

Debate Pack

10 May 2024

Number CDP 2024/0095

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E-petition relating to a visa scheme for Palestinians

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Summary

There will be a Westminster Hall debate relating to a visa scheme for Palestinians on 13 May 2024, opened by Cat Smith MP. The Petitions Committee agreed to the debate in response to an e-petition that attracted over 100,000 signatures.

1

Background

[E-petition 648577](#) calls for the Government to create a visa scheme for “Palestinian individuals affected by war, to be allowed into the UK. Just like we did for Ukraine”. The petition closed on 18 April 2024 with over 100,000 signatures.

The Government’s response to the petition, issued in December 2023, said there were no plans to introduce a special visa scheme. It pointed to existing visa routes, in particular for immediate family members of British citizens and permanent residents.

1.1

The 2023/24 Israel-Hamas conflict

On 7 October 2023, the Palestinian group Hamas, officially designated a terrorist group by many countries including Israel, the United States, the European Union and the United Kingdom, commenced an armed assault against Israel.¹ It launched several thousand rockets into Israel and conducted attacks in border areas, killing around 1,200 civilians and taking 253 hostages, as part of what it called “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood”.²

In response to the assault, Israel conducted air strikes against Hamas in Gaza and on 28 October launched a ground attack to “destroy Hamas’ governing and military capabilities and to bring the hostages home”.³ Hamas continues to fire rockets into Israel.⁴

Citing Israeli authorities and the Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says that since 7 October, more than 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals have been reported killed and around 5,400 injured. At least 34,700 Palestinians have been reported killed and about 78,100 injured across Gaza and Israel.⁵

¹ UK: Home Office, [Islamist terrorist group Hamas banned in the UK](#), 26 November 2021 and HM Treasury, [Current list of designated persons: Counter terrorism \(international\)](#), 16 June 2022, pp3-4

² [“Israel revises Hamas attack death toll to ‘around 1,200’](#)”, Reuters, 10 November 2023; [“Netanyahu touts ‘initiative’ to free hostages in Gaza as pressure mounts”](#), CNN, 22 January 2024

³ [“Israel-Hamas War: Timeline and key developments”](#), ABC News, 22 November 2023; [“PM announces 2nd stage of war, with broad ground offensive; says ‘Never Again’ is now”](#), The Times of Israel, 29 October 2023

⁴ [“IDF says 12 rockets fired from Gaza toward Israeli communities, 5 intercepted”](#), The Times of Israel, 7 May 2024

⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), accessed on 8 May 2024

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees estimates that up to 1.7 million of Gaza's 2.2 million population are displaced (as of 5 May).⁶

Talks on a ceasefire or pause in the fighting continue. A draft agreement has not been published but talks are reportedly centred on a ceasefire occurring alongside the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners over a six-week period, followed by a second period of "sustainable calm" or "permanent cessation of hostilities". Israel opposes any agreement that allows Hamas to retain control of Gaza and threaten the security of Israel.⁷

For more on the conflict and the UK response, see Commons Library research briefing [2023/24 Israel-Hamas conflict: UK and international response](#).

1.2

Safe and legal routes to the UK

People who are at risk of serious harm, including from indiscriminate violence in armed conflict, can claim asylum in the United Kingdom.⁸ But they must be physically in the UK to lodge an asylum application. It is not possible to claim asylum from abroad and there is no asylum visa.⁹

The resulting incentive for physical presence in the UK leads some people to make unauthorised journeys, such as by small boat, in order to lodge an asylum claim. This is relatively rare for Palestinians, who accounted for 0.14% of total unauthorised arrivals detected in 2023 (53 out of 36,704).¹⁰

The Government often emphasises the availability of 'safe and legal routes' for people seeking protection. These broadly fall into three categories:

- Refugee resettlement programmes
- Refugee family reunion visas
- Nationality-specific humanitarian visa schemes, available to some Afghans, Ukrainians, and people from Hong Kong¹¹

⁶ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, [UNWRA situation report #106 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank](#), 7 May 2024

⁷ ["Sustainable calm" proposals splits Israel and Hamas](#), BBC News, 7 May 2024

⁸ Home Office, [Immigration Rules part 11: asylum](#), accessed on 8 May 2024, paras 339C and 339CA

⁹ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3: eligibility for British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening Alumni](#), 17 October 2023; UK Visas and Immigration, [Applications from abroad policy: caseworker guidance](#), 20 September 2011

