



## DEBATE PACK

CBP-0046 (2020) | 6 March 2020

# Radicalisation in the Palestinian school curriculum

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 10 March 2020

2:30-4:00pm

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The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv).

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Background

## The Palestinian school curriculum

In 2016 and 2017, the Palestinian Authority (PA) published a revised curriculum covering both primary and secondary school students. There have since been accusations that the new textbooks promote radicalisation and that “[examples of incitement litter Palestinian schoolbooks](#)”.

A [report by the Israeli-based NGO IMPACT-SE](#) (The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education) also raised concerns about the new textbooks. The Government [has met with IMPACT-SE](#) to investigate the issue further.

Critics argue that as the UK funds the PA, it is in effect turning a blind eye to the accusations of radicalisation.

The PA’s Minister for Education, Sabri Saidam, defended the curriculum in [an interview](#) in 2017, saying that contentious parts of the PA curriculum, including maps that don’t recognise Israel, and praise of so-called martyrs—many of whom are considered terrorists by Israel—derive from “the ripple effects” of the conflict. The UN Relief Works Agency which runs schools in Gaza and the West Bank has rejected criticisms of textbooks used in its schools. In a [statement](#) in 2017, it says that it [reviewed](#) textbooks rigorously and that its curriculum framework “aims to ensure that our curriculum is in line with UN values”.

## The UK Government position

The UK has a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Palestinian Authority under which the PA must adhere to the principles of non-violence and respect for human rights. Under this MoU the Department for International Development (DFID) is required to take action when they do not.

The Government also says that [it does not fund any textbooks](#) or educational materials. Instead, DFID support to the Palestinian Authority contributes to the salaries of vetted teachers and education public servants in the West Bank.

In 2018, DFID reported that financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority had paid the salaries of up to 39,000 teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives and other health and education public servants in the West Bank.

This funding is largely paid through the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA). Funding to UNRWA increased as a result of the US termination of support for UNRWA and of its wider assistance to the Palestinians, as well as new Israeli legislation aiming to withhold Palestinian clearance revenues as of 2019.

DFID says that it has always been clear that [it expects textbooks used by the Palestinian Authority to be academically rigorous](#) and must not to incite racial hatred or violence under any circumstances. DFID also reports that it does discuss issues of concern about radicalisation with the relevant PA representatives from time to time.

DFID also pushed the EU to commission an independent review of Palestinian textbooks. This is being carried out by the Georg Eckert Institute. The interim report will be completed in Spring 2020 with the full report due later this year.

## 2. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

### [What does Trump's plan propose for Palestinian territories?](#)

Al Jazeera  
29 January 2020

### [Back to school: What we teach our children](#)

The Jerusalem Post  
Gershon Baskin  
22 August 2019

### [Textbooks on terror puts \\$80m aid at risk](#)

The Australian  
Elias Visontay  
12 August 2019

### [Jewish and Arab students learn to cross divides at Jerusalem school](#)

The Guardian  
Rebecca Ratcliffe  
17 July 2019

### [EU to probe Palestinian textbooks for incitement to hatred, violence](#)

Times of Israel  
Michael Bachner  
15 May 2019

### [Britain gives £20m for schools glorifying martyrs and jihad](#)

Sunday Times  
Tim Shipman  
1 April 2018

### [To Shape Young Palestinians, Hamas Creates Its Own Textbooks](#)

New York Times  
Fares Akram and Jodi Rudoren  
3 November 2013

### [The Missing Narratives in Palestinian Schoolbooks](#)

Al Shabaka  
Zarefa Ali  
5 March 2013

### 3. DFID responses to press articles

#### UK support for Palestinian education

**DFID Media Team**

**15 December 2018**

Today's [Daily Mail](#) reports that UK aid money is spent by the Palestinian Authority on textbooks that could incite violence against Israel.

In fact, no UK taxpayers' money to the Palestinian Authority goes to schools or to fund education materials that incite violence. DFID support to the Palestinian Authority contributes to the salaries of vetted teachers and education public servants in the West Bank.

We have always been clear that we expect textbooks used by the Palestinian Authority to be academically rigorous and they must not incite racial hatred or violence under any circumstances.

