



Quaker statement on UK's "new approach" to Israeli occupation of Palestine

Quakers in Britain welcomes today's announcement by the Foreign Secretary of a "new approach" in UK policy towards Israel in response to its violations against the Palestinian people. This includes announcing a ban on the import of goods from settlements, sanctions on those providing services to settlements, and sanctions against individual extremist settlers.

Today's move marks a fundamental shift in British policy. We welcome this change as a long-awaited and positive step towards a broader reset.

Successive UK governments have recognised that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. But years of recognition without any meaningful action by the UK and the wider international community have come at a devastating cost. During that time, the Israeli government has deepened and expanded its settlement enterprise, entrenching a system of domination and control that has denied generations of Palestinians their rights and freedoms.

Quakers are clear that settlements and individual settlers are not the root cause of Palestinian suffering. The fundamental issue is Israel's decades-long illegal occupation of Palestine across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, and apartheid over Palestinians. Policies driven by an Israeli government that openly seeks to annex Palestine and deny millions of Palestinians their fundamental rights.

The International Court of Justice's July 2024 Advisory Opinion made clear that Israel's occupation is unlawful and that states, including the UK, have a legal duty not to aid or assist in its continuation. In line with its international legal obligations, the UK must now implement the steps announced today without delay and deploy the full range of other measures available to it.

These other measures include extending the ban to all services and investments with Israeli settlements, ending all arms transfers to Israel, and suspending the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, whose preferential terms are expressly conditioned on respect for human rights. Anything less than a comprehensive package of measures, with full enforcement powers, risks once more addressing the symptoms while leaving the cause intact.

Our witness as Quakers to the realities of the occupation, and our belief that there is God in everyone, compels us to work for its just end as the foundation for a lasting peace and security for all Palestinians and Israelis. We believe these nonviolent measures are a necessary step towards that future. As the minute from our 2011 decision to boycott products from the Israeli settlements said, "Our hearts are full of compassion for Israelis and Palestinians, all of whom are suffering from the effects of the occupation". It continued, "Difficult decisions taken by us today can be reversed". We call for these measures to be taken until such time as the violations have ended.

Palestinians have made clear that this is now an existential struggle. As the Foreign Secretary said today, the UK is not a powerless bystander and cannot stand back from its responsibilities. We welcome this new government's recognition that the time to act is now.

8 September 2026

Further resources

- Read the latest eyewitness testimonies from our Ecumenical Accompaniers on the realities of life under occupation at www.eyewitnessblogs.com
- Find out more about how churches and church agencies in the UK are working together in the recently launched [Just Peace Coalition](#) to help bring about a just peace in Palestine and Israel. Find out ways you and your church can learn more about the situation and take action as part of the Coalition's Time to Act campaign.