Foreign & Commonwealth Office

FCO Press Release: Minister for the Middle East visits the Occupied Palestinian Territories

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British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East, Tobias Ellwood, visited the Occupied Palestinian Territories this week to see firsthand the situation on the ground. During his visit, the Minister saw the impact of Israeli settlements and settler violence on Palestinian communities in Area C and East Jerusalem. The Minister also met Palestinian leaders and business leaders from the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Ellwood met PLO Secretary General, Saeb Erekat, in Jericho and PLO Central Committee member, Hanan Ashrawi, in Ramallah, to discuss the latest political and security developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Minister also discussed the social and economic situation in Gaza with a group of Gazan business leaders.

As part of his visit, Minister Ellwood visited the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan and heard from local Palestinians about the difficulties and challenges they face.

Finally, Mr Ellwood visited the community of Sinjil, an East Ramallah village supported by the British Consulate General, to learn more about the impact of Israeli settlements and settler violence on the lives of Palestinians in Area C.

At the end of his visit, Mr Ellwood, said:

> "I visited the Occupied Palestinian Territories this week and had productive meetings with PLO Officials Saeb Erekat and Hanan Ashrawi. I reiterated the UK's commitment to a negotiated two-state solution, creating a viable, prosperous Palestinian State based on 1967 borders, alongside a secure state of Israel, with Jerusalem as a shared capital.
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> "During my visit, I visited the neighbourhood of Silwan, in East Jerusalem and talked to local Palestinians about the daily challenges of life in the city. I also visited the village of Sinjil and saw firsthand the impact of Israeli settlements and settler violence in Area C. The UK's position on Israeli settlements is clear and

unchanged: they are illegal under international law and are an obstacle to peace."

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