

Debate Pack

CDP-0187 (2021)

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12 November 2021

Roadmap to peace in Palestine

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Background

A Westminster Hall debate on the Roadmap to peace in Palestine has been scheduled for Wednesday 17 November 2021, from 4.30-5:30pm. The debate has been initiated by Tahir Ali MP.

The Roadmap to Peace

The 2003 Roadmap to Peace was drafted by ‘the Quartet’ (the US, the UN, Russia and the EU). Similar to the Oslo process it envisaged transitional arrangements and negotiations leading to a permanent-status agreement by a set date. It also required certain steps to be taken by both sides. Its ultimate objective was a two-state solution.

A Chatham House report notes that the structure and content of the Roadmap mattered much less than the way it was [handled by the US administration](#). In 2003, President Bush was preoccupied by Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Roadmap was not a high priority. Thus he, and the other Quartet members allowed the Roadmap to be “stripped of its substance” by the then Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon. Combined with continued violence in the region this rendered the Roadmap a dead letter.

Since then, there have been a number of attempts to create a new roadmap or path to peace between Israel and the Palestinians. These are set out below in brief: it is not intended to be an exhaustive history of initiatives for peace.

December 2003: Unofficial Geneva Accord

On 1 December the unofficial Geneva Accord, which sets out a detailed draft framework for a comprehensive peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, was agreed. It was negotiated by Israeli politicians and intellectuals from the left of the political spectrum and by members of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the PLO. The accord received a lukewarm reception from the Palestinian leadership, and was rejected by the Israeli Government.¹

¹ Further detail on the accord and the reaction of the British Government and the European Union can be found in Library Standard Note SN/IA/2861, *The Geneva Accord*, available online at <http://hcl1.hclibrary.parliament.uk/notes/iads/sn/ia-02861.pdf> The text of the accord is online at http://www.heskem.org.il/Heskem_en.asp

April 2004: Disengagement plan for Gaza and parts of the West Bank

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon presented the detail of his Disengagement Plan, which called for the withdrawal of all 7,500 Jewish settlers and Israeli military installations from Gaza.² This withdrawal was completed in September 2005.

November 2007: Annapolis Conference

At Annapolis in Maryland, USA, Israel and the Palestinians agreed to resume negotiations on the basis of obligations agreed in the “performance-based road map”.³ As agreed at the conference,⁴ twice-weekly negotiations proceeded from the Annapolis conference, until, in the light of increasing rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel, Gaza was “sealed off” from the outside world on 17 January 2008.⁵ As the Gaza crisis escalated, progress on the substance of the negotiations stalled, and on 2 March 2008 negotiations were completely suspended by Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian National Authority, in protest at Israeli actions in Gaza.

It was not until 5 March that Abbas, under heavy pressure from the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice after her visits to Egypt the West Bank and Israel, agreed to the resumption of talks.

The Palestinian group Hamas, which had won parliamentary elections and taken control of the Gaza Strip, was not represented. It declared it would not be bound by anything decided.

The talks came to an abrupt halt with Israel's military offensive in Gaza in December 2008.

September 2010: Washington

President Obama restarted the peace process in 2010 with a 10-month partial freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said it was "the first meaningful step towards peace". However,

² A general outline of the April draft of the Disengagement Plan, as communicated by the Israeli Prime Minister's office is online at:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Reference+Documents/Disengagement+Plan+-+General+Outline.htm>

³ Full text available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm>

⁴ The text of the Annapolis agreement is available online at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/27/israel.usa1>. For more information about the negotiations there and the immediate aftermath, see Standard Note SNIA/4543: [Middle East Peace Process: After Annapolis](#)

⁵ For more information on the outbreak of violence, and living conditions in Gaza, see Standard Note SNIA/4645: [Gaza: the latest crisis](#)

President Abbas said it did not cover East Jerusalem and that he wanted a guarantee of a Palestinian state based on 1967 lines.

After months of hard diplomacy, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that Mr Netanyahu and Mr Abbas had agreed to "re-launch direct negotiations to resolve all final status issues" and that they believed the talks could "be completed within one year".

The talks were also attended by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan. Expectations were low and deadlock was reached within weeks.

Once the freeze on settlements expired, the talks were suspended.

July 2013: Direct talks

In 2013 Direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians began following an attempt by United States Secretary of State John Kerry to restart the peace process. The talks were mired by the disagreement and subsequent reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. Israel refused to continue with the talks after the formation of the [Palestinian Unity Government](#) in June 2014.

Abbas' 2014 peace plan

On 3 September 2014, Abbas presented a new proposal for the peace process to John Kerry. The plan called for nine months of direct talks followed by a three-year plan for Israel to fully withdraw to the 1967 lines, leaving East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital. The resumption of talks was contingent on an Israeli freeze on construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Some say the plan was Abbas attempting [to seize the initiative](#) at a time when polls showed Hamas in the ascendancy with Palestinian opinion from the Gaza war. The US [rejected the proposal](#).

2020 Trump's peace plan

In January 2020 President Trump launched his long-awaited [plan for peace in the Middle East](#). The [House of Lords Library](#) has published a detailed analysis of that plan.

While supporting the idea of a two-state solution, the borders of those states would be significantly changed. The plan proposed that Israel would acquire sovereignty over approximately 30 percent of the West Bank, that Jerusalem would become the capital of Israel with the city "remaining Israel's undivided capital" and that in exchange the Palestinians would be given land in the desert near Gaza. More detail is provided in Library Briefing Paper, [Annexation of the West Bank](#).

The Palestinian Authority (PA) rejected the US peace plan before it was published. Similarly, Hamas officials in Gaza opposed the plan. Regional

responses have been mixed, with a few offering qualified support and others opposing the plan outright.

The UN called on Israel to abandon the threat of annexation and for the Palestinian leadership to re-engage with the Middle East Quartet.

Abraham Accords

Close on the heels of Trump's Plan for Peace, came the Abraham Accords—agreements to normalise relations between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain. At the time, the accords were portrayed as a barter to prevent the planned annexation of the West Bank in exchange for normalisation of ties with the UAE. The agreements were the first peace deals any Arab country signed with Israel in 26 years.

The Trump administration viewed them as a model for outsourcing regional security that would allow the US to prioritise its interests beyond the Middle East. However, only Morocco and Sudan have so far followed suit and signed normalisation agreements with Israel.

Writing for Chatham House, Yossi Mekelberg said:

Normalizing relations between these countries and Israel was the logical conclusion of regional developments in recent years, however, they will find it [hard to fully flourish](#) without a just and fair solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

15 September 2021 marked the first anniversary of [the Abraham Accords](#).

Developments: May 2021 fighting

In May 2021, a new round of fighting broke out in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem.

