

Debate Pack

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EU Review into Palestinian school textbooks

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1 Background

A Westminster Hall debate on the EU Review into Palestinian school textbooks is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 30 June, from 9:25-10:55am.

The debate will be opened by Caroline Ansell MP.

1.1 The Palestinian school curriculum

In March 2020, there was a Westminster Hall debate on [Radicalisation in the Palestinian school curriculum](#).

That debate arose after the Palestinian Authority (PA) started revising its primary and secondary school curricula in 2017.

There followed reports that the new textbooks promote radicalisation and that [examples of incitement](#) litter Palestinian textbooks.

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. In 2018, the UK Government said it was very concerned about the reports and [met with IMPACT-SE](#) to investigate the issue further.

In 2017, the PA's Minister for Education, Sabri Saidam, [defended the curriculum](#), saying that contentious parts of the PA curriculum, including maps that don't include 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 (UNRWA) which runs schools in Gaza and the West Bank has [rejected criticisms of textbooks](#) used in its schools. In 2017 it said that it had reviewed its textbooks rigorously and that its curriculum framework “aims to ensure that our curriculum is in line with UN values”.

The UK Government position

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

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.

(DFID was merged into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in September 2020, and the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will now have responsibility for the MoU)

The Government also maintained that [it does not fund any textbooks](#) or educational materials. Instead, UK aid 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).

Speaking in the Westminster Hall debate in 2020 Stephen Crabb said:

It is not good enough to be told that we are not funding these textbooks directly. The fact is that we are funding education in the Palestinian Territories. That is a good thing, if it is done well. We should own this issue and be more challenging of our friends in the Palestinian Authority, who, for whatever reason, try to make us believe there is not a serious issue here, when there is.

In December 2018 DFID said that it had 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 said:

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.

1.2

The report on Palestinian textbooks

Background

In the Westminster Hall debate in 2020, the Minister, James Cleverley said the Government was funding an EU-sponsored review of PA textbooks by the Georg Eckert Institute:

[the UK has led international efforts](#) to get to the bottom of the situation with regard to the content in the Palestinian Authority textbooks. We funded the development work for the methodology of an independent review, which is sponsored by the European Union. That review by the

specialist and respected Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research is under way.

He added that it was worth waiting for that report to “underpin the basis for our response to these concerns and our interaction with the Palestinian Authority.”

On 9 June, the Jerusalem Post reported that [the European Commission has received the 200 page report](#) from the Eckert Institute, but had not yet published it. It was due to be presented to the European Parliament first. On 22 February, responding to a written question, Foreign Office Minister James Cleverley said: “The UK has repeatedly [lobbied the EU to push for publication](#), but this is ultimately a decision for the EU.”

Some of the report’s findings were leaked in the German press.

The findings of the report

[The report](#) was published on 18 June.

The summary of the report notes that:

The analysis revealed a complex picture: 1) the textbooks adhere to UNESCO standards and adopt criteria that are prominent in international education discourse, including a strong focus on human rights, 2) they express a narrative of resistance within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and 3) they display an antagonism towards Israel.

Specifically it says that the textbooks “convey the concept of civil rights and the relationship between citizens and the state”; “affirm the importance of human rights in general and in several places explicitly highlight a universal notion of these rights [...]

However the report notes that “this universal notion is, [...] not carried through to a discussion of the rights of Israelis”; and that “when the textbooks mention human rights violations, in most cases these are carried out by Israeli protagonists and affect the rights of Palestinians.”

Representation of Israel

The report says the textbooks convey a one-sided representation of Israel. There are frequent references to the Zionist occupation. And, while there is reference to the founding of Israel, “the recognition of Israel’s right to exist in peace and security documented in the letters by Yasser Arafat to Yitzhak Rabin stands in contrast to the questioning of the legitimacy of the State of Israel expressed in other passages and textbooks.”

The report notes that representations of violence differ, depending on the subject of study. For example, Arabic language textbooks “contain emotionally laden depictions of Israeli violence that tend to dehumanise the

Israeli adversary, occasionally accusing the latter of malice and deceitful behaviour.”

History, geography and social science textbooks “take a more conceptual approach, consistently placing the facts within the narrative of national resistance. The Israeli opponent is portrayed as aggressive and hostile. The language is however, for the most part, objective in tone and avoids inflammatory expressions.”

