

Evidence Submission to the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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Summary

This submission, presented by an independent journalist with two decades of experience covering Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, addresses the UK's role in facilitating peace, critiques existing policies, and provides recommendations for fostering long-term stability. It emphasises pragmatic solutions like supporting the Abraham Accords, the need for a more realistic approach to Palestinian statehood, and the importance of countering extremism domestically and internationally. Key issues addressed include the corruption of UNRWA, indoctrination in Palestinian education, biased media narratives, and the necessity of holding Palestinian leadership accountable to basic standards for state recognition.

Introduction

1. Background and Expertise

As an independent journalist, I have reported extensively on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. My insights are informed by frequent visits to the region and engagement with sources ranging from civilians to officials, ensuring an informed, independent perspective.

2. Purpose of Submission

This submission provides actionable recommendations for UK engagement, critiques past and current policies, and highlights key areas that must be addressed to achieve both immediate conflict resolution and long-term stability.

1. The Construction of the Palestinian Narrative

The Problem with the Current Narrative

3. The Palestinian national movement has historically constructed a narrative that fundamentally opposes the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. While this narrative has been softened in some forums for international audiences, official Palestinian rhetoric, education, and policies continue to glorify violence and reject coexistence. This should be acknowledged by the UK if it is to be changed.
4. Statements and actions by Palestinian leaders often contradict the ideals of peaceful resolution and state-building. Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly emphasised the “right of return” for Palestinian refugees, a demand that would effectively erase Israel’s Jewish majority. Similarly, Hamas openly calls for the destruction of Israel. These positions undermine the prospect of peace.
(See: [MEMRI - Abbas on Right of Return](#))
(See: [Hamas Charter - Call for Israel’s Destruction](#))

Recognition Must Be Conditional

5. Recognition of statehood must be contingent on meeting clear, objective standards. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) outlines four essential criteria for statehood:
 - **A Permanent Population:** The Palestinian population is divided and ruled by two competing factions, Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, with no unified governance. The UNWRA defined ‘refugee’ population is ever expanding and irregularly defined.
 - **A Defined Territory:** Borders remain disputed, and no Palestinian entity exercises uncontested sovereignty over a defined area.
 - **A Government:** Palestinian governance is characterised by corruption, lack of accountability, and division between the PA and Hamas.
 - **The Capacity to Enter into Relations with Other States:** Palestinian leadership has repeatedly failed to engage constructively in diplomacy and frequently uses international forums to delegitimise Israel rather than promote their own statehood constructively.

(See: [Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States](#))

6. The Palestinian leadership currently fails to meet these criteria and has shown no genuine intention to reform. Statehood must not be granted as a symbolic gesture or political maneuver but as a recognition of tangible progress in governance, accountability, and commitment to peace. Premature recognition also sends a clear negative signal to Israel, indicating its valid security concerns are not shared by the UK.

Recommendations

7. The UK must take a principled stance, recognizing that Palestinian statehood cannot be acknowledged until the leadership demonstrates:
 - A clear and unconditional renunciation of violence and terrorism.

- The removal of anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric from official education and public discourse.
 - Commitment to secure governance and accountability.
 - Evidence of stable institutions capable of managing a functioning state.
8. Recognising a Palestinian state under current conditions would reward dysfunction and rejectionism. It would also set a dangerous precedent, undermining international norms on state recognition. The UK must prioritise accountability and reform over symbolic gestures.
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2. The Role of the UK in Supporting a Ceasefire

9. Conditions for a Sustainable Ceasefire

Any ceasefire must totally and permanently neutralise Hamas's capacity for violence while addressing Israel's security concerns. The UK must work with partners to:

- Ensure the unconditional release of hostages.
- Support border security measures to prevent the rearmament of Hamas.
- Assist in dismantling smuggling networks and tunnels used for weapons trafficking.
- Acknowledge previous international guarantees of peace-keeping in the region, and accept Israel's insistence that it must maintain freedom to ensure its own security as and when it needs to.