The fighting took place from 10 May, to a ceasefire overnight on 20 to 21 May. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the Occupied Palestinian Territory reported that the [escalation in hostilities killed 256 Palestinians](#) (at least 129 of those civilians), including 66 children, and 10 Israelis (plus 3 foreign nationals), including 2 children. The fighting also caused 1,948 injuries in Palestinian territory, and 710 injuries in Israel. At the peak of the hostilities, [up to 113,000 people were displaced](#) before the ceasefire.

After eleven days, both sides agreed to a ceasefire and declared victory.

Background to the fighting

There had been a series of confrontations with police since the start of Ramadan in mid-April. These were especially intense near the Al-Aqsa

Mosque — the third holiest mosque in Islam—on a hilltop which is also revered by Jews for whom it is known as the Temple Mount.

East Jerusalem has long been a flashpoint, with an uneasy coexistence there between Jews and Arabs. Israel effectively annexed East Jerusalem in 1980 and considers the entire city its capital. Palestinians claim the eastern half of Jerusalem as the capital of a hoped-for state of their own.

Most other countries do not recognise Israel’s claim. Although former President Trump moved the United States embassy to Jerusalem in 2018, almost all other countries have kept their embassies in Tel Aviv.

In May it became the scene of [nationalist and religious tensions](#) with Palestinians clashing with ultra-nationalists and Israeli police forces trying to keep them apart. [Arabs living in Israel](#) joined the protests in support of the Palestinians.

The escalation of conflict was arguably “connected to a [broader landscape of destabilising factors](#) whose cumulative weight led to the current crisis after months of incubation,” as noted by Professor [Carlo Aldrovandi](#).

Eviction of Palestinian families

Near to East Jerusalem is the predominantly Arab district of Sheikh Jarrah. Here several Palestinian families faced eviction by the Israeli courts in a dispute about who can claim or reclaim property in East Jerusalem. The dispute was the latest episode of longer-term efforts by Israeli settler groups, often supported by recent Israeli governments to make Jerusalem “[more Jewish](#).”

A court ruling, due on 10 May was postponed. Israelis used that day to celebrate ‘Jerusalem Day’, marking the occupation of East Jerusalem in the 1967 Middle East war. This led to further violence.

Concerned about the escalation, the UN Security Council discussed issuing a statement [calling on Israel to cease evictions](#) and for “restraint” and respect for “the historic status quo at the holy sites”

Palestinian in-fighting

On 10 May, [Hamas issued an ultimatum](#), that all Israeli security forces should be removed from the Temple Mount and the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood by 6 pm or Hamas would attack Israel.

The firing of rockets by Hamas from Gaza in retaliation for the injuring of Palestinians in Jerusalem could be interpreted as a sign of solidarity across the territories, and between Hamas and President Abbas’ Fatah Party. However, it is a [commonly-held view that Hamas is attempting to increase influence](#) among Palestinians outside of Gaza in the run up to elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

Parliamentary elections were scheduled for 22 May and presidential elections for 31 July. Both were [postponed on 30 April](#) because of disputes over voting rights in East Jerusalem and divisions in the Fatah Party.

Many Palestinians regarded the dispute on voting in East Jerusalem as [an excuse to avoid elections](#) that Fatah might well lose to Hamas, as it did in the last parliamentary ballot in 2006.

There are also [reports of rivalry](#) within Fatah. Younger challengers to President Abbas have weakened his grip on power.

However, there are reports that the conflict has contributed to [a new unified sense of identity](#) and purpose between Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza:

while the war resulted in a quick military victory for Israel, it also offered a victory of sorts to Palestinians, putting issues like Sheikh Jarrah, which had simmered in the background for years, at the center of a new Palestinian sense of purpose.

International Crisis Group analyst [Mairav Zonszein](#) also supports this view:

Conceptually, Hamas put the Palestinians back on the radar and Jerusalem at the center of their issues,” she said. “The [Israeli] government has realized that Palestinians are uniting; that the fragmentation isn’t as effective as they would like it to be; that they empathize with each other’s struggles, regardless of whether they are in the West Bank, Jerusalem or Gaza.

The dispute over Sheikh Jarrah continues: a recent offer from the Israeli Government has [been rejected by the Palestinian families](#), reportedly on the advice of the Palestinian Authority. The settlers have also [rejected the offer](#).

Developments in Israeli politics

The Government elected in June is a [broad coalition](#) of eight parties. It is said that they are united by the desire to keep Netanyahu, who led the country for 15 years, out. However, Naftali Bennet’s Government has a razor-thin margin of 61 seats in the 120-member assembly.

In November, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz named six Palestinian NGOs as terrorist organisations. The Defence Ministry said [the organisations were under the control of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#) and served as a front to secure finances for the group which is designated a terrorist organisation.

The NGOs are: Addameer, Al-Haq, the Bisan Center, Defense for Children International Palestine, the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees.

A joint statement by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called the decision "appalling and unjust." They said the move constitutes "[an attack by the Israeli government on the international human rights movement.](#)"

16 UK NGOs also [condemned the decision](#).

Meretz, one of the political parties which forms part of the governing coalition said: "We are very unhappy with the [designation of human rights organizations as terrorist organizations](#). So far, it has done more damage to Israel".

The UK Government has not commented on the designation. In [response to a Parliamentary Question](#) on the matter the Government said:

We are aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities and will be seeking additional information to understand the basis for the designations. Human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in the development of thriving, open societies.

Palestinian politics – whither Fatah, whither Hamas?

Some say that the established [Palestinian leadership suffered a grave blow](#) to its standing among Palestinians after the May 2021 fighting with most of the response coming from Hamas in Gaza.

In addition, elections due to be held in May were cancelled in April – due in part to Israeli restrictions on voting in East Jerusalem. However, the bigger picture may include [fears within Fatah and regional neighbours](#), that Hamas might win an election.

While Abbas is said to be hanging on to power with [his party divided](#) and increasingly irrelevant in the context of a renewed sense of Palestinian solidarity across Gaza, the West Bank and Israel, Hamas too, is finding its support waning as its "[military achievement has not delivered](#) the expected increase in internal and external political legitimacy".

The US position: from Trump to Biden

Former President Trump shook up the Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts by recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moving the US Embassy there in 2018. He also withdrew funding from the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which supports Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. His Plan for Peace, which was never accepted by the Palestinians, remained largely a paper exercise. The threat of annexation of parts of the West Bank was staved off by the Abraham Accords, which have remained in place and bolstered Israel's standing among some of its neighbours.

The Biden administration has adopted a different rhetoric. It has repeatedly said that Israelis and Palestinians “[deserve equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity and dignity](#)”.

While supportive of the accords, Biden views them as [a Trump legacy](#) and has focused on the bilateral rather than trilateral nature of the agreements, making their broader regional impact harder to assess. He has been [criticised for failing to fully embrace](#) or take forward the Accords.