The article also reports that a review of the textbooks has not yet been commissioned, when in fact DFID is planning to conduct a thorough assessment of the Palestinian curriculum and evidence. We hope to do this with other international partners, as a joint review will provide a rigorous analysis of Palestinian textbooks and a unified voice from the international community.

The review aims to be completed by September 2019 and if we find evidence of material which incites violence, we will take action.

The UK government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to violence. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other.

An essential aspect of our efforts to prepare the ground for a two state-solution is to support a stable Palestinian Authority which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

DFID support to the public sector in the West Bank provides vital help to both the health and education sectors.

UK financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority this year has paid the salaries of up to 39,000 teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives and other health and education public servants in the West Bank. These staff have immunised up to 3,700 children and provided around 185,000 medical consultations annually; and educated around 24,000 young Palestinians.

Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We continue to urge them to uphold this principle.

The UK Government is working with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education to maintain the delivery of high quality education, including through its curriculum.

### **Explaining British support for Palestinian education**

**DFID Media Team**

**1 April 2018**

Today's [Sunday Times](#) and [Daily Mail](#) report that UK aid money is spent by the Palestinian Authority on textbooks that could incite hatred against Israel.

As International Development Minister Alistair Burt has set out, British support is helping around 25,000 young Palestinians go to school each year.

The UK government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to violence. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other.

DFID support to the Palestinian Authority contributes to the salaries of vetted teachers and education public servants in the West Bank.

Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We continue to urge them to uphold this principle.

The article references the IMPACT-SE report and the claims regarding inflammatory content in textbooks. The government was very concerned at some of the findings of the report and has met with IMPACT-SE to investigate the issue further.

DFID is planning to conduct a thorough assessment of the Palestinian curriculum and evidence and if we find evidence of material which incites violence, we will take action.

DFID support to the public sector in the West Bank provides vital help to both the health and education sectors.

## 4. Press releases

### [UK continues to be among top donors to UNRWA](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**25 June 2019**

*Statement by Ambassador James Roscoe, Head of Open Societies and Partnerships at the UK Mission to the UN at the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA):*

Many thanks, Madam Chair, and our thanks too to the Commissioner-General for his briefing.

We have heard today about the challenges facing UNRWA, in particular the ongoing financial insecurity of the agency and the unpredictable context in which UNRWA operates. We have also heard about the positive impact that UNRWA's services have on the lives of Palestinian refugees and have seen for ourselves the bright hope for the future. In Hanan and Hatem, two impressive ambassadors for the UNRWA school system, we thank them for their powerful testimony. The UK remains a strong supporter of UNRWA. We recognise its unique mandate from the General Assembly to protect and provide essential health and education services to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. And we know that UNRWA is a vital humanitarian and stabilising force in the region.

The UK has consistently been among UNRWA's top donors, in 2018 in recognition of UNRWA's, severe financial constraints. We increased our planned support from £33.5 million to £65.5 million, and encourage other donors to step up their contributions. We recognise that until a permanent solution is found, Palestinian refugees need UNRWA to be on a more secure financial footing to ensure that their basic needs are met. To that end, the UK is working with UNRWA and other donors to broaden UNRWA's base of donor income, continue with program reforms and to encourage multi-year funding commitments. Indeed, it was good to hear the Commissioner-General recommit to reform efforts earlier today. They have resulted in impressive savings over recent years, and UNRWA has made strides in finding new sources of income. But as the number of refugees grows, balancing the books will remain an ever present challenge.

We remain concerned about the impact that this year's funding shortfall will have on UNRWA's essential services and humanitarian relief. That is why I'm pleased to announce - in line with the Secretary-General's request this morning - that the UK intends to again increase our planned level of funding this year to match the £65.5 million we provided in 2018. This UK aid about \$84 million, will help to provide essential services, including healthcare and education for millions of Palestinian refugees - living in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank. As well as cash and basic food supplies for the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees in Gaza and in Syria. We will also bring forward our payment to July to help with UNRWA's cash flow. As last

year, we would like to encourage other countries to consider whether they, too, can increase their funding to UNRWA at this difficult time.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Commissioner-General and the staff of UNRWA for their continuing dedication to serving the needs of the Palestinian refugees. No one expected UNRWA to be here for more than 70 years. The fact that it is reminds us all of the importance of finding a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for Palestinian refugees. The UK is clear that the status of Palestinian refugees must be agreed as part of the wider peace negotiations. Until that time, the UK remains firmly committed to supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency and Palestinian refugees across the Middle East.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

### **UK government has successfully pushed for a review into Palestinian textbooks**

**Department for International Development  
19 March 2019**

After calls by the UK government for international action on education materials, a group of international partners, including the UK will lead a review into the books included in the Palestinian Authority's current curriculum for primary and secondary school children.