Changes since 2019

The report mainly focused on (159) textbooks produced between 2017 and 2019. It subsequently compared 18 textbooks released online in 2020 with earlier versions and found significant changes including “increased representation of female and Christian positions”; “a reduction in the text and images that have escalatory potential: including the alteration of a specific teaching unit that included anti-Semitic content by several significant changes of the narrative.”

The report also notes that textbooks produced for use in East Jerusalem by the Israeli authorities have removed “depictions of violence by Palestinians or Israelis” and contain “an idealisation of the coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians in the amended passages, with no mention of existing tensions.” It notes that “the removal of entire chapters on regional and Palestinian history fundamentally changes the national narrative.”

UN Relief Works Agency review

In 2021, UNRWA carried out its own [review of teaching materials](#) to help ensure online delivery of those materials was consistent with UN principles and values.

UNRWA reports:

to ensure that all educational materials provided to students are those which have been approved by the Agency as in line with UN principles and values, the Agency developed an innovative, secure Agency-wide self-learning platform which will contain all of the learning materials for all UNRWA students. Currently in its final review process, the platform will be launched in coming days. [...]

UNRWA has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and for incitement to hatred and violence in its schools and in all of its operations. Any breach reported is dealt with firmly. The Agency adheres, in its education programme, to the highest standards of neutrality, humanity and tolerance.

The UK Government has expressed [confidence in UNRWA's review](#) system.

FCDO uses a variety of tools to monitor UNRWA's performance and ensure it continues to deliver quality services including via programme monitoring and annual assessments. UNRWA has a robust review system of each host country's textbooks to ensure education in its schools reflects the values and principles of the UN. We accompany our support to UNRWA with stringent attention to implementation of their neutrality policy, including how they apply this to textbooks.

In April 2021, UNRWA won a [British Council award](#) for excellence in “preparing students to be responsible global citizens by embedding international education into their curriculums.”

Next steps

The Commission has said that it "[takes this study seriously](#) and will act on its findings as appropriate, with a view to bring about the full adherence to UNESCO standards in all Palestinian education materials."

Responding to a [Written Parliamentary Question](#) on the report, the Government said:

We have been clear that incitement to hatred or violence is unacceptable from all parties and should have no place in education. This report on Palestinian textbooks highlights progress in key areas, but also indicates that anti-Israel content remains. We will continue to raise concerns about this with the Palestinian Authority, and continue to urge all parties to condemn incitement wherever and whenever it occurs.

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Summary of EU review of Palestinian textbooks

Report on Palestinian Textbooks

Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research
June 2021

This study of textbooks issued by the education ministry of the Palestinian Authority was commissioned by the EU with the aim of examining how Palestinian textbooks address central themes of civic education such as human rights or tolerance, whether they invoke violence or hate, and if so in what way. The study's objective was to provide the EU with a critical, comprehensive and objective foundation for political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority on the subject of education.

The research project started in September 2019. The study was completed in February 2021 and sent to the EU in March 2021. It was published in June 2021 after being reviewed by the EU.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report encompasses an analysis of a sample of 156 textbooks and 16 teacher guides published between 2017 and 2019 by the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MoE) for use in general education schools in the subjects: Arabic language, social studies and social upbringing, history and geography, religious education, mathematics, natural sciences and life sciences.

The curriculum reform initiated by the Palestinian Authority in the 2016/2017 academic year remains an ongoing process with textbook revisions being carried out frequently. After the initial completion of this Report therefore 18 textbooks released in 2020 by the Palestinian Ministry of Education have been additionally reviewed.

Palestinian textbooks are produced and located within an environment saturated with ongoing occupation, conflict, and violence, which they in turn reflect. The analysis revealed a complex picture: 1) the textbooks adhere to UNESCO standards and adopt criteria that are prominent in international education discourse, including a strong focus on human rights, 2) they express a narrative of resistance within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and 3) they display an antagonism towards Israel.