Biden has agreed to recommence funding to UNRWA.

The UK Government position

Speaking to the UN Security Council in May this year, the UK Permanent Representative Barbara Woodward urged [both sides to cease fighting](#). The Government reasserted its position that:

- The firing of rockets at civilians was unacceptable.
- Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence but this “must be proportionate and in line with International Humanitarian Law”.
- The right to freedom of worship must be upheld and “the historic Status Quo in Jerusalem is important at all times”.
- Settlements are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace.
- Israel should work towards the establishment of a Palestinian state along 1967 lines, with its capital in East Jerusalem.
- “The UK remains committed to the two-state solution as the best way to permanently end the occupation and bring peace and stability to the region”.

Some commentators have [expressed disappointment](#) at the UK Government response to the fighting in May 2021 arguing that they expected more from the new “Global Britain”.

Funding cuts

While the UK has [continued to support UNRWA](#), and was [the third largest overall donor in 2020](#), the UK has so far pledged US\$ 39.1 million for 2021, down from \$64.1 million in 2020 and \$76.2 million in 2019.

The Commissioner General of UNRWA argued this was a “[direct impact](#)” of the Government’s decision to reduce the UK aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNI.

The Commissioner General has said the agency was in [an existential budget crisis](#) due to an estimated [\\$100-\\$120 million](#) shortfall this year, and because the current method of long-term funding was unsustainable. Other countries, such as the [Gulf States](#), have also made reduced commitments to the agency this year.

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Press and media 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.

[Palestinians slam Israeli comments on US consulate in Jerusalem](#)

Al Jazeera
7 November 2021

[The Bennett Government's Policy Towards Gaza](#)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Reham Owda
4 November 2021

[Israel approves Palestinian homes after advancing settlements](#)

Al Jazeera
1 November 2021

[Palestinian groups branded terrorists by Israel say they are being silenced](#)

BBC News Online
Yolande Knell
29 October 2021

[Israel labels Palestinian human rights groups as terrorist organisations](#)

The Guardian
Harriet Sherwood
22 October 2021

[U.S. hopes Abraham Accords will help Israeli-Palestinian issue – officials](#)

Reuters
Humeyra Pamuk and Simon Lewis
12 October 2021

[The Abraham Accords are a catalyst for wider change in the Middle East](#)

Financial Times
Zayed Al Nahyan and Yair Lapid
25 September 2021

[The Abraham Accords one year on: A missed opportunity for Biden?](#)

Chatham House
Sanam Vakil
15 September 2021

Israel-Palestine: Waste no opportunity for 'serious' political negotiation, envoy urges

UN News

30 August 2021

With Israeli-Palestinian Peace Fund, Congress Signals U.S. Hasn't Given Up Yet

Haaretz

Ben Samuels

26 June 2021

Israel-Gaza violence: The conflict explained

BBC News Online

16 June 2021

Your Fix for the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Won't Work

Council on Foreign Relations

Steven A. Cook

11 June 2021

Britain must lead the creation of an international fund for Israel and Palestine

House Magazine

Lord Alderdice

9 June 2021

Civil society NGOs urge Biden to establish international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace at G7

Times of Israel

Jacob Magid

4 June 2021

UK must stop talking and take action on Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Chatham House

Dr Neil Quilliam

26 May 2021

Gazans celebrate Israel-Hamas ceasefire that ends 11-day conflict

Financial Times

Mehul Srivastava and Simeon Kerr

21 May 2021

Congratulations on the ceasefire. Now the hard work begins.

Brookings Institution

Tamara Cofman Wittes

21 May 2021

[Biden's bungled response on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#)

Brookings Institution

20 May 2021

[The utter failure of the Abraham Accords](#)

Al Jazeera

Imad K Harb

18 May 2021

[Gaza deaths may end Israel's new Gulf friendships](#)

Chatham House

Professor Yossi Mekelberg

13 May 2021

[Breaking the Israel-Palestine Status Quo](#)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Zaha Hassan, Daniel Levy, Hallaamal Keir and Marwan Muasher

19 April 2021

[Steps to enable a Middle East regional security process](#)

Chatham House

Dr Sanam Vakil and Dr Neil Quilliam

14 April 2021

[Perfect time for international fund for Israel-Palestinian peace](#)

The Times

Stephen Crabb MP and Steve McCabe MP

30 March 2021

[Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilders prepare for \\$250m US government injection](#)

Times of Israel

Jake Epstein

11 March 2021

[Israel and the Palestinians: Chronology of a Two-State Solution](#)

Congressional Research Service

30 June 2020

[Disputes over maps beset Middle East peace process](#)

Financial Times

Mehul Srivastava

29 January 2020

Israeli–Palestinian Peacemaking: What Can We Learn From Previous Efforts?

Chatham House

Greg Shapland and Professor Yossi Mekelberg

24 July 2018

Middle East: The Road Map to Peace

Council on Foreign Relations

Sharon Otterman

7 February 2005

The road map to peace

The Guardian

Simon Jeffery

4 June 2003

The roadmap: Full text

BBC News Online

20 April 2003

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Press releases

[UK statement on Israel settlement construction](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

28 October 2021

James Cleverly, Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, has issued a statement on the recent announcement by the Government of Israel to advance further settlement units in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa James Cleverly said:

We urge the Government of Israel to reverse the decisions on 24 October and 27 October to advance the construction of settlement units in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Settlements are illegal under international law and present an obstacle to peace and stability.

[All parties to Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be open to further dialogue](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

29 September 2021

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council Briefing on the Middle East:

Thank you Madam President, and my thanks to the Special Coordinator for his briefing, and the quarterly report on implementation of resolution 2334.

I'd also like to thank Mai Farsakh and Meredith Rothbart for their remarks, their insights and your work on the ground. And I'd like to pay tribute too to them and to all those in civil society who work to build social peace and the foundations for peace.

Madam President, the United Kingdom welcomes recent engagement between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian leadership, including the meeting between Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Defence Minister Gantz on 29 August. We urge further direct engagement and call on both parties to work together to tackle immediate and long-term threats to peace and stability. While appreciating the difficulties on both sides, we urge all parties to be open to further dialogue.

The UK wants to see greater cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, including on economic initiatives, to help support the recovery of Gaza, boost

the Palestinian economy and improve the lives of all Palestinians living in the OPTs.

However, these initiatives need to be part of a political pathway. All parties need to take steps to avoid exacerbating tensions, and to avoid unhelpful rhetoric. Existing agreements must be respected and all parties must refrain from harmful unilateral actions.

Madam President, we remain concerned by Israel's ongoing settlement expansion, as well as the demolition of Palestinian property and resultant displacement of protected persons, such as prospective demolitions and evictions in Silwan, Walaja, and Sheikh Jarrah. We urge Israel to allow for more legal avenues for Palestinian construction.

