

1st December 2025.

URGENT APPEAL TO STOP THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ILLEGAL SETTLEMENT OF SHIDMA

Dear [insert your MPs name here],

I am writing to you as a member of your constituency to raise an urgent issue regarding the immediate construction of an illegal Israeli settlement in the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour, one of the 3 small towns making up the Bethlehem district.

As a supporter and friend of the Kairos Palestine Christian movement, and also by request of the Mayor of Bethlehem, I am asking you to urgently raise this matter with the Foreign Secretary, in order to put all possible pressure on Israel to halt the building of the *Shidma* settlement which will have severe consequences on the Palestinian community of Beit Sahour, including the Palestinian Christian population living there.

This settlement is not simply a construction project—it is an act of dispossession. It is being built directly upon Palestinians' lands, homes, and backyards, stealing the soil from beneath peaceful families who have lived there for generations. First, it will cut off Beit Sahour from its eastern border, dividing the community into two areas separated by illegal and violent settlers. Second, it will allow for increased attacks on the residents of Beit Sahour and invasion of their homes. It will bring fear, unrest, pain and conflict.

The seizure of the Ush al-Ghurab area has already resulted in the loss of approximately 100 dunums of strategic municipal land that had been earmarked for public facilities, including a **children's hospital to be built, recreational areas, cultural center, green space, and community hall**, plans that had already begun implementation with donor support before settler pressure forced their suspension. Moreover, *Shidma's* establishment further reduces the already-limited space available for Palestinian expansion: only about 7% of Beit Sahour's administrative land remains accessible for building due to settlement encirclement and the annexation wall.

The July 2024 ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of Israel's Policies and Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory affirmed that Israel's continued presence in the oPt is **unlawful** due to its prolonged, systematic violations of peremptory norms, including the prohibition on acquisition of territory by force and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. In this context, the establishment and expansion of the *Shidma* outpost are not isolated violations but form part of an unlawful territorial regime that the ICJ found incompatible with international law. The Shidma outpost therefore reinforces an internationally unlawful situation that **third States are required not to recognize and must act to end**.

I ask you to raise this issue urgently with the Foreign Secretary, and to please inform me of the response.

Yours sincerely,

[name and contact details, including address]