

# Resilient Efforts for Lasting Peace: How the UK can Lead on Israeli-Palestinian Civil Society Peacebuilding

Written evidence submitted by Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) (IPC0009)

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## Executive Summary

The violence, loss of life, trauma, injustice and insecurity that Palestinians and Israelis have experienced since October 7th is unprecedented, with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in its worst crisis since 1948. There is an urgent need to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all hostages. But also, to launch a genuine long-term diplomatic process that tackles the root causes of this conflict, after a decade of neglect and deprioritisation. The Prime Minister’s recent pledge to [support the establishment of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace](#) (IFP) hopefully reflects this Labour Government’s clear understanding of this need.

If a renewed diplomatic process is to succeed where all its predecessors have failed, it must be very different from what has come before. It must be **broader**, taking a multilateral and internationalised approach. It must also be **deeper**, with civil society at the core of any strategy, rather than at the margins, as has been the case in every previous attempt at final status diplomacy.

This new approach has been codified by the US, UK and their major allies in the [June 2024 G7 Leaders’ Communiqué](#). Each G7 member has now pledged to “coordinate and institutionalise support for civil society peacebuilding efforts as part of a larger strategy to build the foundation necessary for a negotiated and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace.” This historic shift—endorsed by [UK parliamentarians across the political spectrum](#)—together with the Prime Minister’s announcement and commitment to host an [inaugural meeting](#), **positions this Government to emerge as a global leader on this critical issue.**

Successful conflict resolution exercises, such as those in [South Africa](#), [Colombia](#) and [Northern Ireland](#), reveal that civil society peacebuilding played a core role in each instance. In each case, it had a key impact on both the societal attitudes and political context, which constitute the oxygen that real peace processes depend upon; proved critical for societal resilience; transformed the political incentives within conflicted societies, creating constituencies – and indeed leaders – who support peace and reconciliation;

developed many of the ideas that leaders ultimately drew upon; and helped to create a counterweight to the spoilers that exist in every conflict.

The [International Fund for Ireland](#) (IFI), established 12 years before the peace agreement, built the societal and political conditions that successful diplomacy needs. The UK's chief negotiator at the time, and currently serving as the UK's National Security Adviser, **Jonathan Powell**, rightly [called](#) the IFI **“the great unsung hero” of the Good Friday Agreement**. The IFI began its work in the late 1980s, when Northern Ireland's Troubles were, within their own context, in a place that elicited similar levels of pessimism and despair to that which we have seen in Israel-Palestine in recent years. The IFI catalysed a sustained, long-term effort to build relationships and trust even as rejectionists attempted to push back against progress. When addressing the need in Israel-Palestine, framed by his experience in Northern Ireland, Jonathan Powell [added](#) that there is “a persuasive case for the UK government to support efforts already underway to establish an International Fund for Israel-Palestine to “scale up” Israeli-Palestinian civil society trust building.”

Inspired by the IFI, and pioneered by the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP), **there is a huge opportunity for the creation of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (IFP)**, an initiative bolstered by the success of the bipartisan 2020 US Middle East Partnership for Peace Act ([MEPPA](#)), which is already investing an unprecedented \$250m in peacebuilding work.

In addition to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary David Lammy and Chancellor Rachel Reeves have also [both endorsed](#) the IFP. This government - with a strong majority and five years ahead of it - could make the realm of peacebuilding its priority, and position the UK as the leading voice, convener and architect for civil society in the region, working to position this agenda at the core of a wider diplomatic process that it works to shape, alongside its closest allies.

At a time of growing conflict in the region, and widespread uncertainty and volatility in the global context, it is vital that UK policy prioritises efforts that strengthen socio-political resilience, inter-group engagement, and the values of equality, security and peace. **Our key recommendation for this government is to build on the Prime Minister's pledge, and lead in the creation of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (IFP)**. Such an institution ensures a sustainable, multilateral, and coordinated strategy for peacebuilding—one that assures efforts are not held hostage to short-term investments or shifting political priorities, especially during times of uncertainty and instability.

