

Guidance in writing a letter to your local MP

The most effective letters are personal ones and even better where you may have an existing relationship with your local MP. That's the reason why our Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) came up with the 'Meet your MP' initiative. <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/politics-and-elections/meetyourmp/> If you have an existing contact with your MP, you may want to reference that.

It is very easy for the recipient to spot where a letter has simply been cut and pasted as part of a chain and so they will be less likely to spend time engaging with the contents. However, it can also be a challenge to pen something from scratch, so the example letter below is intended to help you. The format is written as though it was from a local church, but you may wish to write as an individual and the more you can personalise the content, the more likely it is for the letter to be afforded greater attention.

So far, 76 MP's have signed the Early Day Motion, which the resolution from the URC Mission Committee strongly endorses. You can find if your own MP is a signatory by clicking on this link: <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/56954/proposed-israeli-annexation-of-part-of-the-west-bank>

Example letter to local MP

Dear

In these difficult times of Coronavirus, we bring you greetings and prayers. These are challenging times for those of you in political leadership and our thoughts are with you.

One of the problems of the COVID-19 pandemic is that other important issues can slip from the headlines. The purpose of this letter is to address one such serious concern. Currently, The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu is negotiating alliances, preparing and gathering momentum towards implementing a plan to annex large parts of the West Bank. Capitalising on support from President Trump, Mr Netanyahu wants to implement this action, possibly as early as July.

At the end of last year, a group of 22 people representing the 1,500 churches of the United Reformed Church in England, Scotland and Wales undertook an educational visit to Israel and Palestine. During the visit, members of the URC party were able to speak with many indigenous Christians, tour Christian Aid and Commitment for Life partnership projects and witness at first hand the everyday lived experiences of people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The narrative was one of inadequate water supply, intermittent provision of electricity, economic deprivation, unequal access to health care and severe restrictions on freedom of movement. These observations are not to depict a conflict between faiths, but to highlight an outcry against the disproportionate actions of the Israeli Government.

The proposed annexation will only serve to increase the suffering of the Palestinian people. In the words of Archbishop Suheil Dawani (who met with the URC party last year at St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem) and his fellow church leaders, 'it would bring about the loss of any remaining hope for the success of the peace process'. It is for this reason that the United Reformed Church strongly endorse the Early Day Motion (#464) tabled on 11 May 2020, which is supported by MP's of all political parties. Indeed, it was sponsored by the former Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, Crispin Blunt and his colleague Andrew Selous (Conservative); Andy Slaughter (Labour); Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat); Dr Philippa Whitford and Tommy Sheppard (SNP).

As our local MP, we would therefore encourage you to sign this Early Day Motion. Your support will help to counter a deep injustice.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Yours sincerely...