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# National Lobby of Parliament for Palestine

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## Your briefing

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If you have any questions contact:  
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## INTRODUCTION

**On Tuesday 23 June 2015 (from 2pm-6pm) supporters will gather together in Parliament to call on MPs to take action for Palestinian human rights. Make sure you are there!**

### **What is the national lobby for Palestine?**

The most powerful way to let your MP know you care about Palestine is to ask them to meet you to discuss it. When lots of people from around the UK arrange to meet their MPs in Parliament on the same day, it is known as a lobby day and alerts all MPs to the fact that lots of people care about the issue. Put very simply, an MP notices when their constituents have a problem, be it with their housing, or with human rights!

This Lobby of Parliament is a way to put down a marker early in the new Parliament that Palestine matters.

We will be asking for MPs for:

- 1 An immediate and permanent lifting of the blockade on Gaza, allowing free movement of people, goods and humanitarian aid.**
- 2 An end to the arms trade and all military-industrial collaboration with Israel.**
- 3 An end to trade with settlements.**

There are more detailed policy briefings about these issues further on in your pack.

### **What difference will the lobby make?**

**Palestinian human rights continue to be violated by the Israeli Government, every minute, every hour, every day.** It is clear from the latest actions of Israel's Government that this will not change without external pressure. That pressure will not come from the USA, so it must come from European countries like ours. Britain's historic obligation to Palestine and our role in international politics means we are key to achieving change.

Support for Palestine is growing all the time: there has been a sea-change in support for Palestinian human rights in Parliament. Noticeably in recent

debates including the one on 21 July when so many MPs referred in their speeches to their constituent's emails on the subject. But Government and the majority of Parliament are much less supportive than the general public.

There is a new Parliament, with many newly elected MPs – some of whom are supportive, others who know very little about the situation in Palestine. They are our MPs so it is our job to inform them and to persuade them to respect Palestinian human rights.

Your support will make a huge difference. If you invite your family and friends you can multiply that!

### **What now?**

- 1 Get in touch with your MP using our e-tool**  
<http://www.palestinecampaign.org/lobby-15/>
- 2 Take time off on Tuesday 23 June so you can attend the Parliamentary event**
- 3 Ask your family & friends to join you**
- 4 Book your travel**
- 4 Keep your evening free for the evening rally from 6.30pm-8.30pm at Parliament. You can book your place online:**  
<http://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/evening-rally-after-the-lobby/>

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **Who can take part in the mass lobby?**

If you're eligible to vote in General Elections you can lobby your local MP.

#### **Do I need to be an expert?**

No! Your MP regularly meets local people who care passionately about an issue, but they shouldn't expect you to know everything. We will provide all the information you need in advance. But you will want to be well prepared. We have created this briefing to help you, and we also have experts on hand on the day itself for last-minute preparation and questions.

### When should I arrive in Parliament?

The lobby is taking place on Tuesday 23 June between 2-4pm in the W rooms, off St Stephen's Hall (the large hall you enter just after entering Parliament).

There could be a long queue to get into Parliament. You should allow 30-45 minutes just in case.

### How long will my meeting last?

The meeting will normally last about half an hour, sometimes more, sometimes less. There are likely to be other people meeting your MP at the same time – MPs like to see constituents together, so you won't be alone!

### Will I meet my MP?

Some MPs send their assistants or researchers to meet constituents if they can't make it. Don't be disappointed - staff prepare most letters and briefings for their MP, so they are a key person to engage with.

### My MP hasn't replied to my request for a meeting. What should I do?

If your MP hasn't replied send a reminder then phone Parliament on 020 7219 3000 and ask to speak to their office. **Check their contact details** [www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/)

### If my MP is unavailable should I come?

Yes, do come along. You can still leave a card for your MP to let them know you came, write them a personal letter and help show support for Palestinians. You may find they are unexpectedly available or send a member of staff to meet you.

### What is it like?

Coming to the lobby is one of the best ways to show solidarity with the Palestinian people and we are sure you will get a lot out of the day. You'll meet lots of like-minded people, our preparation talks are interesting and informative.

It is also a great way to visit Parliament, and there is also an evening rally with MPs, Lords and other great speakers. Make sure you are a part of it.