This multilateral body would serve to coordinate and scale civil society and conflict resolution investments at a level that would disrupt the very civic, political, and attitudinal conditions which led to the horrific violence on and since October 7th. It aims to institutionalise and coordinate support from multiple donor states via a single mechanism that can operate at the same scale as the conflict itself. The goal is to pool resources and expertise to radically scale the work of Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders, producing the ideas, movements and leaders needed to create the societal conditions required for genuine conflict resolution. ALLMEP has 160+ member NGOs who are emblematic of the sort of projects that are ready to scale if the resources are provided, as demonstrated in this evidence.

## 1. Introduction: A Broader, Deeper Peace Process

1. Since October 7, Israelis and Palestinians have seen catastrophic violence and injustice, eclipsing the already bleak precedents of recent decades. The toll is devastating, and still rising by the day. It is marked by an unfathomable loss of life, dehumanising violence, hundreds of hostages, millions of displaced persons, and the greatest humanitarian crisis this conflict has ever known, with no end yet in sight. The notion that this conflict could be managed or that the status quo was sustainable – an idea that far too many in the region and some in Whitehall increasingly subscribed to – has been exposed as a deadly fallacy.
2. All of this, along with the wider regional escalation and the international spill-over of antisemitism and islamophobia, has resulted in this conflict re-entering the top tier of foreign policy issues, despite the long list of crises elsewhere in the world. We are also seeing the shockwaves emanating from the region create serious political tremors in our own societies, dividing communities and empowering extremist voices and political charlatans who seek to profit from these divisions. **There is an urgent need to launch a diplomatic process towards ending this conflict. Yet, we must be clear-eyed about how challenging a task that now is, requiring a completely revised approach that learns lessons from the failed attempts of the past.**
3. If a renewed diplomatic process is to succeed where all its predecessors have failed, then it must be very different to what has come before. **First, it must be much broader.** The US' historic leadership on this issue must be buttressed by the creation of a more multilateral and inclusive framework, incorporating the Arab states, the EU and its members, and, of course, the UK, which could play a key role in convening and bridging differences among such a group. **And it must also be deeper.** Civil society must be put at the core of any strategy, rather than at the margins – or as an afterthought or absent altogether – as has been the case in every single previous attempt at final status diplomacy.
4. We have precedents for this type of conflict-resolution project, and they should be studied carefully by those considering the UK Government's approach to this issue.
5. There is ample evidence that demonstrates the successes of conflict resolution when civil society peacebuilding is included in peace processes; and, conversely, its failure when its role is neglected. In Sudan, for example, a [2024 report](#) highlights the disastrous effects of the UK abandoning its peacebuilding programme ahead of the outbreak of the civil war. Sarah Champion, chair of the international development committee, which investigated the Sudan pull-out, stated: "Hindsight is a wonderful luxury, but one that will not benefit the people of Sudan. The CSSF fund supported civil society and removing that took away a literal lifeline."
6. On the other hand, successful peace processes such as those in [South Africa](#), [Colombia](#) and – most notably, as it was a Labour government which secured it – [Northern Ireland](#), reveal a common denominator. While rarely receiving media attention, civil society peacebuilding played

a core role in each instance. First, it mitigated and rolled back violence and had a key impact on both the public **attitudes and the wider political context**, each providing the oxygen that real peace processes depend upon. Second, it created **deep roots** that, in each instance, proved critical for societal resilience over the long and bumpy road that conflict resolution entails. Third, over time it **transformed the political incentives** within conflicted societies, creating constituencies – and indeed leaders – who support peace and reconciliation. Fourth, it developed many of the ideas that leaders ultimately borrowed and presented as their own, having helpfully been first **established, popularised, and made less politically risky** by civil society. Finally, it helped to create a counterweight to the **spoilers** that exist in every conflict, and which have grown in strength in recent decades in Israel-Palestine and stand ready to disrupt and oppose any diplomatic process.