The results of the review will be used to identify the steps necessary to ensure such books promote peace and tolerance. Work on this topic will begin immediately, with results from the review available to the Palestinian Authority and partners by September 2019. The Palestinian Authority have agreed to engage constructively with the findings of the review.

The UK will play a central role in the review process, and intends to commission the Georg Eckert Institute to produce an initial scoping report to expedite the production of the full review.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The UK is rightly at the forefront of the international community on this issue. We are working closely with the Palestinian Authority to ensure that all Palestinian children receive a decent education and are able to fulfil their potential.

UK aid is helping to provide quality education for children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including through paying the salaries of specially vetted teachers in the West Bank. UK aid does not fund the writing or provision of textbooks by the Palestinian Authority, and all UK aid to the Palestinian Authority is subject to rigorous safeguards to ensure aid is used for its intended purpose.



**UK support to help keep schools open for Palestinian children**  
**Department for International Development**  
**19 August 2018**

The UK has agreed an additional donation of £3 million (\$4.69 million) to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), International Development Minister Desmond Swayne announced today.

This funding is helping UNRWA to bridge its unprecedented \$101 million (£65 million) deficit and open its 685 schools on time. UNRWA provides basic education for half a million Palestinian refugee children in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Desmond Swayne said:

The UK is committed to supporting Palestinian refugees through UNRWA and we see education as a top priority. UNRWA plays a crucial role in an unstable region, delivering basic services and humanitarian assistance. It provides a safe place for children to learn and play, broadens their world view through lessons on human rights and tolerance, and gives them the skills to earn an income.

I am pleased that DFID is supporting this work – our £3 million contribution will ensure Palestinian children can continue to go to school. This is in addition to our existing funding of more than £40 million to UNRWA this year.

I welcome the joint effort of donors, including those in the region, to bridge this year's shortfall. However, the deficit is a chronic one that cannot be addressed by fundraising alone. UNRWA will need to pursue further cost saving reforms to address its deficit, to focus on providing essential services to Palestinian refugees and to bring down operating costs.

DFID is the third largest donor to UNRWA's General Fund and emergency appeals, providing over £43m to UNRWA this financial year. This includes:

- £33m for the Agency's General Fund, including the additional £3m contribution announced today;
- £8m for UNRWA's regional appeal for Palestinian refugees affected by the Syria crisis;
- £2m for jobs creation in Gaza; and
- A technical assistance package of up to £500,000.

Last year [2017], following the conflict in Gaza, DFID provided an additional £9m for UNRWA to help meet humanitarian needs.

## 5. PQs

### [Palestinians: Schools](#)

04 Mar 2020 | 901103

**Asked by: Jack Lopresti**

What progress has been made on the international review into the books included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Department for International Development**

Following the UK's calls for international action, an EU sponsored independent review of Palestinian textbooks is currently underway. We understand that an interim report will be completed in Spring 2020 with the full report due later this year. The Development Secretary made it clear that incitement in education is unacceptable when she spoke with the PA Education Minister last week and she held him to account on progress to remove hateful content.

### [Palestinians: Schools](#)

02 Mar 2020 | 19999

**Asked by: Alicia Kearns**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress her Department has made with the Georg Eckert Institute on the review of the textbooks included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum; and if she will make a statement.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Department for International Development**

Following the UK's calls for international action, an EU sponsored independent review of Palestinian textbooks is currently underway. The EU has contracted the Georg Eckert Institute, a specialist textbook analysis centre, to lead this review.

To ensure the review could begin immediately on the signing of the contract, the UK commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute to produce an inception report to establish its methodology in advance.