10. Limitations of Current Calls

Vague calls for a ceasefire are counterproductive and fail to consider the realities of the conflict. The UK's approach must be rooted in practical measures that address the root causes of instability.

3. Palestinian Indoctrination and Education

11. Propaganda in Education

Palestinian curricula glorify terrorism, promote antisemitism, and reject coexistence. This indoctrination ensures that future generations remain entrenched in conflict.

(See: [*IMPACT-se - Palestinian School Curriculum Analysis*](#))

12. Recommendations

- UK aid to the Palestinian Authority must be conditional on the removal of hate-filled content from educational materials.
 - The UK must pressure Palestinian leadership to align education policies with principles of peace and coexistence.
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4. Corruption and Bias in UNRWA

13. Corruption and Ties to Hamas

UNRWA has been repeatedly implicated in facilitating extremism, with its facilities used for storing weapons and launching attacks. Numerous UNWRA employees were active in carrying out the atrocities of 7th October and UNWRA was complicit in the acts of terrorism that day. This undermines its humanitarian mission and perpetuates conflict.

(See: [Times of Israel - UNRWA and Hamas](#) and [The UNRWA-Hamas Linkage](#))

14. UNRWA perpetuates and increases the problem rather than provides a solution, through its definition of Palestinian refugee status being hereditary. Unlike all other refugee groups, Palestinians pass their refugee status down indefinitely to all future generations, growing the refugee population, even when they are settled in other states. This is a policy actively harming any prospect of resolution and must be ended.

(See: [UNRWA: an obstacle to peace](#))

15. Recommendations

- The UK should cease funding UNRWA and advocate for its replacement with a neutral, accountable agency focused on genuine humanitarian relief.
- The UK must oppose structural biases against Israel at the UN and work to promote fair, balanced resolutions, voting accordingly.

5. Media Bias and Its Impact

16. Role of the Media

UK media, particularly the BBC, has perpetuated biased narratives, oversimplifying the conflict and presenting it in binary and often completely erroneous terms. This distortion fuels global antisemitism, entrenches Palestinian rejectionism, and undermines informed discourse.

17. BBC Arabic

BBC Arabic frequently spreads a totally different message with different values to BBC English, with anti-Israel and sometimes anti-Jewish content and language. This has a detrimental effect in Arabic speaking groups in the UK and internationally and is directly linked to the UK's state broadcaster which could instead be an enormous tool for good in spreading true British values and news standards

18. Global Impact

Given the BBC's global reach, its biased reporting has far-reaching consequences, spreading misinformation that exacerbates hostility and undermines the prospect of peace.

(See: [The Telegraph - BBC Coverage Criticism](#) and [BBC Arabic's repeated failures](#))

19. Recommendations

- Establish oversight mechanisms to ensure accurate reporting particularly at the BBC and also at Ofcom to ensure lack of bias, inaccuracies and swift resolution of contraventions.
 - Promote media literacy initiatives to counter the spread of misinformation particularly among younger people.
 - BBC Arabic must be monitored and changed to fulfil its purpose of projecting British values and soft power internationally, rather than spreading anti-Israel propaganda.
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Domestic Extremism and Antisemitism

15. Policing Protests and Hate Speech

Demonstrations ostensibly in support of Palestinians often serve as a thinly veiled pretext for antisemitism. Chants like "From the river to the sea" and overt threats against Jews must be policed rigorously. Failure to address this emboldens extremists and intimidates Jewish communities.

16. Preachers of Hate

Mosques where imams preach violence and hatred against Jews must be investigated and prosecuted. The UK has effectively targeted far-right extremism but has failed to apply the same rigor to Islamist hate speech.