## 2. The Urgency for Grassroots Action

7. Toward the end of his term, the US secretary of state, [John Kerry, reflected](#) on his energetic, quixotic and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to secure an Israeli-Palestinian agreement in 2014: **“In the end, I believe the negotiations did not fail because the gaps were too wide, but because the level of trust was too low.** Both sides were concerned that any concessions would not be reciprocated and would come at too great a political cost. And the deep public scepticism only made it more difficult for them to be able to take risks.” The late Martin Indyk, Kerry’s special envoy, [similarly concluded](#): **“The difficulties we faced were far more because of the 20 years of distrust that built up than because of the core issues that divide the two sides.”**
8. The events on and since October 7 have only increased that distrust and trauma. Against this backdrop, high-level diplomacy – even if much more serious, rigorous and determined than we have seen before – has a poor chance of success. **A diplomatic process cannot succeed without a strategy that directly tackles the fear, dehumanisation and trauma that has engulfed both societies, and then builds, from the bottom-up, constituencies that can support a real diplomatic agreement.**
9. Final status negotiations may be difficult now, **but we can see that political and societal attitudes are in flux**<sup>1</sup>. They are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, as each society deals with unprecedented trauma, and, as has previously occurred after seismic events in the conflict’s history, old ideas and leaders perhaps get swept away. Once a permanent ceasefire is concluded, there will likely be a reckoning among both Israelis and Palestinians. Failed political leaders and their concepts are likely to be faced with angry and grieving populations. Some of those people may be swayed by even more hardline ideas and leaders and seduced by promises of

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<sup>1</sup> Recent polling suggests that this horrific situation may also lead to an understanding among Israelis and Palestinians that we have reached the end of a road, and that a radical change is needed. A [survey](#) conducted by the aChord Center at the Hebrew University in June 2024, found that 64% of the public in Israel agrees to a high or moderate extent that Israel should promote a political-security settlement that includes the establishment of a Palestinian state in exchange for normalisation agreements with Arab countries and recognition of the State of Israel. In the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, a June 2024 [poll](#) by the Institute for Social and Economic Progress found that ~70% of Palestinians would accept a two-state solution along the 1967 borders if serious negotiations occurred, maintaining consistent support since March.

revenge or outright victory. But – as was the case after the Yom Kippur war in 1973 and when the First Intifada came to an end in the early 1990s – **others are likely to be open to proposals that hold out the hope of actually ending this conflict.**

10. **What is already clear is that the people most forcefully promoting a vision of security, peace and equality – and the utility of diplomacy as the primary tool to achieve it – will, at least at first, overwhelmingly come from Israeli and Palestinian civil society, not from political figures in either society.** However, as we have frequently seen in other conflict-resolution paradigms, politicians may then be swayed to follow the path that civil society clears for them. It is thus vital that we bolster those civil society voices now, so that they can play a profoundly important role in the coming period. Many Israelis and Palestinians are too young to remember a real diplomatic process that addressed final status issues, or had previously been disinterested due to a belief that the status quo was sustainable. There is an urgent need to have actors– within their own societies and in their own languages– explain the gains that diplomacy can deliver, and educate about the realities (rather than the myths) that a two-state solution entails. There already exists a huge ecosystem of under-resourced organisations willing and able to do that. If scaled, they will be the ballast on the ground that steadies and strengthens any high-level diplomatic process conducted overhead. The earlier these forces are strengthened, and the greater their centrality and the level of resources they are given, the more significant their contribution will be over the months and years to come.

### 3. The Disruptive Promise of Peacebuilding

11. One factor that should engender cautious hope is the existence of a cohort of civil society peacebuilders who stand diametrically opposed to the despair, hatred and violence that has engulfed so many of their counterparts. They stand willing and ready to educate and mobilise their communities around the need for a diplomatic agreement to end this conflict, once and for all. **They are chronically underfunded, and often the victims of attacks from extremist actors and politicians. But they are also dedicated, highly innovative and are now deeply networked with one another.** It comprises individuals from both societies who intimately understand each other, work together, and are deeply invested in finding a way to deliver peace, equality and security for all. Uniquely in each society, they are simultaneously feeling the deep tragedy and trauma of “the other side”, at the same time as their own. Of course, this has created challenges and tensions. But it has also fostered levels of solidarity, empathy and partnership, and can allow them to better convey the inherent inter-dependence of both Israeli and Palestinian self-interest, as well as countering the dehumanisation and weaponisation of trauma that is so endemic in this moment. They show an alternate reality that is both possible and **could quickly be grown in size to have an impact upon the lives of many more people.**
12. This community represents the embryo of an Arab-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian partnership that is not only viable but can, and must, be scaled up exponentially as a prerequisite of any real strategy to achieve a genuine peace in the region. Perhaps most importantly: this community is very effective. Even amid these most challenging of times, the civil society peacebuilding field is still functioning, and even accelerating. Since October 7, only 5% of [ALLMEP members](#)

surveyed have suspended operations, while over 25% have increased activity, including providing emergency relief across Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel's kibbutzim, demonstrating their capacity to act - jointly - where governments have failed, and offering a powerful example of what true triple nexus (humanitarian-peace-development) programming can and should look like.

