



Virtual Lobby of Parliament 2020

Briefing Pack



Thank you for registering for the Virtual Lobby of Parliament for Palestine. Please read this pack thoroughly, and contact james.tuite@palestinecampaign with any questions.

 **We will have a pre-Lobby briefing over Zoom on Wednesday 25th November from 6-7pm. Please attend using this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84650450070>**

Step 1: Setting up a meeting with your MP

- If your MP has responded to your request for a meeting (either positively or negatively), then please fill in this online form to let us know.

<https://bit.ly/LobbyResponseForm>

- If you have not yet had a response from your MP, then please send a follow-up email using this link

<https://bit.ly/LobbyRequestMeeting>

- If your MP is not replying to emails, then please call them to get a response. You can look up your MP's telephone number here

<https://members.parliament.uk/>

***Your MP is expected to set up the zoom meeting and send a link to you. If they have agreed to meet with you, but not yet done this, then please ask them politely to do so.**

Step 2: Preparing for the meeting.

- On Wednesday 25th November, from 6pm-7pm, there will be a pre-Lobby day briefing over Zoom. Please join this meeting to discuss what will happen on the Lobby Day itself. The Zoom link to join is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84650450070>.
- No-one will meet their MP alone. You will be put in contact with other constituents and PSC representatives ahead of the meeting with your MP. This is to arrange who will say what during the meeting.
- If you are unable to attend the Zoom meeting set up with your MP for any reason, then please let james.tuite@palestinecampaign.org know as soon as possible.
- Please try to stick to the Lobby Day speaking notes outlined below. Each meeting will usually last for approximately 30 minutes, and we would like to emphasise these topics.

Step 3: Speaking notes and key topics.

This is a guide to help you structure the meeting with your MP. Each meeting will be unique, and will require some flexibility, but try to steer the discussion to raise as many of the key points below as possible.

At the start of the meeting briefly introduce yourself, explain that you are taking part in the National Lobby Day organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, and thank your MP for taking the time to meet with you. It is also useful to ask your MP to confirm how much time you have at this stage.

The purpose of meeting with your MP is to try to get them to take action. The best way to do this is through polite engagement. Make sure to ask your MP to do something concrete at the end of the meeting.

Key Points to discuss (enhanced notes follow):

- 1)** Israel's annexation of Palestinian land has not been stopped, and requires a robust international response.
- 2)** Every Israeli settlement is an illegal land grab that dispossesses Palestinians from their homes. The UK is sustaining these gross breaches of international law through our trade policies.
- 3)** Israel is practicing policies that have been identified by legal scholars and experts as meeting the definition of apartheid.

Key asks of your MP:

- 1) Support a complete ban on trade with illegal settlements, and call for regulation to prevent British companies operating in them.
- 2) Ensure settlements are expressly excluded from all future trade agreements with Israel.
- 3) Hold Israel accountable for gross violations of international law through sanctions and restrictive measures.
- 4) Sign [EDM 1140](#) 'Demolition of Palestinian homes'
- 5) Sign [EDM 1139](#) 'Israeli annexation of Palestinian land'

Enhanced notes on discussion topics:

Israel's annexation of Palestinian land has not been stopped, and requires a robust international response.

- After intense international pressure – and following “normalisation” deals between Israel and the United Arab Emirates & Bahrain – Israel **temporarily suspended** its plans to formally annex large areas of Palestinian land. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu has made it clear in public statements that this is only temporary**, and that he fully intends to move ahead with formal annexation in the future.
- **Regardless of whether “formal” annexation goes ahead, it is already the lived reality on the ground.**

Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza has now been in place for over 50 years. Israel has accelerated the construction of illegal settlements across the West Bank to its fastest pace since 2012. In October they approved construction of a further 4,000 settler homes. Israeli jurisdiction extends to settlements and is a **de facto annexation** of Palestinian land.

- There are precise international law obligations on all states that arise from a serious breach of a fundamental principle of international law. **There is a legal duty on all states – including the UK - to cooperate to bring the breach of international law to an end** through lawful means, and complementary duties of non-recognition, non-aid and non-assistance in relation to the illegal situation. This applies to responding to illegal settlements and annexation.
- A clear and compelling precedent for the implementation of these international law duties is in **how the UK responded to Russia's annexation of the Crimea**. These included substantial restrictions on economic exchanges with Crimea, visa bans, and asset freezes. **Consistency in upholding international law is essential, and the same measures should be taken against Israel.**

Every Israeli settlement is an illegal land grab that dispossesses Palestinians from their homes. The UK is sustaining these gross breaches of international law through our trade policies.