We understand from the EU that an interim report covering grade 8 – 10 books will be completed in Spring 2020, with the full report covering all the books due later in the year. DFID is part of the steering committee for this review, and we will continue to engage with the EU to press for this timetable to be met.

### [Topical Questions](#)

04 Feb 2020 | 671 c169

**Asked by: Caroline Ansell**

Does the Minister share my view that unless and until peaceful co-existence is taught, championed and modelled in Palestinian schools, any peace deal with Israel will be short-lived?

**Answered by: Dr Andrew Murrison | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My hon. Friend is right, and she will be aware of the support that we give for health and education in the occupied Palestinian territories, pending the definitive political solution that we would like to see in the not-too-distant future, which remains a huge priority. She will also be aware of concerns about things such as teaching materials in schools, and of the active role that we have taken to ensure that no inappropriate material is used. I spoke recently to the Palestinian Education Minister. I know that this issue is at the top of his agenda, and in advance of the academic year in September, changes will be made.

**[Palestine: UK Aid](#)****29 Jan 2020 | 670 c765****Asked by: Robert Halfon**

UK taxpayers' aid pays the salaries of teachers in Palestinian Authority schools, yet at least 31 official PA schools are named after terrorists who killed innocent citizens. Does the Secretary of State share my concern that the children studying in those schools are being taught that it is honourable to commit violent acts against Israelis? Does he agree that, instead of prolonging the conflict by supporting such rhetoric, we must do more to press the Palestinians to stop glorifying terrorists and to use our aid as it is meant to be used?

**Answered by: Dr Andrew Murrison | Department for International Development**

My right hon. Friend is right to raise this matter. We are clear with the Palestinian Authority on how we expect UK aid to be spent. Last week, I had a further meeting with the Palestinian Authority Education Minister, Professor Awartani, following our meeting in Ramallah last year. He expressed his commitment to the EU's review of teaching materials, as well as to the PA's own review, which will be available before the start of the academic year.

Education means hope, and we need to be careful about removing hope from the OPTs, because hope is what is preventing people from falling into the arms of those with mischievous intent for the future of that part of the world.

**[Palestinians: Schools](#)****22 Jul 2019 | 278333****Asked by: Joan Ryan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 272127, which organisation completed the evaluation; and if he will place a copy of the evaluation in the Library.

**Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Department for International Development**

The independent evaluation commissioned by the Palestinian Authority (PA) was completed by the Arab European Foundation. DFID is not the owner of the report. Ultimately it will be the decision of the Palestinian Authority whether to make the evaluation public.

**[Palestinians: Schools](#)**

**08 Jul 2019 | 272127**

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the independent evaluation of the Palestinian Authority curriculum commissioned by the Palestinian Authority in 2018 and due in March 2019 has been completed.

**Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Department for International Development**

DFID can confirm that the Palestinian Authority (PA) commissioned an independent evaluation of their pilot curriculum, and that this evaluation was completed in March 2019.

**[Palestinians: Schools](#)**

**08 Jul 2019 | 272116**

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2019 to Question 220733, whether the independent review of Palestinian Authority textbooks will be published by September 2019.

**Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Department for International Development**

Given the seriousness with which the UK takes the allegations of incitement in the Palestinian pilot curriculum and textbooks we have taken the time needed to make sure that the independent review delivered will be rigorous, credible and can form the basis for discussions with the Palestinian Authority (PA) on this important issue. Securing the backing of the wider international community is central to this. We are pleased that after calls by the UK government for international action the European Union (EU) agreed to lead and co-fund the independent review. DFID has pressed hard to expedite this and had hope to make findings available to Parliament by September 2019, including by commissioning an inception report to form the basis of the independent review.

The EU are currently in contracting negotiations with a potential service partner. Following this negotiation DFID will provide an update to Parliamentarians on the timetable for the report. We recognise that publishing findings by September is now very unlikely, although we anticipate only a short delay. In the interim, we are continuing to raise our concerns about incitement in education, which I did personally at a

meeting with the Palestinian Authority Education Minister in Ramallah in May 2019.