13. For example, [Ecopeace](#) successfully led a campaign to get the 3 water pipes to the Gaza Strip running again, and the resumption of fuel provision to allow for desalination and sewage treatment, while the Arava Institute and Damour for Community Development formed the "[Jumpstarting Hope in Gaza](#)" coalition to meet the need for water, sanitation, hygiene and energy in the Gaza Strip. [Standing Together](#) formed a response to extremists trying to prevent entry of aid to Gaza, succeeding in ensuring safe passage from the West Bank to Gaza of hundreds of aid trucks. They also launched a [food aid initiative](#) for Gaza, collecting over 400 trucks-worth of aid donated by tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel and Israeli Jews. [Desert Stars](#) installed 193 bomb shelters in unrecognised Bedouin villages, while [Project Rozana](#) runs a free bus system to ensure continued support for some 100,000 West Bank Palestinian patients seeking medical treatment in hospitals in Jerusalem. Since 2010 Project Rozana has never paused these operations, even during this and previous Israel/Gaza wars.
14. In July 2024, over 6,000 people gathered in Tel Aviv for the first "[Time is Now](#)" peace rally, calling for a ceasefire, a hostage deal, and a diplomatic resolution to end the conflict. Even amid war and deep trauma, Israelis and Palestinians stood together, publicly opposing the violence. What difference could it have made if these demonstrators had political backing from the international community? **How powerful would it have been if global leaders had supported these peacebuilders, risking their lives to call for the same message as governments around the world?**
15. Beyond immediate humanitarian efforts, civil society organisations are at the forefront of leading longer-term projects to shape the region's future. The [Phoenix Plan](#), for example, created by young Israelis and Palestinians, is a five-part framework for a diplomatic resolution and sustainable realisation. Other initiatives, such as [Anahnu](#)'s national-religious narrative for supporting a Two State Solution, and Combatants for Peace's nonviolent co-resistance against [violence, home demolitions, and settler aggression](#) in the West Bank, are working to influence public discourse and transform political and societal dynamics in Israel-Palestine.
16. This is a tiny sample of the hundreds of projects addressing the immediate, medium, and long-term needs for sustainable peace, recovery, and reconstruction in the region. **A more comprehensive list can be found [here](#).**
17. **These projects underscore the creativity peacebuilders bring to conflict resolution, demonstrating their capacity to disrupt existing dynamics.** They are illustrative of the comprehensive civil society strategy that can be catalysed with sufficient resources, coordination and institutionalisation as envisioned by the International Fund, and **demonstrate how there is more that civil society can offer when it comes to the immediate, medium and long-term priorities to end this war, and this conflict.**

18. Research consistently shows that peacebuilding initiatives transform the entrenched attitudes that hinder diplomacy<sup>2</sup>. **Many participants translate their new, positive attitudes into active, long-term work for peace.** Indeed, many of the most steadfast, consistent voices for peace among Israeli and Palestinian politicians are alumni or lay leaders of such programmes, including Israeli Knesset member Ayman Odeh, the former MK Stav Shaffir, and the late Dr Saeb Erekat. We know that such peacebuilding projects transform the course of an individual's life, but we have never provided anywhere near enough funding or political support to allow them to transform whole communities, or critical masses of Israeli and Palestinian society. Why not?

