



## DEBATE PACK

CDP 0141 (2020) | 16 November 2020

# UK support for an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace

Westminster Hall

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2:30-4:00pm

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Government policy on Israel and the Palestinians

The UK Government considers that a two-state solution represents the best framework to end the occupation and deliver peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

In July 2020 the Government also set out its overall policy on the Israel/Palestine dispute:

The UK continues to support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair and realistic settlement for refugees.

Until that happens, the UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and Palestinian refugees across the region.

The policy statement accompanied an [announcement that the UK was increasing funding for the UNRWA](#), the UN's agency for supporting Palestinian refugees. £33.5 million of extra UK funding brought the UK's total contribution to UNRWA for 2020 to £34.5 million.

## 1.2 International Fund for Israel-Palestinian Peace

The International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace is promoted by the [Alliance for Middle East Peace](#) (ALLMEP), which describes itself as “the largest and fastest growing network of Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilders”. It nurtures people-to-people contacts and campaigns to work towards conflict resolution.

ALLMEP does not intend to administer the fund itself. The NGO [focuses its work](#) on people under the age of 30. These are the least likely to have had contact with members of the other community and are most likely to reject the other side out of hand: “over 60% of both young Palestinians and Israelis believe the ultimate intent of the other is the removal of their rights or the destruction of their society”.

The fund is [inspired by the International Fund for Ireland](#), which helped end the violence in Northern Ireland. The organisation claims that successive academic studies have shown that such programmes work:

People-to-people peacebuilding programs have been shown to disrupt and reverse many of these attitudes and beliefs that fuel the conflict. We know that they transform the course of individuals' lives, yet we have never funded them at the level where they can transform communities, or entire societies.

Speaking for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office In 2018, [Baroness Goldie said](#) that the UK Government supports the idea:

The UK believes in the work that ALLMEP conducts and we support its objectives. ALLMEP's work in developing an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace is a concept that the UK supports.

According to [press reports](#), Labour Friends of Israel is organising a campaign in favour of the Fund.

In July 2020, the US House of Representatives passed the [Middle East Partnership for Peace Act](#), an amendment to the 2021 House State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill that would provide some \$250 million in funding for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding and Palestinian economic development.

### 1.3 Conflict, Security and Stability Fund for the Middle East Peace Process

This programme, which runs from 2019-22, was designed to help protect the political and physical viability of a two-state solution.

It is complementary to DFID's broader programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

It was designed to contribute to three main objectives:

1. Building effective and accountable Palestinian institutions ready for statehood, supportive of UK values and interests, and resilient to political transition;
2. Protecting and assisting vulnerable communities to preserve the viability of a two-state solution, to uphold international humanitarian law and respond to arising needs;
3. Supporting Palestinian Authority and civil society (Israeli and Palestinian) to work for peace, maintaining and increasing political support for a two-state solution.

The reasons for UK funding are concerns about the high risk of instability in the OPTs and potential overspill of violence into Israel.

Issues of concern include:

- violence and terrorist attacks against Israelis,
- shootings of Gazans during recent protests,
- a deterioration of conditions for Palestinians on the ground in Gaza and the West Bank (including a surge in demolitions of Palestinian structures and settlement expansion in the West Bank), and
- a continued decline of public confidence and support for a negotiated solution.

The Government says that it has the ability to influence both sides to the conflict as a result of strong bilateral relationships, strong engagement with communities throughout Israeli society, and its leading role in building the capacity of a future Palestinian state.

The [expected outcomes](#) from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) are set out as follows:

- Perceptions of corruption in Palestinian Authority (PA) institutions tackled, and their transparency improved.
- Effective legal assistance provided to Palestinians at risk of displacement.

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- Key infrastructure, particularly electricity provision, constructed in isolated parts of Area C, to facilitate continued Palestinian presence on their land.
- Positive perceptions of, and strengthened support for, the 2SS amongst key religious and other relevant Israeli constituencies.
- Under pressure Israeli organisations that advocate within Israeli society for Palestinians' rights are protected.
- Closer links between the West Bank and Gaza at the societal level promoted, to facilitate a later successful political reconciliation.
- Palestinian women's ability to achieve leadership positions in Palestinian society enhanced.

## 2. Aid statistics

The UK regularly provides overseas aid to the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Israel is not eligible to receive official international aid, as its gross national income per capita is above [the limit set by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee](#)). In 2019, the UK provided a total of £80.7 million in bilateral aid to the Palestinian territories.

