House of Lords,
London
SW1A 0PW

30 October 2026

The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Dear Foreign Secretary,

Proposed Sanctions on Israeli Settlements: Proportionality, Healthcare and the Two-State Solution

We are writing to express our serious concerns about the scope and potential consequences of the Government's proposed sanctions regime relating to Israeli settlements. We are particularly concerned in light of yesterday's Sky News report about the recruitment of British Jewish doctors by an Israeli healthcare provider.

The report describes MedEx UK, a careers fair held in Camden on 25 October for British doctors considering Aliyah (moving to Israel). At the fair, Terem, an Israeli urgent-care provider, advertised vacancies for paediatricians, general practitioners and orthopaedic specialists. Its recruitment material identified clinics in Ma'ale Adumim, Beitar Illit and Modi'in Illit in the West Bank, and Katzrin in the Golan Heights.

We were particularly concerned by the response of parliamentary colleagues suggesting that the proposed sanctions should be capable of preventing events of this kind. That would mean turning sanctions powers against a careers event for British Jews.

We recognise that the settlement regime has not yet been finalised and that the precise scope of its restrictions remains uncertain. However, this episode raises fundamental questions about the direction of British policy and its proportionality. It also raises the question of whether the policy is likely to advance the Government's stated objective of a negotiated two-state solution.

First, we struggle to understand what contribution preventing the recruitment of doctors to existing civilian communities could make to peace. There is an elementary distinction between facilitating new settlement construction and employing medical professionals to treat patients. Whatever view is taken of the legal status of these communities, their residents require medical care. Discouraging the recruitment of doctors will not resolve territorial disputes, prevent violence or advance Palestinian statehood.

Second, the Government's approach appears to disregard the territorial realities of previous Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The three West Bank communities named in the report are not interchangeable with every other settlement. Beitar Illit and Modi'in Illit lie close to the 1967 line. They have long been among the most plausible candidates for incorporation into Israel through negotiated land swaps. Ma'ale Adumim presents more complicated territorial questions, but its retention was also contemplated in serious peace proposals, including those Prime Minister Olmert

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put to President Abbas in 2008. None of these proposals established agreed borders. Nevertheless, mutually negotiated territorial exchange has been central to every serious effort to achieve two states. We find it difficult to reconcile the Government's commitment to a negotiated solution with an approach that disregards the very compromises on which an agreement would depend.

Third, the inclusion of Katzrin demonstrates the danger of conflating entirely different territorial disputes. Whatever position the Government takes on the Golan Heights, its status concerns Israel and Syria, not a Palestinian state. It has no connection with the land swaps envisaged in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Your own statement of 8 September addressed the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Treating the recruitment of doctors to Katzrin as a threat to Palestinian statehood shows how indiscriminate an excessively broad sanctions policy could become.

Fourth, the Government must demonstrate that its measures are likely to achieve practical results. Sanctions should be instruments of policy, not ends in themselves. They require clear objectives, proportionate application and a credible explanation of how they will change behaviour. What precisely does the Government expect to achieve by restricting professional or medical services in established communities? What evidence suggests that such restrictions would discourage settlement expansion or advance negotiations? What assessment has been made of their consequences for civilian welfare, including healthcare? And what safeguards will prevent a policy directed at settlement expansion from developing into a much broader programme of economic, academic and professional exclusion?

These questions matter all the more given your statement to the House of Commons on 8 September. You distinguished the Government's measures from the wider BDS campaign. You identified construction, infrastructure, financing and real estate as the services associated with settlement expansion. We welcomed that distinction. The interpretation now advanced by some parliamentary colleagues would erase it. We are also concerned that the proposed ban on advertising settlements could be read to cover job advertisements. That would reach the lawful decisions of British Jews to emigrate to Israel or pursue professional opportunities there.

We would therefore welcome your confirmation that:

- The settlement regime will not be used to restrict medical recruitment or the provision of healthcare services merely because a clinic serves an established community.
- The services restrictions and advertising ban will be confined to activities facilitating settlement expansion, as set out in your statement of 8 September. They will not extend to ordinary civilian, professional and humanitarian activities.
- The Golan Heights falls outside the scope of the settlement regime.
- The regime will include safeguards to prevent its use against lawful British Jewish communal events, including Aliyah and careers fairs, or as a vehicle for wider boycotts.
- The Government will publish an assessment of the expected effect of the measures on settlement expansion and on a negotiated two-state solution, including their potential unintended effects.

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- Parliament will have an adequate opportunity to scrutinise the regulations and the evidence supporting their effectiveness before they come into force.

Britain should use its diplomatic influence to encourage negotiations, improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians, oppose violence and displacement, and promote the practical compromises necessary for peace. Making the recruitment of doctors another battleground in this conflict advances none of those objectives.

There is a fundamental difference between a foreign policy designed to achieve meaningful change and one that increasingly relies on symbolic restrictions whose practical consequences have not been adequately considered. We hope you will ensure that the Government's proposed sanctions reflect that distinction, and we look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,