As has been noted previously, we have seen a worrying upward trend in Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces' live fire throughout 2021; particularly around Beita where eight Palestinians have been killed by the Israel Defence Forces since May. We urge restraint on all sides. Israeli investigations should be transparent, comprehensive and, where there has been excessive use of force, those responsible held to account.

We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinian civilians and aid workers. We express particular concern about the reported attack on 15-year-old Palestinian, Tareq Zubeidi, on 17 August. Communities must be protected from violence and harassment. Such incidents must be investigated fully and those responsible brought to justice.

Madam President, we continue to call on the Palestinian Authority to adhere to international standards on freedom of expression, association and assembly and urge respect for human rights. Reform is needed to rebuild trust with the public.

I reiterate that the UK condemns unequivocally Hamas's indiscriminate attacks against Israel, including the use of incendiary balloons. We call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their rocket fire against Israel.

Finally Madam President, turning to Gaza, the UK welcomed Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid's speech proposing positive policy suggestions to support economic development in Gaza and greater security for Israel. A long-term solution for Gaza is needed not only to end the cycle of violence, but also to make progress towards the two-state solution: a solution to which the UK remains firmly committed.

Preventing further escalation of violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
30 August 2021**

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on the Middle East:

Thank you Mr President, and my thanks to Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing.

Let me start by once again reinforcing the need to prevent a further escalation in violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and to restore calm. We share concerns about the recent tensions in Gaza and call on all parties to take steps to avoid exacerbating tensions and to maintain the cessation of hostilities. The United Kingdom condemns unequivocally Hamas' indiscriminate attacks against Israel, including the use of incendiary balloons. We call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their rocket fire against Israel.

Our attention must remain on the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and the impact on Palestinians living there. It remains vital that Israel ensures regularised access into and out of Gaza, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, especially for humanitarian actors and goods, reconstruction materials, and for medical purposes.

In the West Bank, we should all be troubled by the high number of Palestinians who have been killed by Israeli Forces in recent weeks. Since our most recent debate on 28 July, 9 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, including two children. We urge the Israeli authorities to conduct transparent and comprehensive investigations, and to hold those responsible to account.

In regards to the handling of recent protests, we call on the Palestinian Authority to adhere to international standards on freedom of expression, association and assembly and urge respect for human rights. The use of violence against peaceful human rights defenders, activists and protesters, and the mistreatment of those detained is unacceptable.

In Jerusalem, we remain concerned by the high number of evictions and demolitions, including in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan and al Walaja. Unfortunately, in 2021 we have seen the pace of these unilateral Israeli actions increase across the West Bank. We urge Israel to refrain from actions which displace Palestinians from their homes, act as a driver for conflict and are, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, illegal under international law. It is also vital to maintain calm on Al Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount and to uphold the historic Status Quo.

Mr President, against this fragile backdrop, we continue to see signs of hope. We were pleased to see Palestinian and Israeli firefighters working together to extinguish fires in Jerusalem. We want to see greater coordination and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, particularly on economic initiatives, to help pave a pathway toward peace. The first anniversary of the signing of the Abraham Accords this month is a reminder that the advancement of peace is possible.

We welcome and urge continued engagement between the new Israeli Government and the Palestinian leadership and call on both parties to work together to tackle immediate and long-term threats to peace and stability. Our collective goal remains a two-state solution, based on 1967 lines.

The United Kingdom stands ready to support.

Foreign Secretary visits Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories (May 2021)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

25 May 2021

The Foreign Secretary will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah during his 1-day visit. The UK remains committed to the 2-state solution as the best way to permanently end the occupation, deliver Palestinian self-determination and preserve Israel's Jewish and democratic identity.

He will also meet Israeli Foreign and Defence Ministers, Gabi Ashkenazi and Benny Gantz, as well as Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh and Foreign Minister Riad Malki.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK welcomes the ceasefire in Israel and Gaza. It is crucial that all sides now focus on ensuring it can last. The events of the last month demonstrate the urgent need to make genuine progress towards a more positive future for both Israelis and Palestinians, and break the cycle of violence that has claimed so many lives.

The UK supports a two-state solution as the best way to deliver a lasting peace.

Israel-Gaza ceasefire: Foreign Secretary's statement
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
20 May 2021

The Foreign Secretary has welcomed the ceasefire reached in Israel and Gaza today.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza, an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life.

Hamas must end all attacks on Israel. It is also now important for Israel to facilitate rapid humanitarian access in and out of Gaza.

Israeli settlements: statement by France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
6 May 2021

The governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom have issued a joint statement on Israeli settlements.

Statement from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom:

We urge the Government of Israel to reverse its decision to advance the construction of 540 settlement units in the Har Homa E area of the occupied West Bank, and to cease its policy of settlement expansion across the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Settlements are illegal under international law, and threaten prospects for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

If implemented, the decision to advance settlements in Har Homa, between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, will cause further damage to the prospects for a viable Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and a Palestinian State. This move, alongside settlement advancement in Givat HaMatos and continued evictions in East Jerusalem, including in Sheikh Jarrah, also undermines efforts to rebuild trust between the parties, following the positive resumption of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation.

We call on both sides to refrain from any unilateral action and resume a credible and meaningful dialogue, to advance efforts for the two state solution and an end to the conflict.

Working towards a two-state solution

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

26 February 2021

- UK calls on Government of Israel to end demolition of Palestinian homes and allow delivery of humanitarian aid
- UK welcomes progress made in discussions of Ad-hoc Liaison Committee as well as progress towards elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- UK reaffirms commitment to a two-state solution and calls for “work towards a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike”

Remarks by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on the Middle East (Israel/Palestine), 26 February 2021

Let me start by thanking the Special Coordinator for his briefing, and thanking Malak and Oren for sharing their personal reflections with us today - including on how to help foster peace and understanding among new and older generations alike.

In order to build trust between the parties and populations, unilateral acts must also cease. The UK has called on the Government of Israel to end the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The latest demolitions in Humsa Al-Baqai'a have again made this vulnerable Palestinian community, including children, homeless. We urge the Government of Israel to allow the unimpeded delivery of vital humanitarian aid. We also call on the Government of Israel to refrain from the destruction or confiscation of such aid once it's delivered.