This aid covered a wide range of sectors; £3.0 million was spent on "Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution", and aid was also spent on related sectors (for example, £1.4 million was provided for "Security system management and reform"). This made up a small proportion of all the aid that went to the Palestinian territories – the three largest aid sectors were "Public sector policy and administrative management" (£20.9 million), "Energy policy and administrative management" (£16.2 million) and "Material relief assistance and services" (£15.2 million).<sup>1</sup>

The £3.0 million spent on peace-building and conflict prevention in 2019 covered three programmes, described as follows in the FCDO's statistics:

- **People to people work to build understanding and cooperation with the health sector, young leaders, and religious leaders** (Department for International Development): People-to-people work in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to build understanding and cooperation on social, economic and political issues. This programme will bring together Israelis and Palestinians to cooperate on issues which can have a positive impact on social, political and economic life within both communities. By creating a space for sustained, productive, interaction this will build understanding between people on both sides of the conflict, helping build support for a peaceful, negotiated resolution: **£1.0 million**
- **Improve Security Sector Reform** (Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)): Activities to improve Security Sector Reform in West Bank & Gaza Strip: **£1.0 million**
- **Improving Community Security and Peacebuilding** (Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)): Activities to improve Community Security and Peacebuilding in West Bank & Gaza Strip: **£0.9 million**

For a full list of all of the aid projects currently active in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, please see the FCDO's [Development Tracker website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> FCDO, [Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2019](#), 24 September 2020

### 3. 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 accuracy of external content.

**[How a Proposed New Fund to Bolster the Palestinian Economy Stands to Benefit Israeli Settlers](#)**

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
Zaha Hassan  
2 September 2020

**[Good News: A New International Fund for Peace-building in Israel and Palestine](#)**

The Times of Israel (blog)  
Rob Kronish  
16 July 2020

**[U.S. Congress Votes to Include Legislation for Israeli-Palestinian Peace Fund in 2021 Budget](#)**

Haaretz  
Amir Tibon  
8 July 2020

## 4. Press releases

### [Congress advances historic fund for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding](#)

**ALLMEP: Alliance for Middle East Peace**

**24 July 2020**

The U.S. House of Representatives has just passed the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, historic legislation delivering unprecedented funding for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding and Palestinian economic development. If successfully enacted, it would provide \$250 million over five years in order to expand peace and reconciliation work in the region. This legislation is the result of over a decade of advocacy by the Alliance for Middle East Peace – ALLMEP.

Led by Chairwoman Nita Lowey (NY-17) and Representative Jeff Fortenberry (NE-1), the legislation has garnered bipartisan Congressional support. ALLMEP, working closely with Yadin Kaufmann, has built a broad coalition of endorsers including The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), The American Jewish Committee (AJC), Churches for Middle East Peace, Israel Action Network, Israel Policy Forum, Jewish Federations of North America, J Street, Americans for Peace Now, and The New Israel Fund.

Previously introduced as the Partnership Fund for Peace Act of 2019, the legislation has been adopted into the text of the House State and Foreign Operations 2021 appropriations bill, and contains language that encourages international cooperation. It includes a \$110 million mark intended to dramatically expand peace and reconciliation programming in order to disrupt growing polarization and dehumanization in the region over the long term.

Companion legislation is expected in the Senate State and Foreign Operations bill for Fiscal Year 2021.

“I am proud to advance the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act in the State and Foreign Operations bill for Fiscal Year 2021 and thank ALLMEP for its tireless commitment to this bipartisan priority. With economic opportunity and growth for Palestinians and engagement through people-to-people programs between Israelis and Palestinians, the bill will help increase stability in the region. Years in the making, today’s passage signals the Appropriations Committee’s commitment to fostering community ties and economic development, which are fundamental to cultivating the environment for negotiations on a long-term solution that results in two states for two peoples. I thank my good friend Congressman Fortenberry for his leadership and unwavering devotion to the cause of peace.” —

**Chairwoman Nita Lowey (NY-17), House Appropriations Committee**

“Any road map for peace needs a road. Any road needs a foundation. The Middle East Partnership for Peace Act is a new, innovative way to use development finance and traditional people-to-people programs to build that foundation. I am pleased to see it included in 2021 appropriations.” —**Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (NE-01), Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations**