Compliance with the principles of global citizenship education

The textbooks extensively address central issues of global citizenship education. In numerous instances the textbooks call for tolerance, mercy,

forgiveness and justice. They convey the concept of civil rights and the relationship between citizens and the state. Textbooks for social studies, in particular, also confirm pluralism as a feature of the Palestinian political system and promote political participation in the context of citizenship education. The 2019 editions contain several additional chapters that discuss the meaning of active citizenship and the relationship between the citizen and public spaces, as well as that between the citizen and government. Issues of citizenship are thus allocated more space and further content is dedicated to them. In all subject areas, the textbooks provide images of society that encompass respectful representations of different social, cultural and religious groups including diversity of skin colour, gender and physical abilities. The textbooks emphasise the primary objective of equal access to facilities and services and equal opportunities for participation in public life, as well as cultural, social and religious values that support various forms of coexistence and dialogue. Religious coexistence between Christians and Muslims is the dominant form presented in the textbooks; other religions are rarely addressed. (For 2020 textbook versions see below.)

Awareness of human rights

The analysis of human rights representations in Palestinian textbooks published between 2017 and 2019 shows an increased focus on the topic and a process of reframing national issues within a global political context. The textbooks affirm the importance of human rights in general and in several places explicitly highlight a universal notion of these rights: emphasising their interdependence and inalienability and referring repeatedly to international documents on human rights. This universal notion is, however, not carried through to a discussion of the rights of Israelis. Group-specific rights, in particular the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities are also discussed extensively. The diversity-embracing approach indicates an increased awareness of and response to international agreements and commitments regarding human rights.

Addressing conflict in human rights discourse

References to human rights serve as a framework through which the textbooks address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of human rights violations in the context of international law. When the textbooks mention human rights violations, in most cases these are carried out by Israeli protagonists and affect the rights of Palestinians. The textbooks support these assertions by reference to international conventions.

Antagonistic narratives and one-sided representations of the Israeli 'other'

While the analysis identifies an increased focus on Global Citizenship Education and human rights discourse, it also finds antagonistic narratives

and one-sided representations of the Israeli ‘other’ in textbook portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This primarily applies to the terminology used to refer to the adversary. The term ‘Israel’ occurs relatively seldom, while the term ‘(Zionist) occupation’ dominates in the books. The cartographic representations of All-Palestine, as a political entity, a geographical region or an imagined homeland, generally do not include the State of Israel or cities founded by Jewish immigrants. A few maps show the borders of the West Bank and the settlements within it, thus visualising the disconnected territorial space administered by the Palestinian Authority.

Recognition of Israel and renunciation of terror in source material

The peace process in the Middle East is discussed in a history textbook for year 10, which quotes the speech given by the Egyptian president Anwar El-Sadat in front of the Israeli parliament in 1977 and the letters of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO from September 1993. These sources document different steps taken towards the recognition of Israel and the renunciation of violence and terrorism by the PLO. The recognition of Israel’s right to exist in peace and security documented in the letters by Yasser Arafat to Yitzhak Rabin stands in contrast to the questioning of the legitimacy of the State of Israel expressed in other passages and textbooks.

Ambivalent representation of Jews in religious education textbooks

When representing Jews collectively as an ethnic and religious group, Palestinian Christian education textbooks acknowledge them as representatives of a further monotheistic faith and largely refrain from reproducing prejudices from the New Testament. Three Islamic education textbooks address Jews and Judaism mainly in the context of early Islam. While two of them deal ambivalently with the motifs of loyalty and treason in reference to some Jewish tribes, one textbook provides a learning context that displays anti-Semitic motifs and links characteristics and actions attributed to Jews at the dawn of Islam to the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. [For 2020 textbook versions see below.]

The use of the terms jihad and shahīd

Christian and Islamic religious education textbooks introduce the concept of jihād as a spiritual struggle and process of self-reform, but also as engagement in combat. Islamic religious education textbooks explain the rules and conditions of jihād and the laws forbidding bloodshed and the killing of innocent people. Especially when taken up in subjects other than religious education, the combat-infused meaning of jihād tends to prevail. The term is rarely connected to the current conflict; however, in the few cases where such links are drawn the passages tend to harbour escalatory potential. The term shahīd is a key term that is almost exclusively used in the context of the conflict and refers both to individuals killed while committing

violent attacks against Israel and to Palestinian victims of violence who were themselves not actively involved.

