

*Written Evidence Submitted by Labour Friends of Israel to Foreign Affairs Select Committee
Inquiry:
The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (IPC0021)*

LABOUR FRIENDS OF ISRAEL (LFI)

1. **Established in 1957, LFI supports a negotiated two-state solution for two peoples;** with Israel safe, secure and recognised within its borders living alongside a viable, democratic and independent Palestinian state.
2. **This submission draws on a recent policy publications LFI has produced, including:**
 - “After the War: Marginalising the Enemies of Peace”, by Michael Rubin (December 2024).
 - “Israel, Palestine and a Two-State Solution: A Guide To The Conflict” (July 2024).
 - “Towards Two States: The Path to a Palestinian State”, by Dr. Toby Greene (May 2024).
 - “Civil Society and a New Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: An Agenda for a Labour Government”, by John Lyndon (May 2024).

SUMMARY

3. **Hamas’ 7 October attack on Israel brought devastating suffering: the cold-blooded murder of over 1,200 Israeli men, women and children, the seizure of 250 hostages (96 of whom remain in Gaza), and an ensuing conflict which has seen a humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the loss of many innocent Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese lives. The region has also been transformed in the wake of the war triggered by Hamas, with the collective defence by Israel and its allies creating unprecedented opportunities for a regional settlement that addresses both Israeli security and Palestinian national rights.**
4. **The two-state solution is the only means by which to guarantee Israel’s security and to preserve its precious identity as a Jewish and democratic state, as well as to satisfy the legitimate demand of the Palestinian people for self-determination and national sovereignty.**
5. **The establishment of a Palestinian state is a necessary but not sufficient for long-term conflict resolution.** Robust security arrangements are also required. When Israel withdrew from South Lebanon in 2000 and the Gaza Strip in 2005, those territories were taken over by Iranian-backed armed groups that used them as bases to attack Israel.
6. **This has weakened the case for territorial concessions and a two-state solution in Israel** and politically strengthened those on the Israeli right who are ideologically opposed to a Palestinian state.
7. **However, surveys show a relative majority of Israelis would be willing to accept a pathway to a Palestinian state if it was linked to a regional agreement** including a US-led regional defence pact and normalisation with Saudi Arabia, a position advocated by opposition leaders including Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid and the leader of The Democrats, Yair Golan.
8. **Moreover, the severe blows dealt to the Iranian-led “axis of resistance” by Israel create new opportunities.** The damage inflicted on Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran directly, as well as the collapse of the Iranian-backed Assad regime in Syria, create an opportunity for a new Palestinian-led administration in the Gaza Strip, the revitalisation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and progress on Arab-Israeli normalisation.

9. **President-elect Trump would like to build on the past success of the Abraham Accords** through expanding normalisation to include Saudi Arabia and other Arab and Muslim-majority countries.
10. **The immediate priority must be to secure a ceasefire** that brings the release of hostages (including British national Emily Damari and eight others with British family) and enables the Gaza Strip to receive the scale of humanitarian aid it urgently needs.
11. **Looking beyond this immediate goal, the UK government should:**
 - **Build a consensus on a regional framework for peace** between the new US administration, European partners, and Arab states. The goals must be to marginalise the Iranian-led enemies of peace in the region, reaffirm the two-state framework (that was endorsed in the deeply flawed Trump 2020 peace plan), and strengthen the case for pragmatism and diplomacy in Israel. To this end the UK government should underline its commitment to the normalisation process by appointing a special envoy for the Middle East with the status of an ambassador and a remit to work on the expansion of the Abraham Accords;
 - **Work with allies to continue building pressure on Iran** to stop its advance towards nuclear weapons capability, and stop its military support to regional proxies;
 - **Work with our allies in Europe and the region to promote immediate, practical steps to breathe new life into the PA.** Core to UK efforts to support Palestinian statehood must be a new partnership agreement with the PA. This should include leading a drive by donors to demand that PA schools stop the promotion of antisemitism and “martyrdom” and its practice of paying salaries to convicted terrorists.
 - **Work with our international partners to convene a stabilisation and reconstruction summit for Gaza,** to envisage how international actors can help facilitate a transition to an interim governing authority led by Palestinians with international support and begin reconstruction.
 - **Work with like-minded states on a fundamental review of the mandate, structure and governance of UNRWA,** with the goal of ultimately transferring its functions in the Gaza Strip and West Bank to the PA or other agencies.
 - **Build the civic society foundations for a future peace process** by working to establish an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. As a first step, the government should deliver as soon as possible on the commitment made by the Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, at the LFI annual lunch on 2 December to convene an inaugural meeting in the UK in 2025 to support civil society in the region.
 - **Carefully use the diplomatic leverage associated with irreversible diplomatic steps** – e.g. recognition of a Palestinian state – in the service of long-term objectives. Since recognition alone will have little impact on the ground, it should be viewed as a means to an end, not an end in itself. In deploying symbolic diplomatic moves the UK should therefore act in coordination with allies and in ways and moments that ensure such steps are used effectively to advance intended goals.