“Under the leadership of Chairwoman Lowey and Congressman Fortenberry, the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act will scale up peacebuilding programs and transform civil society in Israel and Palestine. With the Act’s passage out of the House, we are one step closer to radically changing the lives of Palestinians and Israelis, setting a foundation stone towards the broader vision of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.” —**Kevin Rachlin – US Director, ALLMEP**

“We know people-to-people programs can transform the lives of Israelis and Palestinians and their outlook on the conflict. Now, for the first time– thanks to the leadership of Chairwoman Lowey and Congressman Fortenberry– these programs will have the resources necessary to transform entire communities, and the political reality that flows from them.” —**John Lyndon – Executive Director, ALLMEP**



## 5. PQs

### [Middle East: International Assistance](#)

01 Sep 2020 | 78492

**Asked by: Steve McCabe**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to allocate funding to the People-to-People Partnership for Peace Fund upon its creation.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We welcome efforts towards peace. We also support the growth of civil society in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and efforts to improve the Palestinian economy. We will continue to monitor the People-to-People Partnership for Peace Fund as it progresses through the US legislative system.

### [Israel: Palestinians](#)

01 Sep 2020 | 77538

**Asked by: Sharon Hodgson**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 73751 on Israel: Palestinians, for what reason the UK's People-to-People programme ended without alternative provision being established to help ensure continued UK support for co-existence projects in Israel-Palestine.

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

As the Chancellor has set out, like many other nations across the world the UK is experiencing a severe economic downturn as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the likely decrease in the size of the economy this year, the First Secretary chaired a review process across government looking at all strands of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure the UK can maintain operational capacity. This process also has made sure there is continued support for five ODA priorities; bottom billion poverty reduction, climate change, girls' education, Covid-19 and Britain as a force for good.

All ODA spending Departments will now work with respective partners to make these savings in a responsible and efficient way.

**Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**22 Jun 2020 | HL5340**

**Asked by: Baroness Altmann**

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value for money of aid sent to the Palestinian Authority, following reports that it spends seven per cent of its budget, and up to 40 per cent of its foreign aid receipts, on payments to terrorists and their families.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Department for International Development**

No UK aid is used for payments to prisoners or their families or the so called Martyrs Fund. Our financial support to the Palestinian Authority health and education sectors goes into a dedicated bank account and is only paid to individual workers carefully vetted through the PEGASE mechanism (Palestinian-European Socio-Economic Management Assistance Mechanism). Each payment is independently audited to ensure it has been received by the intended recipient.

As is standard practice for all DFID programmes, we assess value for money for the UK taxpayer annually through our review process. Last year UK aid enabled 26,000 young Palestinians in the West Bank to get an education, delivered 3,300 MMR vaccinations for children and enabled 111,000 medical consultations. This is an important contribution towards supporting a stable Palestinian Authority (PA) that can deliver essential services to Palestinians and act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

**Israel: Palestinians**

**11 Jun 2020 | 54900**

**Asked by: Dr Matthew Offord**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 30 April 2020 to Question 38897 on Israel: Palestinians, what criteria her Department used to determine the implementing partner for that programme; and what mechanisms she has put in place to ensure open and competitive funding bids.

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

Our people to people programme aimed to build understanding between Israelis and Palestinians, helping build support for a peaceful, negotiated resolution.

During the design phase of the programme, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) approached DFID with a proposal for a comprehensive programme. While many organisations are performing excellent work in different fields, it was judged more effective to fund one partner to focus on a few specific thematic areas rather than funding several grants in a broad range of sectors through a wide call for bids. With this focused approach we were able to add to the research on what works in people to people programming.

SFCG delivered some activities directly and worked through partners in areas requiring specialist expertise. A Committee consisting of SFCG, DFID and FCO officials agreed a robust set of criteria for SFCG's assessment of potential downstream partners and approved the final selection.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**30 Apr 2020 | 38897**

#### **Asked by: Dr Matthew Offord**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2020 to Question 34965 on Israel: Palestinians, which organisations (a) distributed funds and (b) have received UK funds from the People to People programme.

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

Our three-year People to People programme aimed to bring together Israelis and Palestinians to cooperate on issues which can have a positive impact on both communities, helping to build understanding between people on both sides of the conflict in support of a peaceful, negotiated resolution.

Our programme was implemented by Search for Common Ground, who delivered some activities directly and worked through partners in areas requiring specialist expertise. These partners were: the Jerusalem Intercultural Centre, the Musalaha network, and the Al-Quds Public Health School.

