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**MINISTER CONDEMNS KILLING OF PALESTINIAN GIRL** (11/04/06)

The Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells said:

'We condemn the killing of a young Palestinian girl in the village of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza following Israeli artillery shelling on 10 April. We are particularly concerned about the impact of Israeli artillery fire close to residential areas. Recent Israeli Defence Force (IDF) operations have resulted in several Palestinian civilian deaths, including children. Such civilian casualties are unacceptable.

'The British Ambassador in Tel Aviv has asked the Israeli Government to exercise maximum restraint. Israel has the right to defend itself, but any actions in the Occupied Territories must be proportionate and in accordance with international law. Equally, we urge the Palestinian Authority to take steps to halt all attacks launched at Israeli targets from the Gaza Strip.'