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*From The Minister of State*

*Dear Caroline*

Thank you for your letter of 8 May to the Foreign Secretary about the situation in Occupied Palestinian Territories. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

I share your concerns about the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and appreciate your feedback following your meeting with Prime Minister Haniyeh.

The UK, along with EU Member States, remains committed to engaging with any Palestinian Government whose policies and actions reflect the three Quartet principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements. Following the Mecca Agreement, the National Unity Government stated its commitment "to respect previous agreements". In this context, the UK is willing to engage with individual members who accept these principles, and continues to closely evaluate the policy and actions of the National Unity Government.

While we wait and see what the NUG will mean in practice, and as we assess the financial situation with Palestinian partners, we will continue funding through the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM), in order to help meet basic needs of poorest public sector workers and the most vulnerable citizens in Palestinian society. During 2006 the EU gave over €680 million to the Palestinians, the largest ever contribution by the EU in a single year, over €200 million of which was through the TIM.

The Prime Minister has expressed the importance of strengthening the capacity of Palestinian institutions, which will be crucial for a properly functioning and viable Palestinian state. We support the European Commission's efforts to develop an international mechanism to support the Palestinian people.

Further information about our policies towards the Middle East can be found on the Middle East Peace Process pages of our website at [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk).

KIM HOWELLS