### **Middle East**

**04 Feb 2020 | 671 c167**

#### **Asked by: Jack Lopresti**

Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the ways we can help to secure a long-lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is by working with our allies to support initiatives that promote dialogue and co-existence, such as the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace, as well as ensuring that UK taxpayers' money is not misdirected or misused but goes to the people who actually need it?

#### **Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There are of course a large number of projects and initiatives, many of them funded by the United Kingdom, that are aimed at promoting peace. He will be aware that we are one of the major contributors to the humanitarian situation—we hope, of course, pro tem—before we get a definitive political process that enables a viable Palestinian state to live alongside the state of Israel.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

**08 Jul 2019 | HL16760**

**Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Leeds**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the United States administration about contributing to the Peace to Prosperity Fund proposed by the United States.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The United States is yet to formally request contributions to its Peace to Prosperity initiative. We welcome US efforts to support the development of the Palestinian economy. It is important that economic discussions complement a political process, which is required to unlock lasting and sustainable economic growth for Palestinians and overdue peace in the region. A peace deal and the lifting of access and movement restrictions would generate the ultimate economic dividend not only for the Occupied Palestinian Territories but also for Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the wider region. The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process remains that we support a negotiated settlement leading to a two-state solution based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

**20 Mar 2019 | 909920**

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

What recent assessment she has made of the effect of reductions in US funding for coexistence projects in Israel and Palestine on peace efforts in that region.

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

DFID is concerned by the potential impact of funding reductions in the OPTs, including in the people-to-people sector. Ultimately, the only way for lasting coexistence is through a negotiated two-state solution. DFID remains committed to supporting this through our people-to-people programme and wider support in the economic and human development sectors.

[Topical Questions](#)

**04 Sep 2018 | 646 c25**

**Asked by: Joan Ryan**

It is very welcome that the UK is the first country to support the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace to bring people together to build peace, reconciliation and coexistence—vital for a lasting settlement. What multilateral and bilateral steps will the Government now be taking to build international support for that vital fund?

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The right hon. Lady is right that one of the elements of distress over the years has been the gradual separation of young people, in particular, in the Palestinian areas and those in Israel. All efforts to use the organisations that bring people together are to be supported and sponsored. She will know well that we have a bilateral programme to do this. I hope to ensure when I am in conversation with others, particularly at the UN General Assembly, that this area is not neglected and that we see more of it. It also forms part of the comprehensive settlement we know is necessary to end the conflict in the area.

**[Middle East](#)****20 Feb 2018 | 636 cc11-2****Asked by: Luciana Berger**

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Development on supporting the creation of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

**Answering member: Alistair Burt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The United Kingdom supports the concept of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Department for International Development's people-to-people programme has similar aims, and brings together individuals from both sides to build support for a durable solution. We also remain concerned about the provision of healthcare in Gaza, and we are urging all the parties to take the necessary steps to improve conditions there.

**[Israel: Palestinians](#)****18 Oct 2017 | 901233****Asked by: Ian Austin**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with the Foreign Secretary on support for the establishment of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

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

We are following the progress of establishment of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace closely. DFID's new 3-year people-to-people programme has similar aims and will bring together individuals from both sides of the conflict to build support for a just and peaceful political solution. As a joint minister I can confirm that DFID continues to work closely with the FCO on this.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

**16 Jan 2017 | 58678**

**Asked by: Ivan Lewis**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support the creation of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

**Answering member: Rory Stewart | Department for International Development**

DFID and FCO officials are assessing the viability of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace and its alignment with the UK's objectives on the Middle East Peace Process.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

**09 Jan 2017 | 58557**

**Asked by: Ivan Lewis**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support the creation of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

**Answering member: Rory Stewart | Department for International Development**

The UK is supportive of people-to-people (co-existence) programmes that bring Israelis and Palestinians together to break down barriers and build trust. Ministers are assessing options for how the UK can do more to support work in this area.

## 6. Debates

### [Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)

24 Sep 2020 | House of Commons | 680 cc1209-41

Motion, That this House has considered settlement and annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

### [Israel and Palestine: United States' Proposals for Peace](#)

27 Feb 2020 | House of Lords | 802 cc351-383

and Palestinians, announced on 28 January. Agreed to on question.

### [Palestine: United States' Peace to Prosperity Economic Plan](#)

18 Jul 2019 | House of Lords | 799 cc421-431

States' Peace to Prosperity economic plan for Palestine, published on 26 June.

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