#### 4. We Get What We Pay For—Minimal, Sporadic Investments Fall Short

19. **While historically the UK has been a key player in investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, it has in recent years radically reduced its funding in this sector<sup>3</sup>.** This is particularly evident in the Middle East: ODA spending for CSSF programmes in MENA decreased by over 50% between 2020-21 and 2022-23<sup>4</sup>. And UK funding for civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and resolution in Palestine dropped by approximately 58.27% between 2018 and 2020, from \$11.59 million to \$4.84 million<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Studies demonstrate that alumni of peace programs—such as those by experts at [Notre Dame University](#) and [George Washington University](#)—are far more likely to engage in peace-promoting activities, with Palestinian alumni 21 times more likely to want to engage with Israelis and 53 times more likely to get involved with organisations promoting peace, and Jewish-Israeli alumni 23 times more likely to volunteer for peace efforts. A 2023 [poll](#) that surveyed alumni from various peacebuilding programmes found that graduates of such interventions were completely transformed by the experience, compared with their peers of similar demographic, ideological and socio-economic backgrounds.

<sup>3</sup> Despite government commitments and a clear global need, UK global peacebuilding spending fell by 64% from US\$553 million in 2016 to US\$199 million in 2021, a drop of over US\$350 million, according to OECD data:

Statistics derived using Query Wizard for International Development data, accessed 29 September 2023

(<https://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>) with the following filters:

Recipient(s): All Developing Countries, Total

Flow(s): ODA

Amount: Constant Prices (2021 USD millions)

Type of Aid: All Types, Total

Sector(s): Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution

Flow Type(s): Disbursements

Channels: All Channels, Total

<sup>4</sup> [The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund - Second Report of Session 2022–23](#)

<sup>5</sup> Statistics derived using Query Wizard for International Development data, accessed 29 September 2023

(<https://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>) with the following filters:

Recipient(s): West Bank and Gaza Strip

Flow(s): ODA

Amount: Constant Prices (2021 USD millions)

Type of Aid: All Types, Total

Sector(s): Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution

Flow Type(s): Disbursements

Channels: All Channels, Total

20. **And still, at a time when civil society needs support more than ever to combat the trauma, dehumanisation and hardening attitudes, the UK appears to be reducing its budgetary commitment toward civil society peacebuilding priorities:** The [Autumn 2024 budget](#) revealed a £1.6bn cut to the UK's aid budget, with ODA down from 0.58% of GNI in 23-24 to 0.5% for 24-25 and 25-26. Given the government's adherence to the previous government's restrictive fiscal rules, a return to the 0.7% target within this Parliament seems very unlikely. For far too long, the UK and other major donor states have focused their spending on the symptoms of the conflict, rather than addressing its root causes. While huge amounts of emergency aid are urgently essential to alleviate the current suffering, it must be accompanied by investments that reduce and eventually eliminate the need for such aid in the future. Without (re)building the civil infrastructure, no amount of financial support will stop buildings from being felled once again. By leading investments in peacebuilding — which require relatively modest funding — the UK has an opportunity to break the cycle of short-term, ineffective investments and make a meaningful impact on long-term, sustainable development.
21. Over half of peacebuilding organisations operate on budgets under £400,000, with small teams, and lack of funding is their primary obstacle - not opposition to their work, the depth of the political challenge, or polarisation within the communities where they work<sup>6</sup>. In the long list of problems to be addressed in the region, adequate resourcing for peacebuilders is surely one of the easiest for us to solve.
22. International funding for Israeli-Palestinian peace is about \$1.50 annually per person, compared to the \$44 per person annually that the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) achieved through \$2.4 billion in investments over 30 years<sup>7</sup>. It is no wonder one of these 'intractable' conflicts was resolved. Equally notable is that Israeli-Palestinian civil society today is far stronger and more strategic than Northern Irish civil society was in the late 1980s, when the IFI began its investments.

## **5. Key Recommendation to the UK: Lead of the Creation of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace to Assure the Resilience of Efforts for Peace**

23. A sustainable peacebuilding effort will likely not succeed if it is constantly held hostage to short-term investments and policy agendas. It requires constructing a durable institution with a long-term view, field-wide strategy, and the pooling of resources, legitimacy and insights from a

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<sup>6</sup> [The State of Cross-Border Peacebuilding Efforts](#) by Amal-Tikva (2020). This deep dive into the challenges of Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding discovered that 91% of organisations were unable to reach intended organisational benchmarks with lack of funding cited as the overwhelming impediment and concern for most NGOs working to achieve peace.

<sup>7</sup> [The International Fund for Ireland: A Practical Model for Effective Peace-Building](#) (2017)



coalition of donors. This approach creates efficiencies, leverages opportunities, and fosters strategic partnerships that are simply unattainable within the current framework of diffused and uncoordinated donor entities.