### Book your meeting now

Get in touch with your MP using our e-tool [palestinecampaign.org/campaign/lobby](http://palestinecampaign.org/campaign/lobby)

### Let us know when your meeting is

As soon as you know when and where your MP is meeting you please get in touch and let us know.

Please get in touch via email:

[patricia.banke@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:patricia.banke@palestinecampaign.org)

### Timetable

before 1400 **contact us**

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If you have a meeting that means you need to arrive in Parliament before 1400 please contact us direct and we can arrange an individual briefing for you

1400 Lobby of MPs

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Registration in room W3, inside Parliament

Briefings in room W1, inside Parliament

Meeting MPs: central Lobby

There will be stewards to help direct you.

1800 Lobby ends

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1830 Evening Rally

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House of Commons

*With: speakers*

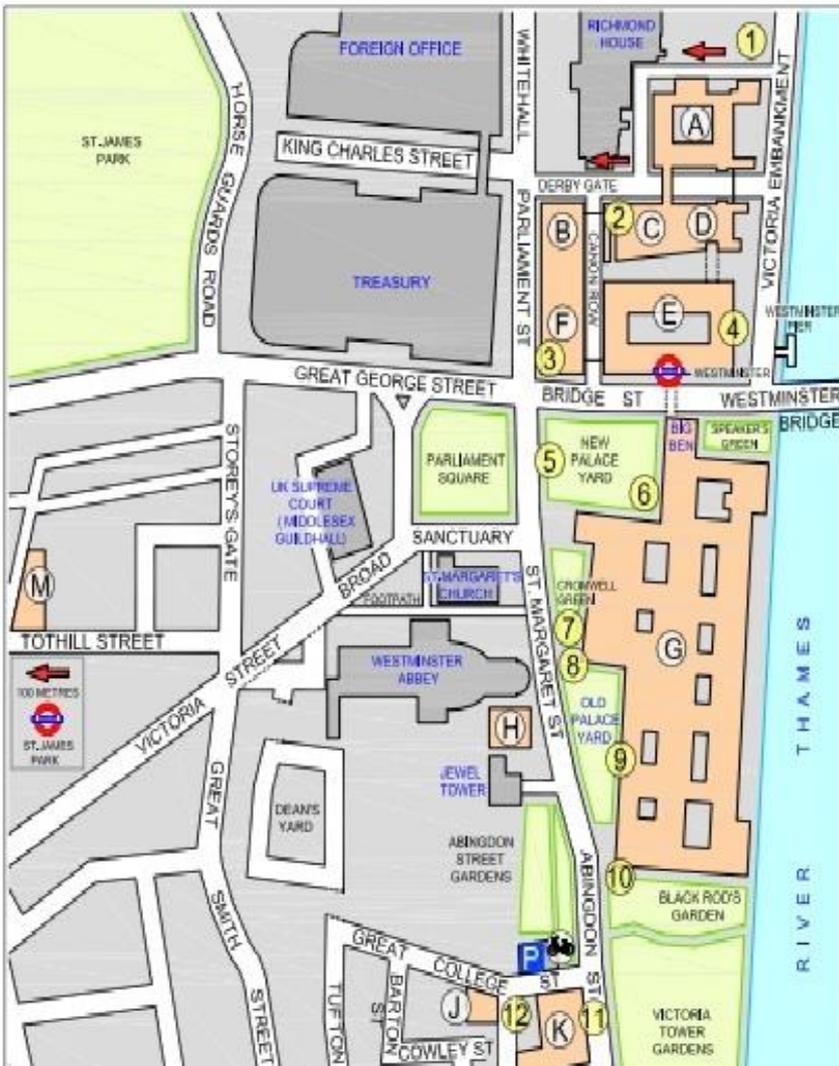
2030 Event ends

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## How to find Parliament

**7** no 7 marks the main visitors' entrance to Parliament (Cromwell Green).

The nearest tube is **Westminster**. To plan your London journey visit [tfl.gov.uk/journeyplanner](http://tfl.gov.uk/journeyplanner)



When you enter through Parliament all visitors are subject to a security scan and bag search. The organisation of the lobby of Parliament is taking place in the W rooms – on the right of St Stephen's Hall – the main hall as you enter Parliament.