The UK will continue to champion the rights and freedoms of women, young people and marginalised groups. We join Palestinian women, and all Palestinians, in rejecting the recent changes made by Hamas – the de facto authorities in Gaza – to travel arrangements from Gaza, which will limit Gazan women's independence and liberty. We call for this decision to be fully reversed, and for all parties to ensure greater freedoms and protections for women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We are clear that the parties must work together to deliver meaningful improvements for Palestinians and Israelis. In this context, I'd also like to welcome, as others have done, the constructive discussions held this week at the Ad-hoc Liaison Committee. We must now drive progress on measures that can alleviate the health and economic challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We welcome cooperation on vaccine access, and encourage the Government of Israel to facilitate the transfer of vaccines to the Palestinian Authority when required. We also need to see tangible and time-bound commitments from the parties to address long-standing barriers to

development of the Palestinian economy. Progress against these issues will help foster an environment conducive to future peace negotiations.

Finally, I'd like to welcome the continued progress towards legislative and Presidential elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As we have heard today, Palestinians need free and fair elections, as a pathway to accountable institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights.

The UK remains committed to a two-state solution. We will continue to work with the parties to the conflict, to build the conditions for a permanent agreement. As our briefers today have made clear, we must work towards a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike. A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace is the best way to achieve such a future.

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PQs

Palestinians: Third Sector

10 Nov 2021 | 68188

Asked by: Caroline Lucas

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the military order issued by the Israeli Defense Ministry on 19 October 2021 declaring six Palestinian civil society organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to be terrorist organisations, if she will reiterate the Government's support for (a) Palestinian human rights defenders and (b) humanitarian and development organisations operating in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories; if she will provide support to those six civil society organisations; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities to designate six Palestinian Civil Society Organisations. We are in contact with the Government of Israel to understand the basis of the designations. We have made clear that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in both Israel and the OPTs, including those critical of Israel's conduct of the Palestinian Territories.

Israel and Occupied Territories: Human Rights

08 Nov 2021 | HL3410

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the climate for human rights in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories following the decision of the Israeli Ministry of Defence to claim that (1) Al-Haq, (2) Addameer, (3) Defence for Children International – Palestine, (4) Bisan Center for Research and Development, (5) Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, and the (6) Union of Agricultural Work Committees, are linked to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

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

We are aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities and will be seeking additional information to understand the basis for the designations. Human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in the development of thriving, open societies.

Palestinians: Elections

05 Nov 2021 | HL3345

Asked by: Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority about elections for (1) municipal councils, and (2) a legislature.

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

We are disappointed that elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have been postponed. The Palestinian people should be allowed to enjoy their democratic rights - and Israel must allow voting for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, in line with the Oslo Accords. We urge further work towards genuine and democratic national elections for all Palestinians, which is crucial to the establishment of a viable and sovereign Palestinian State.

Jerusalem: Housing

01 Nov 2021 | HL3184

Asked by: Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the renewal of a plan to construct a new settlement of up to 2,600 housing units in East Jerusalem.

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

The Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa urged the Government of Israel to reverse their decision to advance the construction of settlement units in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem on 28 October. The former Foreign Secretary also raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, with the Israeli authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May. The UK regularly calls on Israel to end illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank and closely monitors reports of further settlement advancements. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to avoid actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

Israel: Palestinians

27 Oct 2021 | 60365

Asked by: Andrew Gwynne

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what cross-border peacebuilding projects the UK supports in Israel and the Palestinian Territories; and how much funding the Government has allocated to each of those projects.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Cabinet Office publishes Conflict Security and Stability Fund annual programme summaries on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-programme-summaries>. They outline the annual budget, a short summary of the programmes, and a breakdown of the projects in the programme. The peacebuilding projects Constituencies for Peace and Support for Israeli NGOs continue to be funded in Financial Year 2021/2022 though exact spend figures are not yet available. Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts. CSSF spend by regional, cross regional and non-discretionary theme is reported in the CSSF Annual Report. The CSSF Annual Report 2020-21 will be published on gov.uk.

Topical Questions

26 Oct 2021 | 702 c135

Asked by: Matt Western

I welcome the Secretary of State to her position. Will she update the House on her Government's recent discussions with international allies on restarting a meaningful peace process between Palestine and the Israeli Government? Will she describe the personal importance that she attaches to achieving a two-state solution?

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary engages regularly with the leadership of both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It remains a foundation stone of UK foreign policy in the region to pursue, support and, where possible, facilitate a two-state solution based on 1967 lines with agreed land swaps and Jerusalem as a shared capital of both states.

Arab States: Israel

20 Oct 2021 | 56879

Asked by: Dame Diana Johnson

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2021 to Question 43429 on Arab States: Israel, whether the Government is encouraging Arab countries that do not conduct normalised relations with Israel to do so.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan. These are historic steps which see the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. The United Kingdom will continue to encourage further dialogue between Israel and other countries in the region, to work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Lebanon: Palestinians

27 Sep 2021 | HL2655

Asked by: Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

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

The UK is one of the leading donors in supporting Lebanon to host both Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Since 2011, the UK has allocated over £780 million in humanitarian and development funding to Lebanon. Our humanitarian assistance will continue to promote access to education and provide those most in need with timely, flexible assistance and protection services to cover their basic survival needs and reduce gender-based violence, saving lives and reducing suffering. The UK is also a key supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides vital services to Palestinian refugees across their five fields of operation including in Lebanon. Our annual contribution to UNRWA's programme budget helps UNRWA to provide basic education to more than 533,000 children a year (half of whom are girls), access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable across the region.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

20 Sep 2021 | HL2458

Asked by: Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of comments by the Prime Minister of Israel in an interview with The New York Times, published on 24 August, that he will oppose the creation of a Palestinian state and expand Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

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

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. Our position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We urge the Government of Israel to cease its policies related to settlement expansion immediately, and instead work towards the establishment of a Palestinian state along 1967 lines, with its capital in East Jerusalem. We also call bilaterally and in international fora, for Israel to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

13 Sep 2021 | 42106

Asked by: Ruth Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made for the implications for his policies of the recent meeting between President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Defence Minister, Benny Gantz.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We welcome the efforts of Israeli and Palestinian authorities to work towards a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. That is why we will continue to support steps to increase understanding and dialogue between the parties that can help create the conditions for meaningful negotiations.

[Arab States: Israel](#)

09 Sep 2021 | 43429

Asked by: Andrew Gwynne

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the likelihood of further diplomatic normalisation between Israel and Arab nations.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan. These are historic steps which see the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. We also welcome the suspension of plans for Israeli annexation of the West Bank - a move the UK has opposed - as it would have been counterproductive to securing peace in the region.