24. [MEPPA](#), the bipartisan Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, was passed after a decade of US advocacy around the concept of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace<sup>8</sup>. The policy shift at the [G7 Leaders' Summit](#) in June 2024, where G7 members pledged to "coordinate and institutionalize" support for civil society peacebuilding efforts is indicative of a growing understanding of the need for such an approach in other key capitals too. **The utility and urgency of bringing donor states together - to pool resources, legitimacy and expertise - with a real diplomatic process for ending this conflict – has surely never been greater. Yet a global leader for this priority has yet to emerge.**
25. There is now a real opportunity for the UK to lead their G7 partners, and others, in this effort, transforming realities on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians.
26. The UK played a pivotal role in the IFI, with a Labour government harnessing the conditions it created to reach a historic settlement in 1998, and has continuously stated its commitment to doing the same for Israel-Palestine. Leading the way, the UK was the first country to officially endorse the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace in May 2018, long before the MEPPA legislation had been enacted in the US. Since being introduced in parliament, the strong cross-party support the fund attracts has been shown time and again<sup>9</sup>, and has been affirmed by leading experts directly to the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC)<sup>10</sup>. **Seldom has an idea had so much rhetorical support, yet so little concrete evidence of action.** It is worth asking what might be different today had the previous government immediately followed through six years ago, when it endorsed this idea, and set about building such a fund. Yet six years – and seven foreign

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<sup>8</sup> Inspired by the International Fund for Ireland, and pioneered by ALLMEP as part of the project to create an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, US Congress enacted [MEPPA](#) (Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act), the \$250m bipartisan law that provides unprecedented levels of resources that are creating an environment conducive to peacemaking.

<sup>9</sup> During a 2020 [parliamentary debate](#), every participating MP, regardless of party affiliation, endorsed the concept. Ahead of the UK hosting the G7 in 2021, [65 parliamentarians](#) urged the then foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, to establish the International Fund. And in December 2022, then Prime Minister [Rishi Sunak](#) restated his government's support for the idea. In 2023, we saw this same multi-party support during a [House of Lords debate](#) when many peers called for its establishment. And in 2024, as candidates campaigned across the country, [parliamentarians from across the political spectrum](#) made it their priority to call for the G7 Leaders to centre civil society in their commitment to lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace. The only two British MPs with parents from Israel and Palestine, [Layla Moran](#) and [Alex Sobel](#), are staunch supporters, and MPs and Lords from across the political spectrum, including [Stephen Crabb and Steve McCabe](#), [Catherine McKinnell](#), [Diana Johnson](#), and [Lord Alderdice](#), have consistently voice their support for it in the media.

<sup>10</sup> Former [Middle East minister Alistair Burt](#)—widely regarded as one of the most effective holders of that office in recent memory and a vocal advocate for an International Fund since his endorsement on the floor of the House of Commons in 2018—highlighted its utility during a recent oral evidence session for the FAC. Similarly, [Gershon Baskin](#), a renowned Israel-Palestine expert and experienced hostage negotiator, emphasised the need in another session of the Committee.

secretaries – later, it is never too late for this new Labour government to do the right thing, contrasting itself from its predecessors in actions, not just words.

27. **Prime Minister Keir Starmer's December 2024 pledge to support its establishment, along with his commitment for the Foreign Secretary to convene an inaugural meeting in London to support civil society in the region, demonstrates a clear, and early emphasis of this priority. Now, it is critical to ensure that, unlike the previous government, this leadership delivers on its promises, prioritising and investing in meaningful conflict resolution efforts that drive real change, rather than perpetuating the status quo.**
28. The Foreign Secretary should quickly announce the date for the inaugural meeting in London, which would serve as the launchpad for establishing the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. The founding of the institution could then take place at the [G7 Leaders' Summit in June 2024](#), and rooted in an existing multilateral forum, in line with Labour's commitment to working with allies to build and strengthen multilateral institutions.
29. The Foreign Secretary should also make clear that this work can take on much greater energy and effectiveness if it is fused to a real diplomatic process – absent for so many years – **that is clear and unambiguous in its goal of an Israeli-Palestinian final status agreement that ends the occupation and delivers peace, security, and self-determination to both peoples.** The Foreign Secretary can take on the unique opportunity to lead this effort from its foundation, drawing upon Labour's legacy of the Good Friday Agreement, the UK's expertise in the Middle East, as well as its diplomatic strengths as a key convener, longstanding architect of innovative multilateral initiatives, and as a bridge both across the Atlantic, and from the Western Hemisphere to the Arab world.