Representations of violence differ according to subjects

Across the school subjects, the analysis reveals significant differences in the nature and quantity of portrayals of violence. Textbooks for Arabic language contain emotionally laden depictions of Israeli violence that tend to dehumanise the Israeli adversary, occasionally accusing the latter of malice and deceitful behaviour. They depict past acts of violence committed by Palestinians against Jewish paramilitary groups during the British Mandate and subsequently against Israel as part of a heroic struggle against a colonizing oppressor.

Textbooks for history, geography and social studies take a more conceptual approach, consistently placing the facts within the narrative of national resistance. The Israeli opponent is portrayed as aggressive and hostile. The language is however, for the most part, objective in tone and avoids inflammatory expressions. Violence perpetrated by Palestinians, including violence against civilians, is presented as a legitimate means of resistance in certain periods of Palestinian history, alongside peaceful and diplomatic ways of confronting Israel. Especially in higher school years, students are asked to reflect on the use of different means of resistance and to evaluate them.

References to violence in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can also be found in Real Life Connections (RLC) in mathematics and natural science textbooks. Of all the RLC in the textbooks, only a small minority (5 %) are directly related to the conflict. The conflict-related Real Life Connections carry non-escalatory and escalatory potential. (For 2020 textbook versions see below.)

Textbooks for the academic year 2020/2021 reduce escalatory potential

An overview conducted after the initial completion of this Report compared 18 textbooks released online in 2020 by the Palestinian Ministry of Education with earlier versions, and found significant differences. In addition to the increased representation of female and Christian positions there is a reduction in the text and images that have escalatory potential: including the alteration of a specific teaching unit that included anti-Semitic content by several significant changes of the narrative. Some references to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in mathematics and natural science textbooks have been erased completely. References to protagonists of armed Palestinian resistance have in some places been altered or removed.

Palestinian textbooks amended by Israeli authorities

As Israel has annexed East Jerusalem and controls the education sector in this part of the city, Israeli authorities approve and amend textbooks for use in East-Jerusalem schools. A review of 7 amended textbooks has shown, that in spite of significant changes being made to their content, these textbooks do not contain any reference to the amendments made by Israeli authorities nor to the authors of the changed texts. Changes occur on two levels and predominantly concern material that refers to conflict and occupation: the first is the removal of depictions of violence by Palestinians or Israelis, the charting of Israel in maps and the removal of symbolic maps of All-Palestine; on the second level there is an idealisation of the coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians in the amended passages, with no mention of existing tensions. References to Palestinian identity or national symbols are removed, as are passages detailing cultural commemorations and remembrance. The removal of entire chapters on regional and Palestinian history fundamentally changes the national narrative.

3

Press and media articles

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

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[British group calls on government to stop assisting Palestinian Authority](#)

The Jerusalem Post
24 June 2021

[Outcry over UK funding for Palestinian school books that ‘incite terrorism’](#)

The Jewish Chronicle
20 June 2021

[UNRWA schools win international award for excellence in global education](#)

UNWRA [UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East]
12 April 2021

[Biden funding decision inflames debate over textbooks for Palestinian refugees](#)

The Hill
Laura Kelly
9 April 2021

[UNRWA reviews self-learning material to ensure full adherence to highest UN principles](#)

OCHA [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs]
14 January 2021

[In Israeli Textbooks, the Palestinians Are All but Invisible](#)

Haaretz
Or Kashti
21 June 2020

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

Sunday Times
Tim Shipman
1 April 2018

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Press releases

[UK aid will help provide millions of Palestinians with healthcare and education](#)

Department for International Development
2 July 2020

The UK has pledged new funds to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to provide vital support to Palestinian refugees, the UK's Minister for the Middle East, James Cleverly, announced today.

UK support will help the Agency to continue delivering on its UN mandate to support and protect Palestinian refugees.

The UK has consistently been one of UNRWA's top donors, and its support in the last year has enabled UNRWA to provide education for more than half a million children and helped over 3.5 million Palestinians access health services.

Minister for the Middle East, James Cleverly, said:

Overcrowded living conditions and years of conflict have left Palestinian refugees particularly vulnerable to the impact of coronavirus. The pandemic has made it more difficult for UNRWA to carry out its essential work, yet its staff continue to work tirelessly to provide help to those in need.