¹⁰ Home Office, [Irregular migration to the UK detailed dataset, year ending December 2023](#), 29 February 2024, table Irr_D01

¹¹ See Commons Library briefing CBP-9630, [Safe and legal routes to the UK for people seeking protection](#), 25 January 2023

But:

- Palestinians are not eligible for refugee resettlement in the UK.¹²
- Refugee family reunion visas depend on there being a sponsor already granted asylum in the UK. Only partners and children under 18 can be sponsored, unless there are exceptional circumstances.¹³
- There is no bespoke visa scheme for Palestinians and no plans to open one.¹⁴

This means that humanitarian visa routes are rarely available to Palestinians. The Government's January 2024 report on safe and legal routes says they cannot provide for every eventuality, and "it is not feasible to consider protection claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might ask to come here".¹⁵

1.3 Mainstream visa options

Family visas

The Government response to the e-petition notes that Palestinians with immediate family in the UK can apply for a standard family visa.¹⁶

Family visas require a sponsor in the UK with British citizenship or permanent residence. The person sponsored can only be a spouse/partner, child under 18 or parent of a sponsoring child under 18.¹⁷ Other relatives are allowed only if they require long-term personal care because of age, illness or disability, and that care is not available in their country of origin.¹⁸

Family ties to the UK, such as having a sibling or cousin here, are therefore insufficient under the Immigration Rules. The immigration minister has however said that "consideration will be given to compelling, compassionate and exceptional circumstances raised and may be taken into account where certain requirements are not met".¹⁹

¹² *R (Marouf) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2023] UKSC 23, 28 June 2023

¹³ Home Office, [Immigration Rules Appendix Family Reunion \(Protection\)](#), accessed on 8 May 2024

¹⁴ PQ 24090 [on [Visas: Palestinians](#)], answered on 8 May 2024

¹⁵ Home Office, [Report on Safe and Legal Routes, Illegal Migration Act 2023 \(Section 61\)](#), 11 January 2024, p7

¹⁶ Government response to [e-petition 648577](#), 21 December 2023

¹⁷ Home Office, [Immigration Rules Appendix FM: family members](#), accessed on 8 May 2024

¹⁸ Home Office, [Immigration Rules Appendix Adult Dependent Relative](#), accessed on 8 May 2024

¹⁹ PQ 24271 [on [Visas: Gaza](#)], answered on 7 May 2024

Work or student visas

In principle a Palestinian could also apply for a different visa allowing residence in the UK, such as a sponsored work or study visa. Work visa holders can usually bring immediate family (that is, spouse/partner and children under 18) as a 'dependant' on their visa. PhD students can also bring dependants, but not undergraduate or taught master's students.

Such visas are not designed for humanitarian purposes. The costs and sponsorship requirements are likely to be prohibitive in most cases. In addition, Palestinians in Gaza may find it difficult to attend a visa appointment (see below).

Visitor visas

In 2023, the Home Office refused around one in three (34%) visitor visa applications by Palestinians.²⁰

That rate was relatively high: the total visitor visa refusal rate in that period was around one in five (21%). The refusal rate for Palestinians was the 38th highest out of 145 nationalities which had 50 or more visitor visa applications processed in 2023.

The Home Office is less likely to accept visitors who may claim asylum in the UK. For example, when asylum applications by visitors from El Salvador increased sharply in 2021, they were taken off the list of visa-free countries so that applications to come to the UK could be vetted in advance.²¹

Visa appointments

People in Gaza face great practical difficulty in lodging a UK visa application. The UK visa application centre there is closed.²²

There have been some legal challenges to the Home Office's refusal to allow people to apply for visas without attending a visa appointment. Such appointments are integral to the application process so that security screening and identity checks can be carried out.

Judges have however ordered the Home Office to make in-principle decisions on Palestinian visa applications in several cases, without insisting on the appointment happening first. The judgments also note that an in-principle

²⁰ Home Office, [Entry clearance visa applications and outcomes detailed datasets, year ending December 2023](#), 29 February 2024, table Vis_D02

²¹ [Written statement HCWS10](#), 11 May 2022

²² TLSContact, [UK Visa Application Centre in Gaza](#), accessed on 10 May 2024

decision to grant visas might be helpful in securing permission to leave Gaza, which is otherwise extremely difficult.²³

The Government's response to the petition emphasises that, for people who do manage to leave Gaza, visa application centres are open in neighbouring countries.

