



# BRIEFING

# NATIONAL LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT FOR PALESTINE

**Tuesday 15 November 2016**

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If you have any questions please contact: [Annabel.Howarth@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:Annabel.Howarth@palestinecampaign.org) or 020 7700 6192

# 1. Introduction

**On Tuesday 15th November 2016 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?

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 a particular issue. Put very simply, an MP notices when their constituents have a problem, be it with their housing, or with human rights!

The most powerful way to let your MP know you care about Palestine is to ask them to meet you to discuss it.

## The issue

This year our Lobby of Parliament will focus on the UK's continuing support for Israel's illegal settlements. We are asking our Government to back up its statements opposing settlements with action. Our Government says that settlements are both illegal and a barrier to peace, but has not implemented policies to prevent the complicity of the UK

in their construction and upkeep. Indeed, trade and financial transactions between settlements and the UK continue unhindered.

The objective of the lobby is to raise these issues with MPs and discuss the measures that the UK can take to discourage the growth and maintenance of settlements.

There is a more detailed policy briefing on the issue of settlements further on in this 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 that the actions of Israel's Government will not change without external pressure. It is up to us as constituents to persuade our Government to take action. Britain's historic obligation to Palestine and our role in international politics means we are key to achieving change.

Whilst many MPs are supportive, others know very little about the situation in Palestine. They have been elected to represent their constituents, so it is our job to inform them and to persuade them to respect Palestinian human rights, and implement international law.

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://act.palestinecampaign.org/lobby/parliament2016>
2. Take time off on Tuesday 15th November so you can attend your meeting in Parliament
3. Ask your family and friends to join you
4. Book your travel
5. Keep your evening free for our rally from 6.30pm in Parliament. You need to book your place in advance online:  
[www.palestinecampaign.org/events/cant-build-peace-concrete-evening-rally-parliament/](http://www.palestinecampaign.org/events/cant-build-peace-concrete-evening-rally-parliament/)



*Demolished Palestinian structure in the West Bank. Israel routinely destroys Palestinian homes and buildings, including infrastructure build by the EU.*

# 2. 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 will also have experts on hand on the day itself for last-minute preparation and questions.

## When should I arrive in Parliament?

It depends on the time of your meeting.

The lobby is taking place on Tuesday 15th November between 12noon and 6pm we will be based 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, so you should allow 30–40 minutes just in case.

And we urge you to please come and register with us in the W rooms, and to get a briefing and up to date information before meeting your MP.

## 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 probably 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 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  
<http://act.palestinecampaign.org/lobby/parliament2016>

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

## To sum up

### From 12noon: Lobby of MPs

Come and meet us in the W Rooms for registration and briefings, inside Parliament, just off the main hall you arrive into.

There will be stewards to help direct you.

### 6pm: Lobby ends

### 6.30pm: Evening Rally

Committee Room 12, House of Commons  
With MPs and guest speakers

### 8pm: Event ends

# 3. Map and directions

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



On the map the red dot marks the main visitors' entrance to Parliament (Cromwell Green).



# 4. On the day

## Accessibility

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

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.

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

## To meet your MP

Make sure that you leave half an hour to get through security and come to register with us and to get hold of the briefing material in the W rooms.

If you aren't sure where your meeting is please do ask the security staff who are generally extremely helpful. We will also have stewards in Parliament to direct you.

If your meeting is earlier in the day we can arrange for you to receive a verbal briefing before the day. Please email [patricia.banke@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:patricia.banke@palestinecampaign.org) or phone 020 7700 6192 if you wish to arrange this.

## 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 5pm. 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 the key issue 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, this year we are **urging MPs to ask questions and raise issues in the Foreign Office (FCO) Questions session taking place on Wednesday the 16th November** (the day after the lobby!). We will have a list of questions and issues they can raise on the day.

If they are a Government Minister they won't ask questions or sign Early Day Motions (EDMs – a form of Parliamentary petition), 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, and to get in touch with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to support our work for Palestinian human rights.

**Take a photograph** with them if possible, to be shared on social media and in your local media and networks.

**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 briefing here:

[www.palestinecampaign.org/2016lobby](http://www.palestinecampaign.org/2016lobby).