I am delighted the UK is providing this new support to UNRWA so it can continue to deliver its vital services, including healthcare and education, to Palestinian refugees.

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.

UK government has successfully pushed for a review into Palestinian textbooks

**Department for International Development
9 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.

5

PQs

UNRWA

24 Jun 2021 | HL934

Asked by: Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the value of the UK contribution to the UN Relief and Works Agency in the last 12 months; and what steps have they taken to ensure that school books for children supplied by the UN Relief and Works Agency do not (1) glorify terrorism, and (2) incite violence and hatred.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In Financial Year 2020/2021, the UK provided £63.6m to UNRWA, which includes £7million to the Syria Emergency Appeal and £3.8million to the Occupied Palestinian Territories Emergency Appeal. On 20 May, Minister Cleverly announced that the UK is providing an initial £3.2million to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, which launched on 19 May.

The UK Government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to hatred and will continue to monitor UNRWA's implementation of its curriculum framework to ensure lessons taught by UNRWA are in line with UN values. We accompany our support for UNRWA with stringent attention to implementation of their neutrality policy, including how they apply this to textbooks.

Palestinians: Schools

11 Jun 2021 | 8793

Asked by: Christian Wakeford

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the process of producing the content for the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

It is essential to have a strong and thriving Palestinian education system to provide opportunities for the next generation. We have been clear that incitement to hatred or violence is unacceptable and has no place in education.

Following the UK's calls for international action, our European partners agreed to lead an independent review. We understand the review is in the final stages. We will study its findings carefully before deciding on any next

steps. We remain in close dialogue with our European partners and continue to press for completion and publication of the review as soon as possible.

In financial year 2020/21 we provided £20m in funding to the Palestinian Authority to support the salaries of education workers in the West Bank.

Israel and the Palestinians: Supporting Peace

20 Apr 2021 | 692 cc838-9

Asked by: Nicola Richards

Despite assurances that, after countless delays, the EU review of Palestinian textbooks would be published in March, there is still no sign of the report. UK taxpayers' money pays the salaries of Palestinian teachers who use material inciting violence against Israel and Jews, making peace harder to achieve. What more will my right hon. Friend do to ensure that UK aid does not prolong the conflict?

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I thank my hon. Friend for her question. I remind the House that the UK does not fund the textbooks used in Palestinian schools. We understand that the EU review is in its final stages. We are not able to comment on the content of that report until it is released. We regularly engage with the EU at senior level to push for timely publication, and we regularly liaise with the Palestinian Authority to try to bring about the improvements that my hon. Friend has highlighted.

Palestinians: Curriculum

11 Mar 2021 | HL13717

Asked by: Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that material inciting violence against (1) Israel, and (2) Jews, has been included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is concerned about allegations of incitement in Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks and lobbied European partners to conduct a thorough, independent review of the textbooks. To ensure the final report is representative, the study has been extended to include a sample of textbooks introduced for school year 2020-21. Consequently, the study will be completed in early 2021. We have regular discussions with the EU to encourage them to finalise the report as soon as possible.

Palestinians: Textbooks

9 Mar 2021 | HL13579

Asked by: Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of their Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority, following the publication of the report by IMPACT-se Review of UNRWA-Produced Study Materials in the Palestinian Territories, published in January, which found the reported use of inciteful material in educational textbooks used by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in Gaza Strip and West Bank schools.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are aware of the IMPACT-se report and have contacted United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) regarding this issue. We understand that once the issue was identified, UNRWA introduced additional quality assurance processes and will continue to develop new systems to ensure lessons taught by UNRWA are in line with UN values. The UK Government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to violence and will continue to monitor UNRWA's implementation of its curriculum framework and self-learning materials to ensure lessons taught by UNRWA are in line with UN values. We use a variety of tools to monitor the UNRWA performance and ensure it continues to deliver quality services including via programme monitoring and annual assessments. 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 one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for peace.

Palestinians: Radicalism

22 Feb 2021 | 153142

Asked by: Wayne David

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2020 to Question 126811, on Palestinians: Radicalism, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) possible timeline for the Palestinian Authority's revision of educational textbooks and (b) the potential effect of those revisions on affairs in that region.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We understand that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has already updated textbooks for grades 1-6 and hopes to update the remaining textbooks as soon as possible. The independent review of the content in Palestinian

textbooks led by our European partners will include a sample of these textbooks introduced for school year 2020-21. We expect the study to be complete in the near future and will study its findings carefully. The UK will continue to engage with the PA on their plans to revise the remaining textbooks for grades seven and above.