1.4

The Ukraine model

The petition refers to the Ukrainian precedent. In response to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in March 2022, and following criticism that mainstream visa routes were insufficient (given the features described above) the Government radically liberalised the visa regime for Ukrainian citizens and their family members.

Under the Ukraine Family Scheme, British citizens and permanent residents were enabled to sponsor a much wider range of family members for a visa. The Ukrainian family members they could sponsor included parents, siblings, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews, rather than only immediate family. Those sponsored could also bring their own immediate family.²⁴

The scheme was open for applications between March 2022 and February 2024. Over 72,000 visas were issued.²⁵

Under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, visa sponsorship was opened up to Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK at all, provided they could find a sponsor willing provide suitable accommodation. The sponsor could be anyone with permission to live in the UK for six months or more.

The scheme remains open for applications but the criteria for becoming a sponsor were restricted to British citizens and permanent residents in February 2024.²⁶ Almost 185,000 visas have been issued so far.²⁷

All Ukraine scheme visas are free of charge. The visas last three years with the right to work and the right to claim mainstream benefits (neither of which are available to people who lodge an asylum claim, although both are permitted to those subsequently granted asylum). From early 2025, it will also be possible to extend the visas for a further 18 months.²⁸

²³ *R (AK and others) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, [JR-2024-LON-000689](#), 22 April 2024; Doughty Street Chambers, [Mandatory Orders made in two Gaza Family Reunion Cases, requiring the Home Office to take decisions on entry clearance applications](#), 11 March 2024

²⁴ Home Office, [Ukraine Family Scheme \(PDF\)](#), version 6.0, 19 February 2024

²⁵ Home Office, [Ukraine Visa Schemes: visa data](#), 9 May 2024

²⁶ Kingsley Napley, [Recent changes to the Ukraine Schemes](#), 11 April 2024

²⁷ Home Office, [Ukraine Visa Schemes: visa data](#), 9 May 2024

²⁸ Home Office, [Ukraine Permission Extension scheme information](#), 28 February 2024

The requirement to attend a visa application centre was also waived for many Ukrainian applicants until December 2023. The Home Office has successfully defended a legal challenge that argued it is discriminatory to allow this for Ukrainians and not for Afghans. The Home Office cited different national security considerations and the ability to liaise with the Ukrainian authorities to confirm applicants' identity.²⁹ Similar considerations might apply for Palestinians and relations with the Hamas authorities in Gaza.

More generally, the Government has sought to distinguish the Ukraine situation from the Palestinian situation when it comes to visa schemes. Lord Sharpe of Epsom, a Home Office minister, told the House of Lords on 24 April 2024 “the Ukraine family scheme was developed in close consultation with the Government of Ukraine, who have been very clear that they would like their citizens to return to Ukraine when it is safe to do so. Obviously, similar discussions with the Government in Gaza would not be possible, so the two situations are not analogous”.³⁰

²⁹ *R (AB) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2024] EWCA Civ 369, 18 April 2024

³⁰ [HL Deb 24 April 2024 c1466](#)

2 Parliamentary material

2.1 Early Day Motions

[Palestinians and the Researchers at Risk scheme](#)

This House commends the Researchers at Risk scheme instituted by the British Academy in partnership with the Council for At-Risk Academics and with support from the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society; notes that the scheme was funded primarily by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and is currently restricted to Ukrainian academics and their families...

13 Mar 2024 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 505 (session 2023-24)

Primary sponsor: Lucas, Caroline

[Support for families of British Palestinians](#)

That this House absolutely condemns the ongoing conflict in Gaza; further condemns the futile and tragic loss of life and the impact on all Palestinians...and urges the UK Government to take immediate action and create safe, viable routes for the family of British Palestinians to evacuate and seek safety in the UK.

24 Jan 2024 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 317 (session 2023-24)

Primary sponsor: Hendry, Drew

[Short-term medical evacuation of children from Gaza](#)

That this House welcomes the work of Saving Gaza's Children, an NGO dedicated to supporting the children of Gaza to receive life-saving and time-critical, emergency medical care required as a result of the Israel-Gaza conflict by identifying children in dire need of medical evacuation and securing their evacuation to host states which are currently better equipped to manage their complex and often life-threatening medical needs...