## 6. Conclusion

30. **Talk of conflict resolution without a concurrent strategy that catalyses, scales up and empowers these key actors increasingly looks unserious. After 30 years of failed diplomacy and broken promises – and the greatest tragedy in the history of this conflict – we owe Israelis and Palestinians a strategy that finally learns this lesson.**
31. With Labour now in government, there is an opportunity to take a leading role in bringing together allies to establish the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, a mechanism aimed at effectively pooling and strategically coordinating the combined strengths, resources, and legitimacy of a collaborative effort involving members of the G7, EU, and the Arab League.
32. The horrific violence and dehumanisation between Israelis and Palestinians is reverberating within Britain's Jewish and Muslim communities, **fomenting antisemitism and Islamophobia.** Spearheading this strategy – one which supports civil society, disrupts hate and dehumanisation, and establishes the groundwork instead for a widespread Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Jewish partnership – holds the potential to reshape the discourse in the UK, too. It can prompt a

fundamental shift *here*, when Israelis and Palestinians assert their commitment to peace over hatred *over there*. Supporting the work of the peacebuilding community in Israel-Palestine can ripple out into our own streets, giving those concerned with events in the region a joint movement for Israeli-Palestinian peace, security and equality with which they can show solidarity, traversing ethnic and religious lines. All of this is, of course, very much in line with Labour's values and its commitment to drawing communities together rather than pushing them apart.

33. As the UK considers a strategy to assure the resilience of efforts to bring about a lasting peace, it is imperative that it takes a fresh approach and a long-term view. **We must learn the lessons from past diplomatic failures which neglected bottom-up dynamics and multilateral engagement.** And we must examine closely the examples we have of more successful conflict resolution exercises elsewhere in the world, and finally apply those lessons in the Middle East.
  
34. **But it is also vital that Labour's own values inform that rethink. Equality, justice, dignity, multilateralism and internationalism, and the empowerment of communities rather than elites;** these are bedrock ideals that characterise every Labour government since Clement Attlee's. The last time a Labour government came to power following a prolonged period of Conservative rule, they brought these values to bear and, within 12 months, secured the Good Friday Agreement. Nobody is suggesting that conditions are ripe for as rapid a breakthrough in Israel-Palestine. But there is nonetheless an enormous opportunity for this new UK government to bring those same values – and that same sense of purpose and ambition – to its approach to this issue. With it, a Labour government can create a new, legacy-setting approach to an issue in need of new ideas, for the benefit of millions of Israelis and Palestinians emerging from the most traumatic period in their tortured and intertwined histories.

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[ALLMEP](#) (Alliance for Middle East Peace) is the **largest network of Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders, uniting over 160 organisations to advance conflict resolution.** With offices in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, London, DC, Paris, Berlin, and New York, ALLMEP facilitates cross-organisational collaboration, strengthening the Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding field as a diverse but united whole, and serves as the prime interlocutor between Israeli-Palestinian civil society peacebuilding and global governments, advocating for civil society's central role in diplomacy around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. ALLMEP played a pivotal role in securing the \$250 million U.S. legislation, [MEPPA](#), which funds initiatives supporting peacebuilding and Palestinian economic development and partnerships. It is also the driving force behind the idea of an [International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace](#) (modelled on the [International Fund for Ireland](#)), which has gained the endorsement of leaders like Keir Starmer, David Lammy, and Rachel Reeves. Additionally, ALLMEP's advocacy has influenced a recent [policy shift by the G7 leaders](#) to integrate peacebuilding into their broader diplomatic strategies. **ALLMEP's goal is to strengthen multilateral coordination and ensure that civil society peacebuilding in Israel-Palestine—which has too often been overlooked—is recognized as essential to any sustainable resolution.**

*19<sup>th</sup> December 2024*