Most people meet their MPs in central Lobby, which is up the steps at the end of St Stephen's Hall and on the left.

Both Palestine lobby stewards and Parliament's staff can help if you get lost.

## On the day

### Accessibility

Please contact us if you have any accessibility needs. Email [sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org) or call 020 7700 6192.

The House of Commons has information online about accessibility issues [parliament.uk/visiting/access](http://parliament.uk/visiting/access)

### If your MP is meeting you before 2pm

If so, make sure that you leave half an hour to get through security and print off and take this briefing with you.

If you aren't sure where your meeting is please do ask the security staff who are generally extremely helpful.

We can arrange for you to receive your verbal briefing before the day. Please email [sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org) or phone 020 7700 6192 if you wish to arrange this.

### If your MP is meeting you between 2pm-4pm

We will have stewards in Parliament to direct you.

## Other information

**Dress code** Believe it or not, people are often prevented from entering Parliament wearing visible slogans, or even carrying Palestine flags. If you have quantities of books or brochures they might also be taken from you. Please bear this in mind when getting ready to come. We will have large stickers for you all to wear which will demonstrate you are there to support Palestinian human rights.

### No posters or banners

The House of Commons will not allow posters or banners in Parliament.

**Refreshments** there is a public café within the secure area of Parliament, just off Westminster Hall where you can buy drinks, lunch or snacks. It

is open until 1700. You may want to bring supplies with you, particularly if you have a meeting later in the day

## How to lobby your MP

**Thank your MP** for taking the time to see you

**Find out how long they have to talk to you.** If you are seeing your MP with other people you will need to allow time for them to make their points.

**Ensure they know your key message:** we need action not words to defend Palestinian human rights.

**Focus** on one or two of the key issues enclosed in this briefing.

**Take time to listen to their views** – but do interrupt if they are taking up all the time.

**Prepare one or two actions** that you would like them to take. Do research to choose these. For example, if they are a Government Minister they won't ask questions or sign motions/EDMs, so ask them to write and talk to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary instead. If they are very active on the issue, ask them to call a debate on the issues you are discussing.

**Take a photograph** with them if possible.

**Leave them a copy of the briefing** that we will provide on the day. If you are meeting your MP on a different day then please download the briefings from [palestinecampaign.org/campaign/lobby](http://palestinecampaign.org/campaign/lobby) page.

## After your meeting

**Please fill in the feedback form** at the back of this pack (we will also have copies available on the day).

## An end to the blockade on Gaza

Palestinians in Gaza have been living under Israel's siege for more than seven years, a blockade which effectively imprisons 1.8 million people on a strip of land.

**Key facts** As a consequence of the seven weeks of hostilities by the Israeli military on Palestinians in Gaza during July and August 2014, a total of, 2,131, including 501 children, were killed. 71 Israelis were killed, including 66 soldiers. Around 11,000 Palestinians were injured; of these, up to 10% have suffered long-term impairment; over 96,000 homes of Palestinian refugees were damaged or destroyed during the conflict, according to a technical assessment completed by UNWRA in December 2014. Some 20,000 homes were totally destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, leading to the displacement of over 100,000 people. UNWRA noted that only 5% of the funds needed to repair and reconstruct the homes had been pledged.

Gaza has been blockaded by Israel since 2007, a punitive response to the result of democratic Palestinian elections in 2006, which Hamas won. As a result, living standards have rapidly and dramatically deteriorated for the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza. The Gaza Strip - only 360 square km - is one of the most densely populated areas on earth. Over 70% of Palestinians living in Gaza are refugees from their homes in historic Palestine. 80% of Gazans are dependent on aid, 44% are unemployed. The basic infrastructure has suffered widespread destruction, creating, among other outcomes, very significant power shortages. More than 90% of the ground water is undrinkable. There are dwindling medical supplies, placing the population at serious risk, 100,000 displaced people are in need of immediate assistance.

Although Israel has, in recent months, allowed more goods to enter Gaza, the monthly average in 2015, to date, is still less than half of 2007 levels.