08 Jan 2024 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 254 (session 2023-24)

Primary sponsor: McDonnell, John

[Palestinian family visa scheme](#)

That this House notes that at least 18,000 civilians have already been killed by the bombardment and siege of Gaza alongside an escalating death toll in the West Bank; further notes that 60 per cent of buildings in Gaza have been flattened and hospitals and schools bombed, food, water and medical supplies denied... and calls upon the Government to immediately implement a Palestinian Visa Scheme, based upon the Ukraine Visa scheme, that allows those with family in the UK to be given safe passage to the UK and to be allowed to join their families here.

19 Dec 2023 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 233 (session 2023-24)

Primary sponsor: Davies, Geraint

2.2 Debates

[Family Reunion Visas: Gaza](#) – HL Deb, 24 April 2024 – 837 cc1465-1468

[Support for Civilians Fleeing Gaza](#) – HC Deb 06 Feb 2024 – 745 cc221-230

2.3 Parliamentary Questions

[Visa Scheme for Palestinian Refugees](#)

Asked by: Alison Thewliss

Gaza Families Reunited's petition for a Palestinian family visa scheme has garnered 100,000 signatures, and I hope it will soon be debated in Parliament. Gazans are stuck in a cruel and irrational Catch-22 situation: they cannot cross the border to Egypt because they do not have visas, as they cannot get their biometrics registered, but they cannot get their biometrics registered because they cannot get to a visa application centre in Egypt. The Government have the power to waive the requirement for biometrics to be registered, and it is in the Minister's hands to do so. Why won't he?

Answered by: Tom Pursglove | **Department:** Home Department

The hon. Lady will appreciate that the security of the system is imperative. We must act in accordance with the requirements, which we put front and centre. I will not comment on ongoing litigation, but I can say that we will continue to work with Foreign Office colleagues in the way that we have described. Elements of the peace process are at play in relation to these issues, but we will keep our response to this crisis under review as matters develop.

15 Apr 2024 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 748 c15

Date answered: 15 Apr 2024

[Visa Scheme for Palestinian Refugees](#)

Asked by: Patrick Grady

It is not surprising that the upper tribunal found the decision to require biometric data for people from Gaza to be “irrational and unreasonable”, because most of us find that to apply to most decisions made by the Home Office. Is it not also irrational and unreasonable for the United Kingdom to offer humanitarian visas to people caught up in the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan, but not to offer such visas to people fleeing the conflict in Gaza?

Answered by: Tom Pursglove | **Department:** Home Department

I will not give a running commentary on ongoing litigation, but I can say that we are supporting British nationals with dependants in Gaza to get those individuals out of Gaza safely, working in collaboration with Foreign Office colleagues. There are also marked differences at play here. Of course, the right of return is fundamental as part of efforts towards a two-state solution, and other factors are at play in responding to the Ukrainian situation. The dynamic is very different, which directly affects the relationship we have with the Ukrainian Government, particularly in respect of the ability to carry out checks on individuals.

15 Apr 2024 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 748 c14

Date answered: 15 Apr 2024

[Visa Scheme for Palestinian Refugees](#)

Asked by: Patrick Grady

If he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a visa scheme for Palestinian refugees.

Answered by: The Minister for Legal Migration and the Border (Tom Pursglove) | **Department:** Home Department

We are all concerned about the plight of those living in Gaza. Currently, we are not considering establishing a separate route for Palestinians. In any humanitarian situation, the UK must consider its resettlement approach in the round, rather than on a crisis-by-crisis basis.

15 Apr 2024 | Oral questions - Lead | Answered | House of Commons | 902325 | 748 cc14-5

Date tabled: 26 Mar 2024 | Date for answer: 15 Apr 2024 | Date answered: 15 Apr 2024

[Gaza: Refugees](#)

Asked by: Lord Swire | **Party:** Conservative

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have had discussions with (1) the European Union, or (2) the government of Egypt, about receiving Palestinian refugees from Gaza.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Government firmly rejects any suggestion of the resettlement of Palestinians outside of Gaza.

The UK's position is clear: Gaza is Occupied Palestinian Territory and will and must be part of a future Palestinian state. We support a two-state solution that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. This is the only viable option to ensure peace.

04 Apr 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL3424

Date tabled: 19 Mar 2024 | Date for answer: 04 Apr 2024 | Date answered: 04 Apr 2024

[Armed Conflict: Visas](#)

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael | **Party:** Labour · Cooperative Party

To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the potential merits of enabling (a) Palestinian civilians in Gaza and (b) other people living in war zones to apply for a visa without visiting a visa application centre.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign Secretary meets regularly with the Home Secretary to discuss relevant policy matters between the two departments. Visa applications can be started online at any time. Applicants are required to enrol their biometrics in a Visa Application Centre (VAC) as part of the visa application process to support identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control. Foreign national dependents of British citizens who are travelling from Gaza to Egypt and require visas to come to the UK can apply online and then visit the Visa Application Centre in Cairo or Alexandria to provide their biometric information. Further advice on travelling to Egypt from Gaza is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>. The FCDO Consular Contact Centre can be contacted on 020 7008 5000.

