

United Kingdom Address

Plenary Session of the Two State Solution Conference

29 July 2025

Thank you, Chair.

We gather today at a dark moment.

660 days since the Israeli hostages were first cruelly taken by Hamas terrorists.

There is no possible justification for this suffering.

Only a clear duty that we help bring it to an end.

The devastation in Gaza is heartbreaking.

Children are starving, and Israel's drip feeding of aid has horrified the world.

These are an affront to the values of the Charter of the United Nations.

Last week Britain led 28 countries in demanding an immediate end to this terrible war.

And set the region on a path to a better future.

That requires not just an immediate ceasefire.

But a plan to make it last.

Our history means that Britain bears a special burden of responsibility to support the two-state solution.

In the last 12 months, this UK government has repeatedly taken action in the face of the current crisis.

We restored funding to UNRWA.

Suspended arms exports that could be used in Gaza.

Provided tens of millions of pounds in humanitarian assistance.

We signed a landmark agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

We have stood up for the independence of the international courts.

We have delivered three sanctions packages on violent settlers.

Suspended trade negotiations with the Israeli Government and sanctioned far-right Israeli Ministers for incitement.

Yet the situation has continued to worsen.

And the two-state solution feels more distant than ever.

To reach that better future, we must first reflect on the past.

108 years ago, my predecessor as British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, signed the Declaration that bears his name.

It helped lay the foundation for a homeland for the Jewish people.

Britain can be proud of that.

Our support for Israel...

...its right to exist and the security of its people...

...is steadfast.

The Balfour declaration came with the promise "that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights" of the Palestinian people.

This has not been upheld and it is a historical injustice which continues to unfold.

As diplomats and politicians, we have become accustomed to uttering the words "a two-state solution".

Countless times this Assembly and the Security Council has proclaimed them.

Resolution after resolution.

181.

242.

446.

1515.

2334.

These are not numbers on a page.

But the conviction of a frustrated world.

Chair,

Hamas must never be rewarded for its monstrous attack on October 7.

It must immediately release the hostages, agree to an immediate ceasefire...

...accept it will have no role in governing Gaza,...

...and commit to disarmament.

But Hamas are not the Palestinian people.

And there is no contradiction between support for Israel's security and support for Palestinian statehood.

Indeed, the opposite is true.

The Netanyahu government's rejection of a two-state solution is wrong - both morally and strategically.

It harms the interests of the Israeli people...

...closing off the only path to a just and lasting peace.

That is why we are determined to protect the viability of the two-state solution.

His Majesty's Government therefore intends...

...to recognise the State of Palestine when the UN General Assembly gathers in September here in New York.

We will do it unless the Israeli government acts to end the appalling situation in Gaza,...

...ends its military campaign...

...and commits to a long-term sustainable peace based on a two-state solution.

Our demands on Hamas also remain absolute and unwavering.

Before the UN General Assembly gathers, we will take stock of how far the parties have come in meeting these steps.

No one side will have a veto on recognition through their actions or inactions.

But recognition by itself will not change the situation on the ground.

That is why we are taking immediate steps as well.

Like air dropping humanitarian supplies along with Jordan,...

...getting injured children into British hospitals...

...and pressing for the resumption of UN's humanitarian assistance.

We also believe that a lasting ceasefire requires urgent progress on governance and security in Gaza.

We are therefore working with allies on a plan for long-term political negotiations and a two-state solution.

Chair,

There is no better vision for the future of the region than two states.

Israelis living within secure borders, recognised and at peace with their neighbours,...

...free from the threat of terrorism.

And Palestinians living in their own state, in dignity and security, free of occupation.

The decades-long conflict between Israelis and Palestinians cannot be managed or contained.

It must now be resolved.

Britain is ready to play its full and historic part.