Restoring cooperation is an important and constructive step towards peace, and shows both sides are willing to put the needs and security of both Israelis and Palestinians first. We need to build on this momentum through further dialogue and compromise to move towards a two state solution and a lasting solution to the conflict. The United Kingdom will continue to work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Israel: Arms Trade
06 Sep 2021 | 37483

Asked by: Emma Lewell-Buck

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any licences issued for the export of arms to Israel have been revoked as a result of the violence in that country and the neighbouring Palestinian Territory in May 2021.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We consider all export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. The Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
06 Sep 2021 | 36519

Asked by: Steve McCabe

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Answer to Question 22172 on 5 July 2021, what plans he has to discuss the merits of potential collaboration on the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace with his US counterpart.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK government shares the objective of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. UK officials remain in close contact with the US Government regarding the International Fund. The US is at a very early planning stage, and once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

27 Jul 2021 | 35617

Asked by: Jonathan Lord

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to support peace between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Following the ceasefire announcement, the Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 25 and 26 May for talks with senior leaders. The Foreign Secretary met former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution. We have a regular dialogue with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The Foreign Secretary and Ministers have also engaged regional partners, including with Egypt, Jordan and Turkey. The Foreign Secretary made it clear that the UK would continue to work with the parties, and other actors, to encourage a durable ceasefire and to urge them to address the drivers of conflict.

[Topical Questions](#)

20 Jul 2021 | 699 c806

Asked by: Mark Eastwood

I have received more than 2,000 emails from constituents raising their concerns about violence towards worshippers at al-Aqsa mosque, and the threatened evictions of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. In response to those concerns, will my right hon. Friend outline what steps he has taken to raise those issues directly with the Israeli Government?

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

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this very issue with his Israeli counterpart, I have raised it with the Israeli ambassador, and we have consistently called for sensitivity in the security arrangements around the most holy sites in Jerusalem. We continue to call for a permanent ceasefire,

and we will continue to work with all parties, both in the west bank and in Israel, to pursue that aim.

Topical Questions

20 Jul 2021 | 699 c805

Asked by: Catherine McKinnell

The Minister for Middle East and North Africa indicated earlier that the Government have yet to consider joining the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, because they are awaiting further information. Why are the Government not showing more initiative in working with the US to drive that? Our chief negotiator in Northern Ireland held a similar initiative, the International Fund for Ireland, to be the great unsung hero of the peace process. Does the Minister agree that the middle east need be no different?

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

As I said earlier, the UK values and welcomes means for Israelis and Palestinians to work more closely together, and we call on the leadership of both to do so at Government and Palestinian Authority level. We work closely with our US counterparts, and we will continue working with them as they put more details on that fund. Once they are in a position to engage with us in more detail, we will consider that in due course.

Palestinians: Children's Rights

12 Jul 2021 | 29143

Asked by: Fleur Anderson

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of children's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK continues to engage with the Israeli government on human rights issues in the context of the occupation, including the treatment of children. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

Palestinians: Recognition of States

07 Jul 2021 | HL1361

Asked by: Lord Stone of Blackheath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 June (HL820) and their position that they will "recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace", what assessment they have made of the case for recognising Palestine as a state now in order to facilitate negotiations between the government of an internationally-recognised state of Palestine and the government of Israel on an agreed border; and whether they will now recognise the state of Palestine.

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

Any decision to recognise a Palestinian state will rest on an assessment of the prospects for peace, and what best supports progress towards a two-state solution. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue. The UK priority is working with the parties and other international actors to encourage a durable ceasefire and to urge them to address the drivers of conflict.

Palestine

07 Jul 2021 | 813 c1280

Asked by: Lord Polak

I refer the House to my interest as president of Conservative Friends of Israel, as set out in the register. It seems that some noble Lords are failing to experience and comprehend the winds of change in the region: the Abraham Accords, and a NATO drill this week which included Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and the UAE, alongside Israel. Does the Minister agree that the most helpful contribution towards peace and prosperity would be for noble Lords to use their influence with the Palestinians to urge them to sit around the table with the Israelis and create that peace and prosperity?

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

My Lords, I agree with my noble friend; I think we all welcome the important progress made with the Abraham Accords, and we pay tribute to all those who have come forward. However, it is also important, as my noble friend rightly articulates, that there can be no solution to the challenges and the conflicts in the region until we see meaningful progress on the peace talks. For that to occur, Israel and the Palestinian Authority need to sit down and agree a way forward and progress. We all desire peace in the Holy Land, and the talks between those two sides are essential to make that happen.

[Palestine](#)

07 Jul 2021 | 813 c1280

Asked by: Baroness Northover

Is the noble Lord aware that this morning, Israeli forces demolished more structures in the Jordan Valley? Does he agree that that the time really has come to move beyond that old phrase that he has used once again and to recognise Palestine, and that this must be for a viable, sovereign and independent state and not a splintered, semi-sovereign version, as, for example, in the Trump plan?

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

My Lords, on the Trump plan, as I have said before in your Lordships' House, that was a first step. However, I totally recognise the picture that the noble Baroness paints and we agree as a Government that we must have a viable, functioning Palestinian state. On the important issue of the demolitions, we have made our position absolutely clear to the Israeli authorities. They should not be taking place. The settlements in the OPTs are illegal and they, and indeed the evictions, go against international humanitarian law.

[Palestine](#)

07 Jul 2021 | 813 c1279

Asked by: Lord Grade of Yarmouth

Does the Minister agree that our Government cannot consider recognising a territory while it is controlled by proscribed terrorists whose only stated purpose is to wipe their neighbour Israel off the face of the earth, no matter what the cost to their own people?

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

My noble friend refers of course to the situation in Gaza and the role of Hamas. We do not engage with Hamas, and I agree with my noble friend that for anyone to come to the table it is important that they recognise the other party's right to exist. Hamas does not, and if it wants to be a party to peace, it needs to ensure that that recognition is extended.

[Gaza: Israel](#)

30 Jun 2021 | 20593

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions officials in his Department have had with their Israeli

counterparts on the effect of recent airstrikes on the ceasefire in Israel and Gaza.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May. As the Prime Minister has made clear, Israel, the Palestinians and leaders in the region must now work together to find a durable solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict that prevents terrorism, ends the cycle of violence, and delivers a sustainable and just peace based on a two state solution. The UK continues to work with the parties and regional partners to urge de-escalation and efforts to tackle the drivers of conflict.

[International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace](#)

29 Jun 2021 | 21897

Asked by: Lisa Nandy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts at the G7 Summit in Cornwall on the establishment of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. The Foreign Secretary regularly discusses this issue with international counterparts. Peace will only come through negotiations between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress.

[Israel: Palestinians](#)

22 Jun 2021 | 16273

Asked by: Stephen Morgan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 27 November 2020 to Question 118120, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the of the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act 2020; and whether the UK will assume one of the international seats on the governing board of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace created by that Act.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK government shares the objective of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. In support of this, we continue to fund peacebuilding projects focused on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian

Territories. UK officials also remain in close contact with the US government regarding the International Fund. We look forward to hearing more from the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) and US Government about the International Fund's objectives and the projects it will support. Once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration.