There are no plans to authorise entry clearance without biometrics for visa applications from Palestinian civilians in Gaza and or other people living in war zones. Palestinians in Gaza who want to apply for a UK visa but are not a dependent of a British National are not currently eligible for FCDO assistance.

13 Mar 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 16823

Date tabled: 04 Mar 2024 | Date for answer: 07 Mar 2024 | Date answered: 13 Mar 2024

[Palestinians: Visas](#)

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael | **Party:** Labour · Cooperative Party

To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether he has had discussions with international counterparts on a Palestinian visa scheme to support the health needs of civilians.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Government's priority is to support healthcare provision within Gaza, where medical needs are greatest. We are focussed on practical solutions that save lives. On 21 February the UK and Jordan delivered 4 tonnes of aid by air to Tal Al-Hawa Hospital in northern Gaza.

The UK is also providing £60 million in humanitarian assistance to support partners including the British Red Cross, UNICEF, the World Health Organisation, the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation and Egyptian Red Crescent Society to respond to critical food, fuel, water, health, shelter and security needs in Gaza.

08 Mar 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 16271

Date tabled: 28 Feb 2024 | Date for answer: 01 Mar 2024 | Date answered: 08 Mar 2024

[Palestinians: Refugees](#)

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael | **Party:** Labour · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to help reunite civilians in Gaza with family studying at UK universities.

Answering member: Robert Halfon | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Department for Education

The best way to provide protection for vulnerable people in Gaza is an end to the fighting as soon as possible. That is why the government is calling for an immediate pause to get aid in and hostages out, then progress towards a sustainable, permanent ceasefire, without a return to destruction, fighting and loss of life. The government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that we are able to respond appropriately.

Universities offer a range of dedicated support to their international students before they arrive in the UK, on arrival and during their studies. This includes both pastoral care and financial support. If a student is experiencing difficulties, they should contact the university to discuss their circumstances.

07 Mar 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 16824

Date tabled: 04 Mar 2024 | Date for answer: 07 Mar 2024 | Date answered: 07 Mar 2024

[Palestinians: Refugees](#)

Asked by: Lucas, Caroline | **Party:** Green Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to provide safe and legal entry routes for people in Gaza seeking to join family members in the UK.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Home Office

The UK Government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately.

British citizens and those with settled status in the UK, together with their foreign national dependants, may come to the UK provided that they have valid travel documents and existing permission to enter or remain in the UK; or are non-visa nationals. They must also pass appropriate security checks.

The Government allows individuals with protection status in the UK to sponsor their partner or children to stay with, or join, them here through our refugee family reunion policy, provided they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country of origin to seek protection.

There are additional safe and legal routes for people to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, work, or study. They would need to meet the requirements of the relevant Immigration Rule under which they were applying to qualify for a visa.

The Home Office has not considered establishing a separate resettlement route for Palestinians to come to the UK. Since 2015, over half a million people have been offered safe and legal routes into the UK. Our approach is considered in the round, rather than on a crisis-by-crisis basis.

UK Visas and Immigration is working closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in supporting family members of British nationals evacuated from Gaza who require a visa, signposting the necessary steps and expediting appointments at the Visa Application Centre.

06 Mar 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 15866

Date tabled: 27 Feb 2024 | Date for answer: 29 Feb 2024 | Date answered: 06 Mar 2024

[Asylum: Gaza](#)

Asked by: McLaughlin, Anne | **Party:** Scottish National Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his Department's policies on deciding asylum applications of the conflict in Gaza.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Home Office

Asylum claims made by claimants from Gaza, as is the case with all asylum claims lodged in the UK and admitted to the UK asylum system, have an individual assessment made against the background of relevant case law, policy guidance and the latest available country of origin information.

06 Feb 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 12563

Date tabled: 01 Feb 2024 | Date for answer: 06 Feb 2024 | Date answered: 06 Feb 2024

[Visas: Palestinians](#)

Asked by: Davies, Geraint | **Party:** Independent (affiliation)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a Palestinian Visa scheme based upon the Ukraine Visa scheme that allows those with family in the UK to be given safe passage.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Home Office

The UK Government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately.

