer camps in which children performed mock stabbing attacks and about the glorification of terror by PA media.

In their answers to 20 specific examples we raised, ministers would only offer rote words of condemnation and general assurances that they raise the issue of incitement with the PA. They would not, however, confirm that they had brought up with the PA any of the instances we put to them.

Indeed, the government even refused to say that it had discussed two cases we raised where the PA has paid thousands of pounds to terrorists who carried out attacks on UK citizens: Mousab Abu Shkhidem, Nidal Shehadeh, Is'haq Arafe, and Hussein Kawasmeh, the murderers of Mary Jane

Gardner, a British tourist murdered in a terrorist attack in Jerusalem in 2011 and Kifah Ghneimat and Iyad Fataftah, who in 2010 attacked and seriously injured Kay Wilson.

Instead, ministers simply stated UK aid is not paid to Palestinian prisoners and their families. This is sophistry: as the government well knows, and the International Development Committee warned in 2014, British cash to the PA effectively frees up other money for Ramallah to incentivise terrorists. Moreover, what message does it send to the PA about how seriously we take incitement if, as it appears, we don't even protest at payments to those who kill and injure our own citizens?

The government must take a new, more transparent and tougher approach. We are therefore asking you to take the following actions:

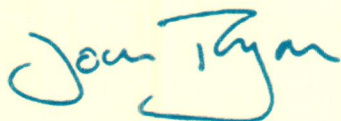
First, DfID will soon carry out its annual review of the PA's compliance with the Partnership Principles. We urge you to order DfID to publish this year's review, and to immediately publish the 2016 and 2017 reviews.

Second, we ask that you direct your ministers to tell parliament the specific examples of incitement they have raised with PA over the past year.

Third, ministers claim that they regularly discuss incitement with the PA. If this is the case, their words are clearly falling on deaf ears. There are no signs of any let up in the drumbeat of hate, glorification and incentivisation of terrorism pumped out by the PA. It is time for the government to put our money where its mouth supposedly is. The PA spent seven per cent of its 2017 budget on payments to terrorist prisoners and the families of so-called "martyrs". As a first step, we propose that, until these payments stop, Britain should cut 14 per cent from its aid to the PA. The Palestinian people should not suffer for the crimes of their leaders, so this money should be used to establish a new Palestinian Peace Fund, aimed at young people. It would primarily support education projects in Palestine which are not tarnished by the PA's violent and disturbing hatred of Jews, but it could also be used in other imaginative ways – for instance, to establish scholarships to allow young Palestinian students to study in the UK alongside Israeli students. We ask that you support this proposal as a signal to the PA that it needs to mend its ways.

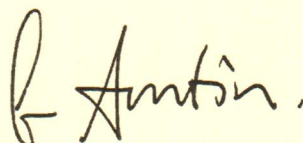
Finally, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these concerns in further detail. Britain's support for a two-state solution and a peaceful settlement between Israel and the Palestinians is of utmost importance, and we must work together to ensure UK aid works to support a goal that we all share.

Yours sincerely,



Rt. Hon Joan Ryan MP

Member of Parliament for Enfield North



Ian Austin MP

Member of Parliament for Dudley North