Gaza: Israel

14 Jun 2021 | 12189

Asked by: Tommy Sheppard

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the joint communication issued by nine UN Special Rapporteurs on the recent hostilities in Gaza which found that potential war crimes had been committed in that conflict, what steps he is taking to ensure accountability for violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is a steadfast supporter of international justice and does not hold back from voicing or raising concern about Israel's actions when warranted. However, Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

Palestinians: Security

02 Jun 2021 | HL311

Asked by: Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make a statement that the Palestinians under occupation are entitled to security and self-defence.

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

The recent violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK worked actively to urge the parties to work with mediators towards an immediate ceasefire. We also fully supported Egyptian, Qatari and UN efforts to that end, working closely with the US. The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May, which is an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life.

We agree with President Biden's recent remarks that Palestinians and Israelis equally deserve to live safely and securely and to enjoy equal measures of freedom, prosperity, and democracy. Our long-standing objective is a negotiated two-state solution which will allow Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace, lessening the likelihood of politically driven violence and incitement to violence. We continue to believe that the best way to advance a two state solution is through dialogue. We therefore urge all sides to show maximum restraint and refrain from taking actions which endanger civilians and make peace more difficult.

Israel: Palestinians

27 May 2021 | HL218

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to recent clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants, (1) what action they are taking to encourage restraint on both sides; and (2) what discussions they have had with the government of the United States on how to de-escalate the situation.

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

The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May. As the Prime Minister has made clear, leaders in the region must now work to find a durable solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict that prevents terrorism, ends the cycle of violence, and delivers a sustainable and just peace based on a two state solution. We continue to fully support Egyptian and UN mediation efforts.

The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 25 and 26 May for talks with senior leaders and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution as the best way to deliver Palestinian self-determination and ensure Israel's status as a Jewish, democratic state.

Ministers and Ambassadors throughout the Middle East are also engaging regional partners, including Egypt, Jordan and Turkey, while we remain in close contact with the US administration.

Middle East: Security

21 May 2021 | 657

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on Middle East security and stability of the (a) continued annexation by Israel of East Jerusalem, (b) application of policies by Israel to prevent construction of

homes by Palestinians in East Jerusalem, (c) application of policies by Israel to evict Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem, and (d) application of policies by Israel to promote construction and possession of homes in East Jerusalem by Jewish settlers.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Our concerns about evictions of Palestinians from their homes are long-standing and well-known. I [Middle East Minister James Cleverly] spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and to the Palestinian Head of Mission in London on the 11 May, to urge them to de-escalate, restore calm and to reiterate our position on this issue. I publicised on the 8 May outlining our concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions, which in all but the most exceptional cases are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

al-Aqsa Mosque

17 May 2021 | 479

Asked by: Sarah Owen

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recent incident at the al-Aqsa mosque, Jerusalem.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. We call on all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation. Violence against peaceful worshippers of any faith is unacceptable. Respect for the historic status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem is important at all times, especially during religious festivals such as Ramadan. Our priority now is to secure an immediate de-escalation on all sides.

5

Debates

[Abraham Accords](#)

25 Oct 2021 | House of Commons | 702 cc112-8

Agreed to on question.

[Israel and Palestine](#)

14 Jun 2021 | House of Commons | 697 cc1-22WH

Motion that this House has considered e-petitions 585313 and 585314 relating to Israel and Palestine. Agreed to on question.

[International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace](#)

17 Nov 2020 | House of Commons | 684 cc81-105WH

Motion that this House has considered UK support for an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. Agreed to on question.

[Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)

24 Sep 2020 | House of Commons | 680 cc1209-1236

Motion, That this House has considered settlement and annexation of the Occupied Palestinian territories. Agreed to on question.

[Palestinian School Curriculum: Radicalisation](#)

10 Mar 2020 | House of Commons | 673 cc51-76WH

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

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

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

Lords motion to take note of the United States' proposals for peace between Israelis 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

Lords question for short debate on what assessment they have made of the government of the United States' Peace to Prosperity economic plan for Palestine, published on 26 June.

[Westminster Hall adjournment debate on the roadmap to peace in the Middle East](#)

03 Jun 2003 | House of Commons | 406 c1-21WH

Debate on the roadmap to peace in the Middle East.

6

Urgent Questions

Violence in Israel and Palestine

12 May 2021 | House of Commons | 695 cc123-137

Layla Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if he will make a statement on the violence in Israel and Palestine.

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): The recent escalation in violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories is deeply concerning. It is the worst violence seen there for several years. As the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop and every effort must be made to avoid the loss of life, especially that of children. The UK offers our deepest condolences to the families of those civilians killed. Civilian deaths, both in Israel and Gaza, are a tragedy.

We urge all sides to refrain from any kind of provocation so that calm is restored as quickly as possible. As we enter the final days of the holy month of Ramadan, restoration of peace and security is in everyone's interest. The UK will continue to support that goal. The UK unequivocally condemns the firing of rockets at Jerusalem and other locations in Israel. We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism from Hamas and other terrorist groups, who must permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. There is no justification for any targeting of civilians. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence and to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, are in line with international humanitarian law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. Violence against peaceful worshippers of any faith is unacceptable. The UK has been clear that the attacks on worshippers must stop. The status quo in Jerusalem is important at all times, but especially so during religious festivals such as Ramadan. Our priority now must be an immediate de-escalation on all sides and an end to civilian deaths.

As I made clear over the weekend, we are concerned about tensions in Jerusalem linked to threatened evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. That threat is allayed for now, but we urge Israel to cease such actions, which in most cases are contrary to international humanitarian law. The UK continues to support international efforts to reduce the tension. The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in a call to the Israeli Foreign Minister yesterday and will speak to the Palestinian Prime Minister shortly. I have spoken to the Israeli ambassador and the Palestinian head of mission in the UK to urge them to de-escalate and to restore calm. The UK has also engaged at the UN Security Council, calling for

all sides to take measures to reduce further violence and making clear our deep concern at the violence at the holy sites in Jerusalem. I am sure that the Security Council will continue to monitor the situation closely, and it is due to reconvene. UK embassies throughout the middle east are engaging with regional partners, and we remain in close contact with the US Administration and our European allies.

The situation on the ground over the last few days demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK remains committed to a two-state solution as the best way to bring peace and stability to the region. I repeat: we urge all sides to show maximum restraint and refrain from taking actions that endanger civilians and make a sustainable peace more difficult.

Middle East Peace Plan

30 Jan 2020 | House of Commons | 670 cc926-940

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State if he will make a statement on the proposed Middle East Peace Plan that was announced by President Trump this week.

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (Dr Andrew Murrison): I thank the right hon. Lady for her urgent question. As the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement on Tuesday, the Government welcome the release of the proposal by the United States for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, which clearly reflects extensive investment in time and effort. A peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians that leads to peaceful co-existence could unlock the potential of the entire region and provide both sides with the opportunity for a brighter future.