Israel: Textbooks

28 Jan 2021 | HL12020

Asked by: Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that material is being included in textbooks for school children in Israel which incites hatred and violence towards Palestinians.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to violence, including the use of racist, hateful or anti-Palestinian language and any comments that could stir up hatred and prejudice. 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 one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for a peace.

Palestinians: Schools

21 Jan 2021 | 138478

Asked by: Andrew Bowie

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of the education received by Palestinian children in schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

FCDO uses a variety of tools to monitor UNRWA's performance and ensure it continues to deliver quality services including via programme monitoring and annual assessments. UNRWA has a robust review system of each host country's textbooks to ensure education in its schools reflects the values and principles of the UN. We accompany our support to UNRWA with stringent attention to implementation of their neutrality policy, including how they apply this to textbooks.

EU-funded report on Palestinian textbooks: concerns over incitement, anti-Semitic content and imagery – the EU’s position and response

18 December 2020 | [E-005567/2020](#)

Asked by: Carmen Avram (Romanian MEP)

In May 2019, the European External Action Service commissioned a report following concerns raised the previous year over incitement in Palestinian textbooks. Similar misgivings have also been raised this year by MEPs and by Parliament in the context of the Commission discharge procedure. What is more, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) recently published a report calling on the Palestinian authority to remove all incitement from their school curriculum.

The organisation IMPACT-se has been analysing textbooks in the Middle East and their compliance with UNESCO standards of peace and tolerance for over 20 years. When some interim results of the EU-funded report emerged, concerns were raised that the report’s authors – the George Eckert Institute – made serious mistakes that undermined the credibility of the review. These included:

1. analysing the wrong textbooks and attributing Arabic-language Israeli textbooks to the Palestinian authority;
2. ignoring anti-Semitism;
3. ignoring incitement to violence.

The Commission recently declared that it would not make the interim findings public (‘Publication is therefore not foreseen’).

The detailed IMPACT-se evaluation shows that Palestinian authority textbooks are replete with troubling references throughout all grades and subjects to anti-Semitic content and imagery, hate speech, and incitement to violence, martyrdom and jihad.

1. Is the Commission aware of this? What is its position?
2. What action does it intend to take?

Answered by: Olivér Várhelyi | European Commission

The Commission is aware of the report of the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) concerning Palestinian textbooks. In order to have an objective basis for discussion, the Commission has contracted an independent and internationally recognised research institute, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, to carry out a study of Palestinian textbooks against defined benchmarks (based on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation standards on peace, tolerance and non-violence in education).

In July 2020, an Interim Report was submitted to the EU for approval. Interim reports are working tools intended for monitoring purposes and do not contain substantial conclusions. They provide partial information and non-conclusive assessments. The interim report was not made public in any way.

Nonetheless, the Commission confirms that the study does not look at Arabic-language Israeli textbooks. The methodology of the study includes a separate section on a very limited sample of textbooks used in occupied East Jerusalem and modified by Israel.

It would be premature to draw conclusions on the basis of an Interim Report. The Commission will draw conclusions on the basis of the study once it is completed and will present the findings to the European Parliament. The results of the final study will inform the EU's policy dialogue with the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinians: Radicalism

14 Dec 2020 | 126811

Asked by: John Howell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2020 to Question 120022 on Palestinians: Radicalism, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies in the event that the Palestinian Authority does not (a) remove material allegedly inciting violence against Israel and Jews from the school curriculum and (b) change the names of official Palestinian Authority schools reportedly named after terrorists.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is concerned about allegations of incitement in Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks. The UK does not fund textbooks in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The PA is in the process of revising its textbooks and we understand that it has already updated Grades 1-6 and hopes to update the remaining textbooks as soon as possible.

An independent review of the content in Palestinian textbooks led by our European partners is currently underway. The final report is due in the near future and we will study its findings carefully before deciding any next steps. We have also raised our concerns about school naming at senior levels within the Palestinian Authority and will continue to do so.

