



Winter Lobby of Parliament 2021

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.

Step 1: Setting up a meeting with your MP

- Register for the Lobby Day by requesting a meeting with your MP on the 7th December.

<https://palestinecampaign.eaction.online/winterlobby2021>

- 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/winterlobbyresponse>. If your MP is not available to meet on the 7th December, then please try and arrange to speak with them on a different day.

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

<https://palestinecampaign.eaction.online/winterlobby2021followup>

- 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.

- 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 winter 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. Each of the 3 topics below have concrete asks for you to take to your MP:

Key Points to discuss (notes follow):

- 1)** The criminalisation of 6 Palestinian human rights organisations, taking place within the context of apartheid.
- 2)** The expansion of illegal settlements and de facto annexation of Palestinian land. Banning trade with Israeli settlements.
- 3)** Ending the UK-Israel Arms Trade.
- 4)** **If meeting a Labour MP.** Labour Party Motion passed at conference.

The criminalisation of 6 Palestinian human rights organisations, taking place within the context of apartheid.

- On 19 October 2021, the Israeli Ministry of Defence (MoD) designated six of the most prominent and highly regarded Palestinian human rights NGOs as terrorist organizations. This decision has been condemned by leading international stakeholders and UN human rights experts. The UK, however, has not done nearly enough to protect these organisations, and has issued a very weak response.
- The designations are shocking, but not a surprising development. They are the escalation and culmination of aggressive campaigns targeting Palestinian NGOs and their donors, which have been waged for years by the Israeli government and groups affiliated with it.
- This attack on civil society organisations is an example of the apartheid reality faced by Palestinians. 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. International law categorises apartheid as one of the most serious crimes against humanity, which all states have a responsibility to actively prevent.
- In April this year Human Rights Watch released an in depth report finding Israel guilty of committing the very grave crimes of apartheid and persecution. You can read the full report here: [*A Threshold Crossed, Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*](#). Israel’s most significant human rights organisation, B’Tselem, also declared Israel to be an apartheid regime early this year. You can read their report here: [*A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid*](#). Amnesty International is expected to publish a similar report in the new year.
- The six designated Palestinian NGOs are: UPWC, UAWC, Addameer, Defence for Children International-Palestine, Bisan Center, and Al-Haq. These NGOs provide a spectrum of essential services to the Palestinians. Their work is also essential in documenting human rights violations, and relied upon by international agencies. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights is

prevented by Israel from visiting the occupied Palestinian territory, and so relies heavily on the valuable work of these organisations.

- The Israeli government announced and issued the designations based on vague and unsubstantiated claims. The Israeli government has released no evidence at all for these allegations. It has adopted a secretive approach, confidentially sharing information framed as 'evidence' with the EU and (donor) governments only.
- The UK has failed to defend the Palestinian organisations, and instead asked Israel to provide evidence. This official response falls far short of what needs to happen to address the designations, which have pushed Palestinian civil society at large into an existential crisis. The organisations are vulnerable to having their offices raided, equipment confiscated, funding blocked, and staff arrested. Palestinian civil society won't recover from the defunding, disruption, and disappearance of the designated NGOs.

• **Urgent action is required from the UK. Ask your MP to call on the government to:**

- Acknowledge Israel's failure to present credible evidence against the 6 organisations;
- Demand Israel immediately revoke its decision to criminalise human rights and civil society groups;
- Take active steps to support Palestinian human rights defenders, including these six organisations;
- Urge the Israeli Ministry of Defense and Justice, and other relevant interlocutors, to cease the employment of illegal practices and policies of intimidation and harassment, including the arbitrary criminalisation, harassment, and repression of Palestinian CSOs, which violate fundamental conventions under international law;
- Issue a public statement of non-recognition of the criminal designations as an internationally wrongful act of apartheid, comprising legislative measures calculated to breach the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association

The expansion of illegal settlements and de facto annexation of Palestinian land. Banning trade with Israeli settlements.