(See: [Talk TV - Preachers of Hate Report](#))

(See: [Telegraph - Dossier reveals hate-filled rants by preachers in Britain's mosques](#))

(See: [Habibi - Islamist Extremism Documentation](#))

17. Consequences of Inaction

Incidents like the assassination of David Amess MP and the firebombing of Mike Freer's office demonstrate the deadly consequences of unchecked extremism. Domestic attacks including the Manchester Arena bombing and others in the UK are the result of Islamic terrorism fuelled by hate preachers acting freely here.

(See: [BBC - David Amess Murder Trial](#))

(See: [BBC News - Mike Freer Firebomb Attack](#))

18. Recommendations

- The UK must take a zero-tolerance approach to hate speech and extremist rhetoric, ensuring that laws against incitement are enforced uniformly.
 - Public messaging and police and judicial action must make clear that antisemitism, even when disguised as criticism of Israel, will not be tolerated.
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6. Pragmatic Solutions for Regional Stability

19. **Complexity of the Conflict**

Israel faces an existential threat from Hamas, supported by a network of Islamist extremists led by Iran. There can be no effort towards peaceful coexistence when the other parties remain committed to Israel's destruction.

20. **Abraham Accords as a Model**

The Abraham Accords represent a pragmatic approach to regional diplomacy, aligning mutual interests and bypassing intransigent actors. The UK should actively support and build upon this framework which engages regional states willing to accept a Middle East with a Jewish state in it, actively building alliances and relations to fully collaborate with Israel. With Donald Trump's second term starting in January, there will once again be a sense of optimism for the continuation of the Abraham Accords agenda, and the UK should strongly support America and Israel's efforts in this direction.

21. **Rejecting Empty Rhetoric**

The UK must abandon outdated platitudes like simply 'calling for a two-state solution', as these fail to reflect the realities of Palestinian rejectionism and extremism. Instead, it should adopt a realpolitik approach, focusing on balancing power and fostering stability.

7. Hostages: A Standalone Humanitarian Crisis

22. **The Hostage Crisis**

The taking of hostages by Palestinian terrorists on 7th October is against international law. Their brutal treatment underscores the inhumanity of Hamas. The UK must prioritise their release as a standalone humanitarian issue, unlinked to broader negotiations.

23. **Government Response**

The Foreign Secretary's removal of his yellow ribbon pin in solidarity with hostages when he met PAlestinian representative in the region reflects a lack of seriousness in addressing this crisis. Even this small symbolic gesture signalled a lack of moral clarity and determination.

24. **International Red Cross**

The IRC has not made a single visit to the hostages, nor provided them with any food, medicine or aid. Despite their independence and refusal to condemn the terrorists, the body has not managed to serve its intended purpose and provide for the wellbeing of the hostages. The body should be castigated for its failure, and be compelled to do more.

25. **Recommendations**

- All the UK's interactions with the Palestinians and their allies and backers must emphasise the hostage situation as a distinct and absolute issue which must be resolved with no reward to the terrorists. Anything else encourages future hostage taking.
- All UK diplomatic and other pressure must be applied to the Palestinians and their allies (e.g. Qatar, Tukey, Iran) to release the hostages unconditionally, not to Israel in order to force it to make unthinkable concessions which endanger its security.

- The UK should pressure and work with the IRC to rectify the lack of aid and care provided to the hostages immediately.
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Conclusion

24. A Call for Realism and Resolve

The UK's engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be grounded in realism, acknowledging the complexities of the conflict and the nature of the actors involved.

25. Supporting Stability and Justice

By addressing issues like media bias, extremist indoctrination, and domestic antisemitism, the UK can foster informed dialogue and strengthen its role as a principled ally in the pursuit of peace, building trust in Israel so that the UK is more relevant and able to help find a real solution.

26. Acting Decisively

The time for vague policies is over. The UK must take clear, concrete actions that reflect its commitment to justice, stability, and the defense of democratic values, and must be clearer, more determined and more outspoken in its support of Israel and its rejection and condemnation of Islamic terrorism and Palestinian rejectionism and violence.

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