

MPs Message to PM Boris Johnson on Balfour Project Call for the Strict Application of International Law, Including via the ICC, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

By [Crispin Blunt MP](#)

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[Balfour Project](#)

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Member of Parliament for Reigate

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: CB/TO

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA

2 June 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Balfour Project Charity Statement

We write to draw to your attention the enclosed statement by the Balfour Project charity, issued under its own authority at the conclusion of its conference "Israel/Palestine: in search of the rule of law" on 26 May. Over 1400 people, mainly from the United Kingdom, participated in the conference.

Among the distinguished speakers were Baroness Hale of Richmond, former President of the Supreme Court, the Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve QC, Lord John Alderdice, Philippe Sands QC and Professor Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. A cross-party panel of Members of Parliament discussed the UK's role in upholding the rule of law - specifically international law to which our country is a party - in Israel and Palestine. The final statement contains several requests addressed to Her Majesty's Government, to which we ask you to respond.

The statement lends strong support to the International Criminal Court, whose independence and integrity are paramount. With this in mind, we ask you to clarify the decidedly mixed message conveyed in your 9 April letter to Conservative Friends of Israel. You defend the integrity of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – but in the same letter oppose its planned investigation into crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by Israeli or Palestinian persons. The ICC must operate without fear or favour, as we hope you will agree. The latest violence between Hamas and Israel only serves to underline the validity of the ICC's determination that it does have jurisdiction. Independent investigation is needed – by the ICC.

Your Government has pledged to uphold the rule of law and the independence of multilateral institutions. To be universally respected, the law must be applied impartially and consistently, whether it be in the Crimea, Hong Kong, Belarus, or Israel/Palestine. As a key advocate of the Rome Statute which led to the establishment of the ICC and a pioneer of the rules-based international order, our country is expected to lead by example, not by exception. There can be no selective application of law.

International humanitarian law will be seen to be upheld when the United Kingdom ensures that Israel cannot benefit economically from its illegal settlement project. The means to do so is to hand, in the form of the Occupied Territories Bill, now before the Irish Dail. Last week,

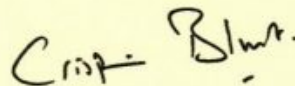
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the Dail unanimously passed a resolution, with the agreement of the Irish Government, affirming that illegal Israeli settlements constitute de facto annexation. We commend Mr Coveney's response to the debate, and ask you to confirm your agreement with your Government partners in Dublin.

Finally, the Balfour Project statement renews the call for your Government now to recognise the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel, on pre-June 1967 lines. Given Britain's historic role in the region, this step will be highly consequential. It will advance the prospect of a peaceful two-state solution: the declared goal of both your Government and the Balfour Project, and a goal under ever-increasing threat. Recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination is a Palestinian right equal to Israel's acknowledged statehood right. Where Britain leads, others will follow.

The alternative to a two-state solution is "a sort of apartheid system", as you said courageously to Mr Netanyahu in 2017. Developments since then have proved you right. We ask you to act in the best interests of both peoples, and in our own national interest – recognise the state of Palestine now.

Yours sincerely,



Crispin Blunt MP

Also signed by:

Joanna Cherry QC MP
Julie Elliott MP

CC.

Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Developments
Affairs
Sir Vincent Fean, Chair of Trustees, Balfour Project.

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Balfour Project Statement: Israel, Palestine, and Law

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