- During the past half-century, the Israeli authorities have allowed almost 700,000 settlers to move into often purpose-built settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which the UN has repeatedly [called](#) a “flagrant violation under international law”. Last month, Israel [reportedly](#) approved the construction of a further 3,100 new settler homes in the West Bank.
- The ongoing occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is another manifestation of apartheid, as confirmed by Human Rights Watch and B’Tselem.
- During Israel’s 54-year-long military occupation of Palestinian territory, tens of thousands of Palestinian homes and properties have been demolished by Israeli forces, with thousands of Palestinians displaced. In the first nine months of this year alone, some 673 structures were demolished, displacing nearly 1,000 Palestinian people.
- Every Israeli settlement is a war crime under international law and the de facto annexation of Palestinian territory. When Russia annexed the Crimea, the UK immediately responded with substantial restrictions on economic exchanges, visa bans, and asset freezes. The UK must show consistency in responding in the same way to Israel’s illegal settlements.
- There are precise international law obligations on all states – including the UK - to cooperate to bring breaches of international law to an end. This includes through non-recognition, non-aid, and non-assistance in relation to illegal situations. By continuing to allow UK trade with illegal settlements, the UK is not complying with its obligations under international law. A ban on trade with illegal settlements is not a sanction against Israel, but simply upholding international law.
- Words of condemnation are not enough, and Israel has proven time and time again it will continue annexing Palestinian land and ignore international law.

Now is the time for consequences and an immediate ban on trade with illegal settlements.

- Labour previously announced it would support a ban on settlement trade in response to any formal annexation of Palestinian land (which was proposed by Israel while Trump was president). **This is not good enough.** De facto annexation is just as illegal and requires the same response. The Liberal Democrats are now supporting a complete ban on trade with settlements, and Labour Party members passed a motion during autumn conference demanding for this to be Labour Party policy too.

- **Ask your MP to support a complete ban on trade with illegal settlements. They can do this by calling on the Government to implement this, but also to by demanding it within their own party. Ask Labour MPs to write to Lisa Nandy and Wayne David.**

Ending the UK-Israel Arms Trade: [Please read this short briefing paper.](#)

- Since 2015, the UK government has approved over £400 million worth of military technology and arms exports to Israel.
- Between 10th May - 20th May 2021, over 230 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli attacks on Gaza, over a quarter of them children; thousands more have been injured, and over 90,000 people displaced.
- The Government has refused to properly answer questions from MPs about what British weapons have been used by Israel in attacks against Palestinians.
- Israel's use of excessive and indiscriminate force has been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations and has been deemed unlawful by human rights experts.
- Israel uses military force to sustain its illegal occupation and repression of Palestinians across the West Bank, Gaza, and inside Israel.

- UK export controls are strict on paper, but not enforced. The Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria set out guidelines stipulating that an export licence should not be issued if:

- The goods proposed for export might be used for internal repression (such as against Palestinian citizens of Israel).
- The items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law (such as targeting civilians/civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip).
- There is a risk the intended recipient would use the export item aggressively against another country, or to assert by force a territorial claim, such as in the seizing of Palestinian property in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

These are just a few of the clear examples of the UK not adhering to our own export controls. If the guidelines were properly implemented, then it would mean a de facto two way arms embargo.

- Ask your MP to support the 'Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill'. They can do this by either signing [Early Day Motion \(EDM\) 300](#), or – if they do not sign EDMs – by emailing katie@caat.org.uk at the Stop Arming Israel campaign to have their support publicly noted.

If meeting a Labour MP. Labour Party Motion passed at conference.

During the Labour Party conference in September, party members overwhelmingly passed a [significant motion](#) on Palestine which recognised the apartheid reality on the ground.

It called for a ban on trade with illegal settlements, an end to the UK-Israel arms trade, and sanctions to be implemented against Israel. The motion had unanimous support from trade unions, who passed a similar resolution at the TUC conference.

Labour party members and supporters have been clear about what they want MPs to do. MPs and the party leadership must now listen.

Final additional points: These are not topics to actively raise, but which may come up.

- If your MP starts discussing support for co-existence projects, here is a briefing on why they are problematic: [The International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace & the Return of P2P Programmes.](#)
- Here is [PSC's statement on](#) the recent UK designation of Hamas as a terrorist organisation.