

# *Former British Foreign Office Minister Urges UK to Recognize Palestine*

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London, December 26 (RHC)-- Former British Foreign Office Minister Baroness Sayeeda Warsi says the United Kingdom must unilaterally recognize Palestine as an independent country. In an exclusive interview with English-language newspaper daily The Independent on Thursday, Warsi said London's policy of "Israeli appeasement" is not working, and called on British ministers to openly condemn Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank.

"These settlers are illegal occupiers of illegally occupied land. It is clear concerted policy of Israel to do this and that is why we've got to recognize Palestine and set down a marker. We have to say these are illegal; people who live there are illegal and they will have to be removed," she said.

The former British Foreign Office minister added that London claims to believe in a two-state solution but is only recognizing one of them. "The right to have a state is not a gift that we need to give. It is a right that the Palestinians have. For us to say you can only have a state at the end of a negotiation -- are we therefore saying if there is no negotiation there is no state?"

Warsi also expressed surprise over the scale of Israeli settlements being built on the Palestinian territories. "These settlements represent the slow strangulation of the two-state solution and unless action is taken now it will be impossible in the future," she said.

Britain's first Muslim woman cabinet minister, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, resigned in August over British Prime Minister David Cameron's "morally indefensible" failure to condemn the 50-day Israeli military campaign against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

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