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The Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander MP,
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Thursday 29th September 2011

Dear Mr Alexander,

We would like to strongly commend you for your letter to the Foreign Secretary last week urging recognition of Palestine at the UN meeting in New York, and calling for the exertion of renewed will by the international community to re-start peace negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis.

You are absolutely right to argue that the case made by Palestinians for UN recognition is strong, particularly in light of the positive testimony endorsing readiness for statehood responsibilities by the UN itself, as well as the World Bank and IMF. The progress made by the Palestinian Authority under its 13th programme for Government reflects the determination for statehood recognition and deserves to be acknowledged through support for the UN vote by General Assembly and Security Council members.

It is of some dismay to us that with recent news of the expansion in the building of illegal settlements by Israel in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, that the question for supporting the recognition of Palestine, based in the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, should invite such fierce debate and resistance.

If there was a time for the British Government and its partners in the Quartet and international community to unequivocally assert their support for the two state solution the UN vote for recognition of Palestine was it.

The Palestinian issue is one that deeply affects political debate and social justice activism among Muslim and non-Muslim citizens in the UK and throughout the world. DfID's Palestine Programme Operation Plan for 2011-15 clearly states that "*The conflict resonates strongly with public opinion in the UK and abroad, exacerbates regional instability, and is a key driver of Islamic radicalization.*"

The stance taken by the coalition government is therefore, a matter of deep regret. This is increasingly so as the prospects for realizing two states in the region diminish by the day and with it the faith and trust of Palestinians, especially the young, in the justice of the international system.

There have been a number of politicians who have petitioned the Government to do the right thing and we thank you, and the Labour Party, for being among them.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Asif
CEO