- This year, **Israel has accelerated the construction of illegal settlements across the West Bank to its fastest pace since 2012.**
- The building of settlements and their expansion, including the associated infrastructure (the Barrier, military checkpoints, and settler-only by-pass roads), has continued apace for decades, shrinking the space available for Palestinians to develop livelihoods and build essential housing and infrastructure.
- There is a **well-recognised link between home demolitions and settlement expansion.** 2020 has seen the highest level of Palestinian home demolitions in four years, despite the covid-19 pandemic, which has left over 800 people homeless many of who are children. **In November, Israel destroyed the entire Palestinian village of Khirbet Hamsa al-Foqa - making 73 people, including 41 children homeless - in the largest incident of forced displacement in years.**

- Settling civilians from the occupying country into territories that it occupies violates international humanitarian law and **constitutes a war crime under international criminal law.**
- The presence of settlements and their associated infrastructure severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination. This has specific legal significance because the right to self-determination is an elevated norm of international law, equivalent to the prohibition on annexation, which consequently engages a range of **legal duties that all states – including the UK - are required to implement when a serious breach occurs.**
- We cannot afford to wait any longer: statements opposing illegal settlement expansion must be matched with concrete actions. **Statements of condemnation alone are insufficient** to deter the Israeli government from continuing to breach international law. Action is required, and has been called for by Palestinian civil society and UN Special Rapporteur Professor Michael Lynk.
- There are two key steps, to be enacted through legislation, that the UK should immediately take when it comes to settlements:

- **Ban settlement goods from entering the UK marketplace. This is a requirement anchored by third-party state duties under international law.**
- **Prevent companies from operating in and trading with settlements, or otherwise from contributing to their maintenance and/or expansion.** The regulations should capture the three UK based companies listed in the recently published UN database for their “material and substantial” involvement in settlement-related activity. This includes companies JCB, whose equipment is used in the demolition of Palestinian homes, Opodo and Greenkote.

Israel is practicing policies that have been identified by legal scholars and experts as meeting the definition of apartheid, including in a UN report written by Special Rapporteur Richard Falk and Professor Virginia Tilley.

- While the word apartheid is mostly associated with the system of white minority rule in South Africa, it is actually a crime not limited to any one country or regime. **Apartheid is defined under international law as any inhumane acts committed in the context of systematic discrimination and domination by one racial**

group over another, with the aim of maintaining that system of oppression. Apartheid is a crime against humanity.

- Israel's oppression of Palestinians meets the definition of the crime of Apartheid that is set out by the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- **Israel has de-facto control over all of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but treats Jewish Israelis and Palestinians very differently.**
- **The way in which Palestinians are given less rights than Jewish Israelis is institutionalised and written into the laws that govern how the Israeli state operates.**
- Israeli policies in the West Bank aim to forcibly displace and concentrate the Palestinian population into isolated bantustans and ensure the continued expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.
Palestinians are faced with a separate system of law to the law that is applied to Jewish Israelis illegally settled in the West Bank. Palestinians experience home demolitions and theft of their land on a daily basis, while Israeli settlers are given legal and financial support and vastly superior infrastructure.

- The majority of Palestinians are the 7.25m refugees who have been forced from their homes to make way for Jewish Israelis. **Palestinian refugees are prevented from returning to their homes or receiving citizenship – while under the Israeli Law of Return, any Jewish person around the world can immigrate to Israel and become a citizen of the state at any time.**
- 20% of Israel's population are Palestinian citizens with Israeli passports. They face policies that discriminate against them in every aspect of their life vis-à-vis the Jewish population, whether in housing, land or education. **Palestinian citizens of Israel cannot even choose where to live** – 43% of communities across Israel have “Admissions Committees” made up of Jewish-Israeli citizens who can decide whom to accept into or turn away from their community, effectively enabling the segregation of Palestinians in housing. **Put simply, if you are Palestinian, you will not be allowed to live in the town simply because you are not Jewish.**
- **In the Gaza Strip, Palestinians live under a suffocating land, air and sea blockade**, which effectively imprisons them in the Strip.
- These oppressive policies, acts and laws imposed on all Palestinians wherever they are **make up a system of**

Israeli control in which Palestinians are marginalised, subjugated and collectively disempowered based on their ethnicity.

- Once we understand this, it becomes clear that this is a system of apartheid. **The term “apartheid” helps us understand that what Palestinians face on a daily basis are not isolated human rights abuses, but part of a racist system of rule over them.**
- As Palestinian civil society has repeatedly demanded, states have a responsibility under international law to hold Israel to account for this crime of apartheid, including by putting sanctions in place until Palestinians can live in freedom and equality. The British Trades Union Congress has just passed a motion calling for sanctions against Israel, citing apartheid.