**[Gaza: Israel](#)**

**08 May 2019 | HL15420**

**Asked by: Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations are they making to the government of Israel about that government restricting books being brought into Gaza.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon**

**| Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. The right to education and the supply of books for this purpose is a basic right. That is why the UK continues to support education through our funding to the Palestinian Authority and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees. Last year, UK support contributed towards the salaries of approximately 33,000 public servants under the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, including teachers, helping 25,000 young Palestinians to receive an education and proper reading material. We continue to regularly urge the Israeli authorities to remove restrictions on movement and access in Gaza which can impair access to quality education.

**[Palestinians: Overseas Aid](#)**

**09 Apr 2019 | 240936**

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the naming of a PA Ministry of Education sports festival at the Beitunia Upper Elementary School for Girls after terrorist Dalal Mughrabi.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department for International Development**

The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. Our support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the PA to commit to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. We have held meetings with the PA that will inform the 2019 assessment, which we are currently finalising. The UK regularly raises allegations of incitement in the education sector in our conversations with the PA, and had a detailed discussion on this topic as recently as 21 March 2019.

**UNRWA: Finance**

**19 Mar 2019 | 232607**

**Asked by: Alan Brown**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what representations she has made to her counterpart in the US administration on its decision to maintain its reduction to UNRWA funds.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Department for International Development**

As the Minister responsible for the Middle East, I raised the US withdrawal of funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with the US President's Middle East Envoy, Jason Greenblatt, on 28 September 2018.

The Secretary of State has not spoken with her counterpart in the US administration about the decision to maintain a withdrawal of funding from UNRWA, but recently discussed this with Nita Lowey, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, on March 7<sup>th</sup> 2019. The Secretary of State raised her concerns about the impact of funding cuts to UNRWA on the delivery of essential services to Palestinian refugees, including to the provision of healthcare and education.

The UK has been clear that we are concerned about the impact of US cuts to UNRWA on regional stability and services to Palestinian refugees. UK officials continue to engage with the US on this matter, and we will continue to work with UNRWA and other donors to help place the Agency on a more secure financial footing.

**Palestinians: Schools**

**18 Feb 2019 | 220733**

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2019 to Question 211628, what assessment her Department has made of the PA Minister of Education's assertion on 22 January, as reported by al-Watan, that the minister stressed the ministry's and all the Palestinian people's rejection to the attack on the national Palestinian curriculum lead by the Zionist lobby.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Department for International Development**

The UK is committed to working with the Palestinian Authority (PA) to ensure that the pilot Palestinian curriculum is consistent with the PA's commitment to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to take action against incitement to violence. The UK will conduct an independent review into allegations of incitement in textbooks, with findings to be published by September 2019. I personally discussed the content of the pilot Palestinian curriculum with Palestinian Authority (PA) Education Minister Sabri Saidam earlier this year. Minister Saidam has committed to engage constructively with the findings of the textbook review, and to consider its recommendations.

**UN Aid to Palestinian Refugees****22 Jan 2019 | 653 c124****Asked by: Richard Burden**

Does the Minister agree that the announcement by the Israeli authorities that they plan to close UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem is a direct attack on the welfare of Palestinian refugees in two refugee camps there, including 3,000 students? I welcome the Minister's increased funding for UNRWA, but will he commit to support the renewal of UNRWA's mandate later this year?

**Answered by: Alistair Burt | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question; he knows the area very well. Of course we will continue to support UNRWA, and look hard at the mandate renewal. It is important that it continues its work there because, as I have said, there is concern about what the impact would be if that work is not done. As I said earlier, all this tells us that such disputes and concerns will not change unless there is overall agreement on a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. Unless that is done, these problems will continue to occur, much to the misery of all involved.

**Palestinians: Overseas Aid****21 Dec 2018 | 202748****Asked by: Sammy Wilson**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has investigated allegations that UK aid has been used to purchase school books encouraging Palestinian children to sacrifice their lives in the name of religion.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Department for International Development**

No UK aid is used to fund the purchasing of school textbooks in the OPTs. UK aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is used exclusively to pay the salaries of teachers, doctors and other public servants working in the health and education sectors. Our money goes into a special, dedicated bank account before being paid to individuals who have been vetted in advance. Independent auditors then check that the money paid out of the UK dedicated bank account goes only to these vetted individuals after every disbursement.