SECURING A CEASEFIRE

12. **The immediate priority must be to secure a ceasefire** that brings the release of hostages (including British national Emily Damari and eight others with British family) and enables the civilians of Gaza to receive the scale of humanitarian aid they urgently need.

13. **Ceasefire negotiations have failed over many months, with various sticking points.** Netanyahu has been accused inside Israel of avoiding an agreement to ensure the stability of his governing coalition.
14. **However, the US administration has repeatedly noted that, despite the massive suffering and destruction in the Gaza Strip, Hamas has avoided a deal.** Most recently, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told Israeli Channel 13 News: “We have seen Hamas repeatedly, time and again, when the opportunity was there to do something, not be prepared to step up and do it.”¹
15. **Pressure is increasing on Hamas because of Israel’s military successes against them and their allies Hezbollah and Iran, and the fall of Assad.** Moreover, Trump has made clear his desire to see the war end and the hostages return even before he enters office, which may help increase the pressure on all sides to get to at least an initial or partial agreement.
16. **The UK’s direct influence is limited, but, working with our allies, Britain can maximise pressure on Hamas and reinforce its increasing sense of isolation.** This includes through maintaining firm support for Israel in its regional conflict with the Iranian-led “axis of resistance” and increasing pressure on Hamas via its other regional supporters Qatar and Turkey. A show of greater flexibility on the part of Hamas will increase the already considerable domestic pressure on Netanyahu and his government to secure an agreement to return the hostages.

THE CHALLENGES FOR DIPLOMACY BEYOND A CEASEFIRE, AND WHAT THE UK CAN DO

17. **The two-state solution is the only means by which to guarantee Israel’s security and to preserve its precious identity as a Jewish and democratic state, as well as to satisfy the legitimate demand of the Palestinian people for self-determination and national sovereignty. It is also the only solution which has the potential to command popular support among both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, as well as in the international community.** On three occasions since 2000, Israel has proposed or accepted comprehensive frameworks for resolving the conflict based on two states for two peoples but found Palestinian leaders unwilling or unable to accept them.² Nonetheless, despite the frustrations of past failures and the damage done by the recent conflict, this remains the only approach that can secure the sufficient legitimacy from Israelis, Palestinians, and key Arab partners needed for long-term stability.
18. **However, even after a ceasefire and the start of the reconstruction process in the Gaza Strip, it will take considerable time to establish the conditions to bring about a Palestinian state.** No Israeli or PA leadership will be able to make the compromises necessary for a comprehensive conflict-ending agreement in the near future.
19. **The PA is weak, corrupt, and distrusted** by Palestinians, Israelis and western and Arab donor countries.
20. **The argument of the Israeli right that the establishment of a Palestinian state would be a reward for terrorism and incompatible with Israeli security,** exposing the country to more Iranian-backed threats on its borders, is especially persuasive for Israelis after the

¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/sullivan-hamas-has-refused-to-provide-names-of-hostages-its-holding/

² The Clinton parameters in 2000; the Olmert proposal of 2008, and the framework developed by John Kerry in 2014.

trauma of 7 October. Recent experiences in Southern Lebanon and Gaza have left Israelis believing that giving up land does not bring peace but only sets the stage for further conflict.

21. **A two-state solution cannot be brought about by international declarations or acts of recognition by individual states.** Israelis perceive their very survival in the region to be at stake, having been attacked since 7 October 2023 from the territory of Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Iran. Those Israelis who believe a two-state solution is necessary to maintain Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state must be able to make the case domestically that it also strengthens Israel's security.
22. **In this context, there is much the UK can do to help build the framework for conflict-resolution in Israel and Palestine, and at the regional level.** This submission focuses on three main dimensions: developing a regional context for a two-state solution; reforming the PA; and building civil society constituencies for peace.