According to the UN, the average imports to Gaza in 2015 is 1407 truckloads a week – in January 2007 there were 14,520 truckloads that month.

Citing security concerns relating to the situation in Sinai, the Egyptian Government has effectively sealed its border with Gaza and also destroyed over 80% of the smuggling tunnels on which the residents of Gaza have relied on for their basic supplies.

The ceasefire agreement committed Israel agreed to "stop all hostilities in the Gaza Strip by land, sea and air including incursions and targeting of individuals. Israel will open crossings on its border to allow humanitarian aid and construction materials to enter Gaza, and will extend the permitted fishing zone to six miles off the coast of Gaza. The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt is also to be opened. All of those terms have been violated by Israel [see attached infographic]

We need support from MPs to press the Israeli and Egyptian governments to permit the free flow of goods and people to and from Gaza. Not only do we seek an end to the humanitarian crisis but also the ability of Palestinians to live normal lives - free to travel, meet relatives, work and have a family life without punitive restrictions. These restrictions represent a collective punishment for the 1.8m who live in the Gaza strip.

### **What we are calling for:**

An end to the blockade on Gaza

### **What we are asking the UK Government to do:**

For the UK Government to make public, urgent and sustained representations to Israel and Egypt to lift border restrictions and for the ceasefire agreement to be respected.

### **Ask your MP to:**

- Raise this important issue with Ministers
- Support a parliamentary debate on Palestine
- Sign Parliamentary motions
- Ask parliamentary questions

## Ending UK trade with settlements

Israel's illegal settlements are built on Palestinian land, often forcing Palestinians out of their homes and off their land. The UN, EU and UK repeatedly affirm these settlements are illegal and damaging to the chances of peace. But if they are illegal, what are their goods doing in our shops?

### Key facts

Since the Israeli settlement programme began in 1972, the combined population of the settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has risen to over half a million. Settlements are built on Palestinian land, forcing Palestinians out of their homes and off their land.

Israel continues with settlement expansion. In October 2014, the UK Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond released a statement saying 'The UK deplores Israel's decision to advance plans for 2,610 settlement units in Givat Hamatos... it will have serious implications for... Jerusalem being a shared capital in a future two-state peace agreement and will hinder the process.'

As a consequence of the settlement programme, among many other actions by the Israeli Government, Palestinians face growing restrictions on their daily mobility, residency rights and on their ability to secure an income. Palestinian homes are being demolished on the basis of planning laws which restrict Palestinian residency rights in Jerusalem.

In 2013 the World Bank estimated that the current loss to the Palestinian economy as a result of the occupation is 35% of Palestinian GDP (about \$3.4 billion in 2011).

In spite of official criticism, by European governments, of Israel's human rights record and of its treatment of Palestinians, Europe continues to purchase goods produced in settlements on a significant scale.

The Council of the European Union has committed itself to ensure that – in line with international law – all agreements between the State of Israel and the European Union must state they do not apply to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, namely the Golan Heights, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Yet the EU imports approximately 15 times more from the illegal settlements than from the Palestinian economy. Given that the EU is sustaining the occupied Palestinian territory through aid, it is inconsistent and counter-productive that it is also trading with the settlements. Our support of the occupied Palestinian territory whilst we are importing Israeli settlement produce means that – as UK tax payers – we are subsidising Israel's occupation.

At least seventeen Governments in the EU have warned published online guidance warning their citizens and businesses about risks involved in trade and other economic links with illegal Israeli settlements. Al Haq, a legal human rights organisation with a focus on international law – states that the British and other EU Governments need to go further and have legal obligation to prevent the imports of settlement goods. Without this they are complicit with a breach of international law.

We need support from MPs to urge the British Government and the European Union to impose a total block on the import of goods produced in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. At the same time, we need the UK Government to work with its European partners to achieve Europe-wide action against settlement goods. We call on MPs to request Ministers to discuss this important issue with European colleagues and report back to Parliament.

### What we are calling for:

For the UK Government and Europe to impose trade restrictions on Israel so that goods produced in Israeli settlements do not enter the UK and the rest of Europe.