The UK government is deeply concerned about the findings of a report into the PA's new curriculum conducted by IMPACT-se. It is a priority for DFID to commission an independent review of the PA's textbooks. We are also continuing to raise our concerns about incitement, which I did myself at a meeting with the Palestinian Education Minister earlier this year. Earlier this month, DFID officials met the PA Education Minister and raised UK concerns over specific examples in the textbooks.

### [Palestine Refugees](#)

21 Nov 2018 | 649 c851

**Asked by: Stephen Crabb**

In June last year, UNRWA discovered a major terrorist tunnel under two of its schools in Gaza. What support can the UK give to UNRWA to ensure that its neutrality is not violated, and that its resources do not get misappropriated?

**Answered by: Alistair Burt | Department for International Development**

Bearing in mind UNRWA's particular position, particularly in Gaza, we know—I have discussed this with senior directors at UNRWA—it is absolutely essential that it maintains the integrity of its operation. When others have abused that in trying to disguise schools as places where terrorist activity could be hidden, it is essential that it deals with that. We will continue to give it every support in finding that out.

### [Topical Questions](#)

10 Oct 2018 | 647 c128

**Asked by: Jack Lopresti**

Does my hon. Friend share my concern about the Palestinian Authority's continuing naming of schools after terrorists and the payment of salaries to convicted murderers? Can we be sure that UK taxpayers are not facilitating payments?

**Answered by: Alistair Burt | Department for International Development**

My hon. Friend can be absolutely sure that we share his concern in relation to this. The matter is continually raised with the Palestinian Authority. There should be no incitement to terror and no incitement to violence. We make rigorously sure that no UK taxpayers' money is spent on this.

### [Palestinians: Schools](#)

14 Sep 2018 | 171642

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the methodologies of the review of the Palestinian Authority's curriculum will include compliance with (a) Articles 1, 4.2 and 5 of the Declaration of principles on tolerance proclaimed and signed by the member states of UNESCO on 16 November 1995, (b) Principles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the UN Declaration on the promotion among youth of the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding between peoples, signed in 1965, and (c) Articles 9 and 18 of the integrated framework for action on education for peace, human rights and democracy, approved by the general conference of UNESCO at the 28th session in Paris in November 1995.



**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Department for International Development**

We are in the process of commissioning the review and are considering the most robust methodology for conducting the textbook analysis. We will give consideration to relevant international agreements and previous high quality academic research when determining the final methodology. We will provide further detail on the methodology in due course.

## 6. Other Parliamentary material

### 6.1 Debates

#### [International Development Assistance \(Palestinian National Authority Schools\)](#)

**08 Jan 2019 | Debates on bills | House of Commons | 652 cc207-211**

Ten minute rule motion for leave to bring in a Bill. Motion opposed. Original question agreed to. Presentation and first reading (Bill 311). To be read a second time on 8 March.

#### [Palestinian Education System](#)

**04 Jul 2018 | House of Commons | 644 cc164-172WH**

Motion that this House has considered incitement in the Palestinian education system. Agreed to on question.

#### [Palestine: Children](#)

**21 Jul 2016 | House of Lords | 774 cc748-782**

Lords motion to take note of the conditions in which Palestinian children are living and the impact on their health and wellbeing. Agreed to on question.

### 6.2 Statements

#### [UK Support to UNRWA](#)

**27 Jun 2018 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS801**

##### **Alistair Burt (Minister of State for International Development):**

The UK remains firmly committed to supporting Palestinian refugees across the Near East. The UK recognises the UN Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) important mandate from the UN General Assembly to support and protect Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA is a necessary humanitarian and stabilising force across the Near East, providing millions of Palestinian refugees with hope and opportunities every day. Its basic services, including food, education and healthcare, provide a life-line to the five million and more Palestinian men, women and child refugees across the region, and enable them to live in dignity until a negotiated peace agreement.

The UK is concerned about the possibility of service suspension as a result of the exceptional funding deficit that UNRWA is facing this year. The Syrian conflict has caused more than 50,000 Palestinian refugees to be on the move again, and increasing numbers of refugees are food insecure and vulnerable to shocks. Recent violence in Gaza has added to the burden on UNRWA's health services. UNRWA's work has never been more critical.

