



Rt Hon Joan Ryan MP

House of Commons

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21 September 2018

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Secretary of State for International Development
Department for International Development
22 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2EG

Dear Secretary of State,

We write to express our serious concern following the Trump administration's decision to end all funding for coexistence projects in Israel-Palestine.

As believers in the power of coexistence to bring ordinary Israelis and Palestinians together in the spirit of peace and reconciliation, and thus build vital civic society support for future political and economic progress, we condemn this mean-spirited and counterproductive step that will only damage the prospects of a lasting agreement between Israel and Palestine.

This move is further evidence – if any were needed – that despite President Trump's warm words about his desire to do the "ultimate deal", his actions show that he is a barrier to peace, not its facilitator.

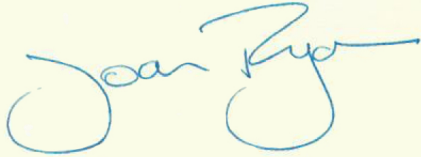
We call on the British government to publicly condemn this reckless decision and pressure the United States to think again.

We also ask that Britain steps up to help fill the void left by the United States. We welcome the UK's existing commitment of £3m over three years for people-to-people projects but call on the government to immediately increase this funding in light of President Trump's decision. Just as we rightly increased our commitment to UNRWA in response to US withdrawal, we must once again urgently prioritise UK spending in Israel-Palestine towards the promotion of peace through additional funds.

The Trump administration's arbitrary action underlines why support for coexistence must be placed on a firmer footing. The International Fund for Ireland helped to underpin and provide crucial public support for the Good Friday Agreement; a similar undertaking is sorely needed in Israel-Palestine.

We are proud that the UK was the first country to formally support an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace and ask that, at a time when it is needed most, the government takes the vital next steps, working with European allies, in helping to turn it into a reality.

Yours sincerely,



Rt. Hon Joan Ryan MP
Chair, Labour Friends of Israel
Member of Parliament for Enfield North

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