Regional level: Supporting normalisation and a new security framework

23. **Developing a regional framework for peace should be a key focal point for the UK and its partners.** The UK's focus should be on building a consensus on a regional framework for peace between the US, European partners, and Arab states. The goals should include marginalising the Iranian-led enemies of peace in the region, reaffirming the two-state framework, and strengthening the case for pragmatism and diplomacy in Israel by envisioning the benefits of a regional agreement.
24. **Support among Israelis and Palestinians for a two-state solution is stronger when framed in a regional context.** When asked to choose between a regional war, involving Israel, the PA, Lebanon, Yemen and possibly Iran, or a regional peace deal that includes a two-state solution and Arab-Israeli normalisation, 65 percent of Palestinians and 62 percent of Israelis chose peace, according to 2024 polling.³
25. **The events of 7 October have had a searing impact on Israelis, but most want to see an end to the war, the return of the hostages, and a diplomatic path forward.** They do not support the aspirations of hardliners within the governing coalition to annex parts of the West Bank or Gaza Strip. More Israelis support than oppose a package deal that includes normalisation with Saudi Arabia, the establishment of a demilitarised Palestinian state that is not controlled by Hamas, and an American-led regional defence alliance.⁴ Netanyahu's unwillingness to articulate a diplomatic way forward was a key point of contention with centrist opposition leader Benny Gantz, who joined the government on an emergency basis but then quit in June 2024, and Yoav Galant, who was fired as defence minister in November 2024.
26. **Saudi Arabia has remained open to normalising relations with Israel,** following the example set by the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco in 2020, but has hardened its demand that there be a credible pathway to a Palestinian state. Riyadh hosted the first meeting of the Global Alliance for Implementation of the Two-State Solution in October.
27. **Despite the crisis engulfing the region following the 7 October attacks, the Abraham Accords have endured.** The UAE has played a significant role in providing humanitarian aid to Gaza and could be a major contributor to reconstruction alongside Saudi Arabia. Hamas launched the 7 October attacks to derail the gathering momentum to a US-brokered agreement between Israel and the Saudis. Iran and allies of the regime will remain determined to stop this process. However, Israel's achievements in dramatically degrading

³ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/989>

⁴ <https://mitvim.org.il/en/the-israeli-foreign-policy-index-of-2024/>

Hamas and Hezbollah, and exposing the vulnerability of Iran, strengthen the opportunity to advance it, nonetheless.

28. **Trump is keen to build on the success of the Abraham Accords, which were negotiated during his first term, through expanding normalisation** to include Saudi Arabia and other Arab and Muslim-majority countries. In his first-term, Trump showered the Netanyahu government with diplomatic gifts, and shattered US relations with the PA. But the administration also launched what he touted as a “realistic two-state solution” which envisaged a Palestinian state on 70 percent of the West Bank plus Gaza.⁵ In reality, it was – for justifiable reasons – utterly unacceptable to the Palestinians, although it did mark a step forward from Trump’s previous flirtation with abandoning the US’ long-standing commitment to a two-state solution. He also blocked the Israeli right’s plans for annexing large swathes of the West Bank. Netanyahu was persuaded to shelve unilateral annexation in return for the Abraham Accords breakthrough. There are a range of positions within Trump’s incoming administration, including those supportive of annexation. However, Trump’s desire to see the war ended and secure a major diplomatic achievement could position his administration in support of Israeli concessions to Saudi demands on Palestinian statehood, putting pressure on Netanyahu’s coalition, and blocking moves towards annexation. Trump’s hawkish rhetoric on Iran may also increase deterrence against Tehran and its proxies, building on Israel’s military successes against Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and Iran, and the fall of Assad.
29. **Framing a pathway to a reformed, PA-led Palestinian state as a part of a regional pact to contain the Iranian axis and exclude Hamas and other threats from the Palestinian territories, will help pragmatic Israeli leaders rebuild support to a two-state framework.** The more concrete and credible the prospects of regional cooperation, the more centrist Israeli opposition leaders can position their rivals in the coalition as the barriers to a better and more secure future.
30. **In November 2024, Israeli opposition leader and former prime minister Yair Lapid published a diplomatic plan linking a two-state solution to regional normalisation.** In his proposal, a Gaza ceasefire would enable an international force to be stationed in Gaza that could include the UAE, Egypt, Morocco and the civilian arm of the PA. This would be followed by a regional conference that would agree: a multinational reconstruction plan for Gaza including Arab and European countries and the US; a coalition to counter Iranian threats; advancing economic and diplomatic normalisation, including with Saudi Arabia; and a joint commitment to “create the conditions for a future separation between Israelis and the Palestinians, according to the two-state principle, subject to a significant reform of the Palestinian Authority and the preservation of Israel's security interests.”⁶
31. **Yair Golan, former IDF Deputy Chief of Staff and leader of The Democrats, has made similar proposals,** calling for “progress with the Palestinians [that] will enable normalisation with Saudi Arabia, Israel’s integration into the region, and the formalisation of an anti-Iran coalition.”⁷
32. **Normalisation between Israel and Saudi Arabia would open immense economic and development potential not only for Israel, the Palestinians and for Sunni Arab states, but for Europe and Asia.** At the G20 summit in India in September 2023, a memorandum