Only the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian territories can determine whether the proposals can meet the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. We encourage them to give the latest plan genuine and fair consideration, and to explore whether it might prove a first step on the road back to negotiations. The UK's position has not changed. Our view remains that the best way to achieve peace is through substantive peace talks between the parties, leading to a safe and secure Israel that lives 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, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

Our first priority now must be to encourage the United States, Israelis, Palestinians and our partners in the international community to find a means of resuming the dialogue necessary for securing a negotiated settlement. The absence of dialogue creates a vacuum, which fuels instability and all that follows from that.

7

Early Day Motions

Proscribing of Palestinian human rights organisations

EDM 583 (session 2021-22)

25 October 2021

Tommy Sheppard

That this House condemns the declaration of 22 October 2021 made by Israeli Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, which designated six Palestinian civil society groups as terrorist organisations; notes that the Israeli authorities have not provided any evidence to substantiate their claims about the organisations; further notes that the targeted groups Al-Haq, Addameer, Bisan Center, Defence for Children International Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees are organisations deeply committed to protecting the human rights of Palestinian communities, highlighting Israel's illegal policies and also those of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas; further notes the statement of 22 Israeli civil society groups based in Israel in support of the six NGOs; views this as a further direct assault on Palestinian civil society in an effort to isolate and suffocate Palestinian human rights defenders; recognises the significant impact this assault has on some of the most prominent Palestinian civil society organisations including on the local and international public's right to information about the reality of human rights violations in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories; calls on the Government to demand that the Israeli Government reveal any evidence against those organisations; and further calls on the Government to reaffirm its support for Palestinian and Israeli civil society and human rights organisations as a key foundation in building a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel and Palestine

EDM 218 (session 2021-22)

21 June 2021

Debbie Abrahams

That this House expresses its profound concern at recent events in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel; welcomes the ceasefire which began on 21 May 2021; calls for every effort to be made to end all attacks and forms of aggression, address the underlying causes and hold those responsible fully accountable; recognises that genuine calm and de-escalation can only be achieved with the full realisation of Palestinian rights and the end of Israel's systematic discrimination against Palestinians in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory; and calls on the UK Government to work to end the 54 years of occupation and 14 years of the blockade of the Gaza Strip, lift the blockade of Gaza and allow the free flow of goods both way and ensure the

tunnels under the Gaza-Egyptian border are closed off permanently with international monitoring, strengthen support for UNRWA and work with international partners to put it on a sustainable long-term financial footing to ensure the dignity of Palestinian refugees until such a time as a just and sustainable solution is achieved, work to ensure the holding of free and fair Presidential and Parliamentary Palestinian elections throughout the occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem, end Israel's systematic discrimination against Palestinians including its own Palestinian citizens, ensuring all mob attacks are fully investigated and use every diplomatic method to bring about a peace process that can resolve this conflict on the basis of international law, justice and the end of all discrimination to ensure a secure and lasting peace.

Occupation of Palestine

EDM 107 (session 2021-22)

25 May 2021

Kenny MacAskill

That this House, whilst welcoming a ceasefire in Israel, Palestine and Gaza, notes with concern the continued threat posed to Palestinian civilians by the Israeli Defence Forces; therefore regrets that the Ministry of Defence refused to publish details of the agreement strengthening military co-operation signed by the British Armed Forces with the Israeli Defence Forces on 2 December 2020; further regrets that the Department of International Trade declined to publish the names of companies granted export licences for components potentially for use by the Israeli Defence Forces; and believes that in view of past Palestinian civilian deaths and the severity of the ongoing threat that continues to face them that normal security and commercial confidences are overridden by legitimate public interest.

Violence perpetrated by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in Sheikh Jarrah

EDM 3 (session 2021-22)

11 May 2021

Tahir Ali

That this House unequivocally condemns the ongoing violence perpetrated by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the Sheikh Jarrah area of Jerusalem; condemns the attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli police which left hundreds of civilians injured; joins the UN in calling upon the Israeli authorities to demonstrate maximum restraint and to allow the freedom of peaceful assembly for Palestinians; opposes and will work to prevent the ongoing evictions of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem, which is part of a wider attempt to push Palestinians out of Jerusalem altogether; calls on the international community to pursue suitable sanction against the Israeli

Government until all violations of international law and human rights are ceased; and recognises that the violence perpetrated by the Israeli authorities in May 2021, along with the continued evictions of Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah, increases regional tensions and frustrates efforts to broker a lasting and just peace between Israel and Palestine.

ICC preliminary examination of the situation in Palestine

EDM 30 (session 2019-21)

7 January 2020

Martyn Day

That this House notes the statement from the International Criminal Court prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the preliminary examination of the situation in Palestine; reaffirms full support for the application of international humanitarian law and prosecution where violations are found to have occurred; welcomes the scope of the investigation into war crimes committed in the Israel-Palestine conflict; further notes that in addition to investigating Israel for war crimes the investigation will also look at Palestinian organisations for targeting civilians, use of torture and denial of fair trials; welcomes the impartiality of the investigation; and calls upon the UK Government to apply all necessary pressure upon those party to the Israel-Palestine conflict and urge unfettered access for the ICC to carry out its investigation without hindrance.

White House Israeli-Palestinian Peace Plan

EDM 2589 (session 2017-19)

8 July 2019

Alex Sobel

That this House condemns the US negotiated Economic Plan for Palestinian Development; notes that the plan doesn't lift the security measures in place preventing freedom of movement or guarantee return of land annexed by Israel; and is concerned that the political plan being drawn up in Washington DC will attach significant loss of land and freedoms in return for economic support, which would undermine the Oslo Accords.

Publication of Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East

EDM 999 (session 2002-03)

2 April 2003

Richard Burden

That this House notes with concern that several weeks have now passed since President Bush promised the publication of the Quartet's Roadmap for peace in Israel/Palestine; further notes that subsequently President Bush indicated

that publication was contingent on the appointment of a Palestinian Prime Minister and that Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) has been formally appointed as Prime Minister and endorsed in that role; believes that there is no excuse for further delay in the formal publication of the Roadmap; further notes that the Roadmap was drawn up for implementation with the United Nations Resolutions, and therefore welcomes US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's statement to the 44th annual policy meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee that the Roadmap is 'not a matter of renegotiation'; believes that the parties to the Quartet, USA, EU, Russia and UN, all have important collective and individual roles to play in securing implementation of the Roadmap; therefore urges them to publish the Roadmap without further delay and to progress its implementation; and, pending publication, draws the attention of honourable Members to the fact that the draft of the Roadmap can be seen at www.jmce.org/documents/usroadmap2.htm.

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