In the face of these pressures, the UK has committed to deliver its next round of financial support earlier than originally planned to help meet

the growing needs of Palestinian refugees across the region. We will disburse £38.5m to the agency in recognition of the severity of the deficit and the importance of service delivery. This includes £28.5m that I committed at the UNRWA Rome Pledging Conference earlier this year, and £10m of funding that the UK is bringing forward from next year's budget in response to the exceptional cash flow challenges UNRWA are facing.

The UK will continue to work closely with UNRWA to reach a secure and sustainable financial footing. We have welcomed UNRWA's efforts to become ever more efficient and cost-effective, and are committed to working closely with them, host authorities, and fellow donors to maintain a realistic and achievable pace of reform.

We communicated the UK's ongoing support to the UN Secretary General at an UNRWA Pledging Conference in New York on 25<sup>th</sup> June. We were pleased that twenty donors announced contributions, or their intention to contribute, to the 2018 budget of UNRWA. I will continue to urge the international community to come together to ensure that UNRWA can maintain its essential work and find ways to ensure continuity of essential services to Palestinian refugees.

All of us who care about stability in the region and about the rights and needs of this vulnerable group of people need to do our part to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees. The UK has welcomed UNRWA's efforts to broaden its donor base and encouraged partners to step up with more funding and more predictable disbursements. The UK has highlighted our concern about the impact on the activities of UNRWA that any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements might have. While we acknowledge the greater burden shouldered by some, we urge all donors to honour their commitments.

While the support and services provided by UNRWA are essential, ultimately there needs to be a just, fair, agreed, and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee question as part of a negotiated peace agreement. The UK is firmly committed to a two-state solution to provide the long term answer for Palestinian refugees.

Peace will come only through fresh negotiations between the parties, supported by the international community. It is critical that both Israelis and Palestinians return to direct negotiations and urgently prioritise steps to resolve the situation in Gaza. The UK remains firmly committed to this process.

## 7. Further reading

### United States Government Accountability Office

[West Bank and Gaza: State Has Taken Actions to Address Potentially Problematic Textbook Content but Should Improve Its Reporting to Congress](#)

Report to the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate  
June 2019

### Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research

[The texts of "the others" – an Israeli-Palestinian textbook project on the history of the Middle East conflict](#)

### IMPACT-se

IMPACT-se researches school textbooks, teachers' guides, and curricula to assess whether young people are being educated to accept others—be it their neighbours, minorities and even their nation's enemies, and to solve conflicts through negotiation and compromise while rejecting hatred and violence.

### **IMPACT-se reports on schools/education in Palestinian Authority areas**

[Palestinian curriculum put to the test: The General Certificate of High School Examination in Palestine \(Tawjihi\)](#)

November 2019

- This report studies the twenty-six tests comprising the Palestinian 2019 Tajihi Matriculation Exam which tests grade 12 material from the Palestinian curriculum. The exam was analysed according to IMPACT-se's UNESCO-derived standards to research peace and tolerance in school education and compared it with the relevant textbooks and content from the PA curriculum that students needed to memorise for the exam. IMPACT-se's finding is that many of the final exams are so designed that students must study problematic content that does not meet international standards for peace and tolerance.

[The rejection of peace: References to Peace Agreements, Israel, and Jews, Now Removed from PA Curriculum](#)

September 2019

- A report on selected positive content about peace, relations with Israel, and Jewish historical presence previously in the Palestinian school curriculum between 2000 and 2016, and subsequently removed from the restructured 2016–19 curriculum. Although some

of the positive examples were removed even before 2016, the “new” PA curriculum represents a quantum leap backward toward radicalising the textbooks—and unfortunately—Palestinian school children.

**The new Palestinian curriculum: by the numbers—Quantitative Analysis of the Current Palestinian Ministry of Education Curriculum**

September 2019

- A quantitative analysis of textbooks from the current Palestinian Ministry of Education curriculum, applying UNESCO-derived standards of peace and tolerance. All 2019-20 textbooks for the first semester were analysed. Additionally, in this report, we define Problematic Content as: violent connotations, incitement to violence, hatred of the Other, and radical, inappropriate or disturbing content. The accompanying graph from the report displays by grade, the number of violent references included in each textbook.

**PRIME Institute**

**Learning each other’s historical narrative: Palestinians and Israelis**

PRIME Institute (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East)

March 2003

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