## After your meeting

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

# 5. Briefing: Ending UK trade with settlements

The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an Occupying Power from transferring its civilian population into an occupied territory. But this is precisely what Israel is doing by building civilian towns and cities in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Israel's illegal settlements are built on Palestinian land, often forcing Palestinians out of their homes. The UN, EU and UK repeatedly affirm that these settlements are illegal and damaging to the chances of peace. However, UK trade with these settlements continues. The most obvious example of this is the continued sale of settlement goods in our shops.

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, with some estimates putting the figure at over 600,000.

Israel continues with settlement expansion undeterred by a series of strongly worded statements from the UK government. In March 2016, the Foreign Office released a statement saying 'The UK and our international partners have consistently called for an end to settlement expansion, which is illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace.' The Foreign Office has also stated that, 'There are... clear risks related to economic and financial activities in the settlements, and we do not encourage or offer support to such activity.' However, there has yet to be concerted government action to prevent settlement goods from reaching the UK or action to prevent UK companies, charities or individuals from providing them with financial support.

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 that restrict Palestinian residency rights in Jerusalem. Most immediately, by confiscating Palestinian land, settlements force Palestinians into ever-shrinking ghettos.

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 taxpayers – we are subsidising Israel's occupation.

At least 17 EU Governments have 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 have legal obligations to prevent the import of settlement goods. Further, legal advice from the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2004 suggested that third party states are compelled to act to ensure they do not perpetuate the occupation and the expansion of settlements. Without doing 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. We are also asking for restrictive measures against charities and corporations that do business with settlements. This includes excluding from public procurement companies involved in settlements.

## What we want the UK Government to do:

1. Commit to a thorough review of all UK financial relationships with Israeli settlements. Publish and promote a stronger set of guidelines to businesses and banks to ensure they have no trading, financial or investment links with settlements
2. Ensure that settlements are excluded from all bilateral and multilateral arrangements between the UK and Israel.
3. Ban the importation of settlement products to the UK.



*An expanding Israeli settlement near the Palestinian village of Bil'in. The village has become famous for its weekly demonstrations opposing the confiscation of its land for settlement expansion.*

## Key arguments:

- 1 The Government has a stated position opposing settlements – considering them illegal and a barrier to peace – and of not encouraging trade with settlements.
- 2 However, EU and UK trade with settlements continues. The EU does an estimated £198m of trade with settlements per year.
- 3 The Government is contradicting its own policy of opposing illegal settlements by continuing to trade with them. The impression is therefore that the UK Government is not genuine about its desire for a just peace.
- 4 The current unrestricted trade with Israel's illegal settlements encourages the Israeli Government to continue expanding settlements. Israel has thus far ignored all UN, EU, UK and other international statements demanding that it cease and reverse its settlement construction.
- 5 Backdoor negotiations to encourage Israel to cease its violations of international law have not had any impact. As with other states with which the UK has relations, we need to back up our words with action.
- 6 The Government can take practical steps towards opposing settlement construction by:
  - a. Committing to a thorough review of all UK financial relationships with Israeli settlements. Publish and promote a stronger set of guidelines to businesses and banks to ensure they have no trading, financial or investment links with settlements
  - b. Ensuring that settlements are excluded from all bilateral and multilateral arrangements between the UK and Israel.
  - c. Implementing a ban the importation of settlement products to the UK.





# 6. Feedback form

Your name .....

Email .....

Name of your MP .....

Constituency .....

## Is your MP willing to take Parliamentary action?

- a) Write to Ministers on your behalf?  Yes  No
- b) Table parliamentary questions?  Yes  No
- c) Apply for Adjournment/Westminster Hall debates?  Yes  No
- d) Raise the issue in Cabinet meetings/with the relevant Ministers?  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 FCO Questions  Yes  No

If yes, please write the question your MP is submitting below if known

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- b) Get a photograph with you  Yes  No

## In general, did you MP seem:

- Very supportive  Supportive  Neutral  Unsupportive

Further comment:

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Please return this form to:

November Lobby Feedback, PSC Box BM PSA,  
London WC1N 3XX Fax: 0207 609 7779  
[Annabel.Howarth@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:Annabel.Howarth@palestinecampaign.org)

Further comment:

A series of 27 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



## Palestine Solidarity Campaign

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