We recognise that some people impacted by the events in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories may wish to join family in the UK. The Government is working with authorities across the region to facilitate the repatriation of British citizens and their family members who already hold permission to come to the UK.

There are currently no plans to introduce bespoke arrangements for people arriving from the region who do not hold permission to come to the UK.

24 Jan 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 10582

Date tabled: 19 Jan 2024 | Date for answer: 24 Jan 2024 | Date answered: 24 Jan 2024

[Refugees: Palestinians](#)

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael | **Party:** Labour · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of a Homes for Palestinians scheme similar to Homes for Ukraine.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | **Party:** Conservative | **Department:** Home Office

Since 2015, over half a million people were offered safe and legal routes into the UK. This includes over 28,600 individuals resettled to the UK under our global resettlement schemes. We continue to provide the most vulnerable refugees in need of protection a route to safety directly from regions of

conflict and instability through these schemes, which include the UK Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship and the Mandate Resettlement scheme. This represents one of the most generous resettlement offers in the UK's history.

However, the U.K. only has finite capacity. We cannot provide a safe and legal route for every conflict in the world. There are no plans to introduce bespoke arrangements for people arriving from the region, and we are not considering establishing a separate route for Palestinians to come to the UK.

Immediate family members of British citizens, and those settled in the UK, who wish to come and live in the UK and do not have a current UK visa, can apply under one of the existing family visa routes.

The UK's efforts are focussed on ensuring aid reaches those who need in [sic] most. The Prime Minister announced on Monday 23 October that the UK will provide a further £20 million of humanitarian aid for civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). This latest funding is in addition to the £10 million of aid announced by the Prime Minister last week.

23 Nov 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 852

Date tabled: 08 Nov 2023 | Date for answer: 13 Nov 2023 | Date answered: 23 Nov 2023

2.4

Committee material

[Humanitarian situation in Gaza Inquiry](#)

Publications - Reports, oral evidence transcripts, written evidence and correspondence

Corporate author: International Development Committee

3 Media

3.1 Press releases

[Call to establish safe routes for people fleeing Gaza: letter to UK Government](#)

Scottish Government

12 April 2024

[Temporary resident pathway opens for Palestinian extended family in Gaza](#)

Government of Canada

09 January 2024

3.2 Articles and blogs

[Plaid Cymru MP urges UK Government to introduce Palestinian family reunification scheme](#)

Nation

07 May 2024

[The company taking refugees out of Gaza — and ‘making millions’](#)

Sunday Times

27 April 2024

[Palestinians were refused Australian visitor visas due to concerns they would not ‘stay temporarily’](#)

Guardian

16 April 2024

[Scottish minister calls on UK to allow more Palestinians to join family here](#)

Independent

12 April 2024

[Call for Ukraine-style visa scheme for Palestinians in Gaza with family in UK](#)

Guardian

02 April 2024

[Joint Letter Calling for Urgent Gaza Family Scheme](#)

Helen Bamber Foundation

02 April 2024

['I lost hope with the Home Office': Palestinians fundraise to evacuate family in Gaza](#)

Guardian

29 March 2024

[Our Letter to Ministers regarding the cancellation of visas for Palestinians from Gaza](#)

Refugee Council of Australia

18 March 2024

['Our families are dying': outrage as program fails to bring Palestinians to Canada](#)

Guardian

13 March 2024

[MPs and peers call for Gaza visa scheme](#)

BBC

12 March 2024

[Mandatory Orders made in two Gaza Family Reunion Cases, requiring the Home Office to take decisions on entry clearance applications.](#)

Doughty Street Chambers

11 March 2024

[Gaza family win visa legal battle with Home Office](#)

BBC

10 March 2024

[Home Office refuses to set up Ukraine-style visa scheme for Palestinians](#)

Open Democracy

04 January 2024

[British-Palestinians call for visa scheme for trapped relatives](#)

BBC

15 December 2023

[US sanctions individuals implicated in West Bank attacks](#)

BBC

05 December 2023

[Government grants hundreds of temporary visas to Palestinians](#)

ABC Australia

E-petition relating to a visa scheme for Palestinians

22 November 2023

[Gaza: what is the UK doing to rescue British citizens and their family members?](#)

Free Movement

07 November 2023

[Safe passage for people impacted by the violence in Israel and Palestine](#)

Refugee Council

23 October 2023

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