



[REDACTED]

Our Reference: 202000014389
Your Reference: 202000011105

24 February 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter on 3 February 2020 addressed to the First Minister concerning the Scottish Government's position on Israel and UK government's announced plans to ban Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) activities by universities and local councils which are inconsistent with UK foreign policy. I have been asked to respond.

The Scottish Government is aware of the planned UK Government measures outlined in the Queen's Speech, and will carefully consider the potential impact of these measures as further details are made available. Regarding the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions activities, in line with other governments in Europe, the Scottish Government does not have a policy of boycotting goods from any one country, nor does it advocate a policy of boycotting Israel. However, I should be clear that the Scottish Government expects companies that are awarded public contracts to maintain high standards of business and professional conduct and strongly discourages trade with companies active in Israeli settlements which are recognised as illegal under international law. This however, is not advocating a policy of boycotting Israel, or any one country.

The Scottish Government formally adopted the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism in June 2017 and we find this to be helpful in describing manifestations of anti-Semitism. Formally, adopting this definition demonstrates the Scottish Government's determination that there should be no place in Scotland for any form of anti-Semitism or religious hatred that makes our communities feel insecure or threatened in their daily lives.

The Scottish Government will continue to encourage the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to work with the international community to secure long-term peace and end the cycle of violence which continues to affect both Palestinians and Israelis. We agree with others in the

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international community that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law; making it harder for a peaceful two state solution to be reached. We will condemn all acts of violence and will continue to engage with both sides in the conflict to urge them to take the necessary steps towards a peaceful, two state solution.

Yours sincerely



INTER : International Relations

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