### **What we want the UK Government to do:**

Commit to a thorough review of all UK financial relationships with Israeli settlements

### **Ask your MP to:**

- Support a parliamentary debate on Palestine
- Sign EDMs
- Ask parliamentary questions

## **Israeli Arms industry**

We are campaigning for an end to the arms trade, and all military-industrial collaboration, with Israel.

Contrary to its own criteria, the UK government grants export licenses for British military hardware and components to be supplied to Israel. At the same time, it imports Israeli military hardware and components and also provides training, in the UK, for Israeli military personnel

### **Key facts:**

The UK government has criteria, against which arms export licence applications are considered, which say a UK arms export licence should not be granted where:

- there is a clear risk of the equipment being used for “internal repression”
- the export would “provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts;” and
- there is a “clear risk that the intended recipient would use the proposed export aggressively against another country, or to assert by force a territorial claim”.

Yet the government has been reluctant to refuse or revoke export licenses. Since 2010, it has licensed the export of £42m worth of military equipment to Israel.

- The UK government has purchased, from Israel, targeting systems, drone technology and drones. The latter were

developed by Israel’s Elbit Systems, in a joint venture with Thales UK under a contract awarded by the Ministry of Defence.

- Members of the Israeli military have attended education courses for military personnel in the UK.
- Israeli firms, including Elbit Systems, receive funding through 46 projects under the EU’s Framework Research Programme.

We want to see an end to the arms trade with Israel.

The refusal of all export licences to Israel (directly or via a third country) where the end-user is the IDF or military industry;

The revocation of any extant export licences to Israel (directly or via a third country) where the end-user is the IDF or military industry;

A ban on arms imports from Israel.

A ban on collaborations between UK-based companies and the IDF or Israeli military industry

### **In order to help us achieve this, we are asking MPs to:**

- support calls for an early review of existing arms export licenses to Israel
- and a review of the policy of exporting arms to States on the FCO ‘watch list’ of countries of concern relating to their human rights record.

### **Ask your MP to:**

- Raise this important issue with Ministers
- Support a parliamentary debate on Palestine
- Sign EDMs
- Ask parliamentary questions

## For all the issues

If your MP is a backbencher (ie doesn't have a role in Government or the Opposition) then ask him/her to:

- Support a parliamentary debate
- Join the All Party Group for Palestine
- Sign Parliamentary motions (EDMs)
- Ask parliamentary questions

If your MP is a frontbencher (ie has a role in Government or the shadow team) then ask him/her to:

- Write to the Foreign and DfID Secretaries of State
- Raise the Gaza blockade in Cabinet (when attending meetings)
- Raise the issues individually with Ministers and the Prime Minister

All MPs can:

- Attend and support local meetings and events
- Try to visit Gaza and the West Bank



**Feedback form**

Your name

.....

Email

.....

Name of your MP

.....

Constituency

.....

**Which issue(s) did you raise with your MP:**

- The blockade on Gaza
- An end to the arms trade, and all military-industrial collaboration, with Israel
- An end to settlement trade

Other:

.....

**Is your MP willing to take Parliamentary action?**

- a) Sign Early Day Motions?  
Yes No
- b) Write to Ministers on your behalf?  
Yes No
- c) Table parliamentary questions?  
Yes No
- d) Apply for Adjournment/Westminster Hall debates? Yes No

**Is your MP willing to get involved nationally and locally by?**

- a) Join Britain-Palestine All Party Group?  
Yes No  already a member
- b) Join their political parties' group?  
Yes No Already a member
- c) Speak at / hold a local meeting?  
Yes No
- d) Visit the occupied Palestinian territory?  
Yes No

**For today, will your MP:**

- a) Submit a question to International Development Yes No
- b) Sign our #actionnotwords sheet (provided)  
Yes No
- c) Get a photograph with you Yes No

**In general, did you MP seem:**

- very supportive supportive neutral
- unsupportive

Further comment (please continue overleaf if necessary):

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Please return this to: Please return this form to:  
November Lobby Feedback, PSC Box BM PSA, London WC1N 3XX Fax: 0207 609 7779  
[sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org) or fill it in online at [palestinecampaign.org/gazalobbysurvey/](http://palestinecampaign.org/gazalobbysurvey/)