Palestinians: Radicalism

30 Nov 2020 | 120022

Asked by: John Howell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2020 to Question 117220 on Palestinians: Radicalism, what representations he has made to the Palestinian Authority on (a) the content of textbooks in the new Palestinian Authority school curriculum which allegedly incites violence against Israel and Jews and (b) the reported naming of official Palestinian Authority schools after people convicted of terrorism offences.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is concerned about allegations of incitement in Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks. The UK does not fund textbooks in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. UK aid to the PA helps to ensure it can deliver essential services, including by contributing to the salaries of carefully vetted education and healthcare professionals in the West Bank.

We regularly raise our concerns about allegations of incitement in Palestinian textbooks and school naming at senior levels within the PA and will continue to do so.

Palestinians: Textbooks

17 Nov 2020 | 113488

Asked by: Steve McCabe

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to encourage the EU to publish the interim report of the Georg Eckert Institute on the Palestinian Authority's school textbooks; and what response the Government has received from the EU.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Following UK calls for action, the EU commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute, a specialist textbook analysis centre, to undertake a robust, impartial review of Palestinian textbooks. We have remained in close dialogue with our European partners throughout the process, including urging them to complete the review as soon as possible. In July an interim report was submitted to the EU for approval. The EU used the report to inform partners, including the UK, about the current status of progress and to receive feedback. Publication of the interim report is not currently foreseen by the EU. The UK has repeatedly lobbied the EU to push for publication, but this is ultimately a decision for the EU.

Palestinians: Textbooks

23 Mar 2020 | 30196

Asked by: Scott Benton

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate she has made of the amount of UK funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency that was disbursed on education using Palestinian Authority approved textbooks in the latest period for which figures are available.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Department for International Development

In 2018/19 DFID provided £65.5 million to UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) including £47.5 million to UNRWA's programme budget, which includes their education programme. On average UNRWA spends 58% of this budget on education enabling UNRWA to educate more than 533,000 children, half of whom are girls. Around 325,000 children attend schools in Gaza and the West Bank.

Palestinians: Textbooks

11 Mar 2020 | 25083

Asked by: Jack Lopresti

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency's for Palestine Refugees in the Near East of reports that Palestinian school textbooks contain content which incites violence; and if she will make a statement.

Answered by: James Cleverly | Department for International Development

The UK recognises the UN Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) unique mandate to support Palestinian refugees until a lasting political settlement is reached which determines their final status. Until that time, the UK will continue to meet humanitarian need and promote regional security by supporting the 5 million Palestinian refugees across the Middle East through UNRWA. Our contribution to UNRWA last year helped provide education to more than 530,000 children (half girls), health services for over 3 million people, and social assistance for over 250,000 of the most vulnerable people.

Students in all UNRWA schools are taught the curriculum of their host country. UNRWA reviews host country textbooks and when problematic material is identified, develops alternative content and provides its teachers with support to ensure that the lessons taught in its schools promote tolerance and peace. The International Development Secretary spoke to the Palestinian Minister of Education in February to emphasise this point and encourage the Palestinian Authority to remove all inappropriate material from textbooks.

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Debates

Palestinian School Curriculum: Radicalisation

10 Mar 2020 | House of Commons | 673 cc51-75WH

Motion that this House has considered radicalisation in the Palestinian school curriculum. Agreed to on question.

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.

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Further reading

Commons Library Briefing

[Radicalisation in the Palestinian school curriculum](#)

Commons Library Debate Pack

6 March 2020

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

[The 2020–21 Palestinian School Curriculum Grades 1–12](#)

May 2021

[Review of UNRWA-Produced Study Materials in the Palestinian Territories](#)

January 2021

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

November 2019

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

September 2019

[The new Palestinian curriculum: by the numbers—Quantitative Analysis of the Current Palestinian Ministry of Education Curriculum](#)

September 2019

PRIME Institute

[Learning each other's historical narrative: Palestinians and Israelis](#)

PRIME Institute (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East)

March 2003

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

United Nations

UNWRA Staff Incitement of Antisemitism and Terrorism Violates United Nations Principles

[Written statement submitted by United Nations Watch]

UN General Assembly Human Rights Council

A/HRC/46/NGO/136

17 Mar 2021

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