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/world/middleeast/peace-plan.html>

⁶ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-presents-wide-ranging-peace-initiative-starting-with-truces-in-gaza-and-lebanon/>

⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-08-26/ty-article-opinion/.premium/divide-the-land-separate-from-the-palestinians-what-israel-should-do-after-gaza/00000191-8e0c-d7f9-a5bd-be1d593c0000>

of understanding to create the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor was signed between Saudi Arabia, the EU, India, UAE, France, Germany, Italy and the US (the UK was not a signatory). The corridor would create transformational new energy, trade and communications routes from Asia to Europe. It envisages tying together maritime routes from India to the UAE; overland rail between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel; and maritime routes from Israel's Haifa Port to Europe via Greece. The plan also includes laying electricity and digital lines, as well as a pipe for exporting clean hydrogen, produced using solar fields in the Arabian Peninsula. EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen described it as "the most ambitious project of our generation".

33. **Given the UK's deep strategic, economic and historic ties to India, the Gulf, Israel and Europe, and its active role in confronting Iranian threats, it should be part of this initiative.** In particular, the UK government should underline its commitment to the normalisation process by fulfilling Labour's pledge – made by Foreign Secretary Lammy at the 2023 LFI annual lunch – to appoint a special envoy for the Middle East. That envoy should have the status of an ambassador and be tasked with encouraging additional countries to normalise relations with Israel and to ensure UK economic and cultural sectors have access to the opportunities created by emerging regional platforms and exchanges. Britain must be clear, too, that Arab-Israeli normalisation must have clear benefits for the Palestinians baked in.
34. **A significant model for regional cooperation is the Negev Forum,** a multilateral forum for regional cooperation founded by the Israel, UAE, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain and the United States, that met for the first time in March 2022. The UK should work with partners to revive and expand the Negev Forum, and to explore options to become formally involved as a member or an observer.
35. **At the regional level, it is vital that the UK work with our allies to maintain pressure on Iran.** The UK has played an important role supporting Israel's defence against Iranian attacks as well as repelling and responding to Houthi attacks against shipping. The UK government has been ramping up sanctions on the Iranian regime's ideological vanguard, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which is responsible for the brutal suppression of dissent at home, as well as Tehran's nefarious regional and international activities (such as the supply of ballistic missiles for Putin's war in Ukraine). In line with Labour's manifesto commitment, the UK government should institute a ban on the IRGC as swiftly as possible.
36. **The UK should also create a strong alignment with E3 allies and the US administration on Iran's nuclear programme.** Tehran has been advancing fast towards breakout capability and may be more incentivised to build nuclear weapons following the defeat of Hezbollah and the fall of Assad. It is even more important therefore to increase pressure to stop its advance towards nuclear weapons capability, and stop its military support to regional proxies

Supporting a reformed Palestinian Authority

37. **Integral to achieving a two-state solution is a reformed PA governing the West Bank and Gaza and the permanent exclusion of Hamas.** Only seven percent of Gazans want Hamas to govern the territory in future. However, the PA lacks legitimacy. In a 2024 poll, only 10 percent of Palestinians living in the West Bank viewed the PA under its current leadership as legitimate with 36 percent saying the PA needs "moderate" reform and 45 percent thinking it requires "deep reform". Nonetheless, despite its failings, some 70 percent of Gazans and 59 percent of West Bankers view the PA as "a future Palestinian state, or a state-in-the-making".⁸

⁸ <https://institute.global/insights/geopolitics-and-security/tbi-comment-new-polling-by-zogby-research-services-reveals-palestinian>

38. **While the Israeli far-right seeks to undermine the PA, pragmatic Israelis, including the security establishment, see a successful PA as an Israeli interest**, in helping to stabilise the West Bank and keep out Hamas or other Iranian-backed threats.⁹
39. **The legitimacy and administrative competence of the PA is a necessary condition for Palestinian statehood.** Any process toward a two-state solution will have to address at least five governance challenges associated with the PA, including: political and constitutional reform and the rule of law; corruption; human rights abuses; economic reform; payments to terrorists and their families, and officially sanctioned incitement to violence and terrorism. It will also have to rebuild trust with Israel that its security forces can be a partner in the West Bank and eventually in the Gaza Strip.¹⁰
40. **Abbas has amassed and concentrated enormous power in his own hands.** Elected in 2005, he has never contested an election since. The legislature has effectively ceased to function, and the judiciary has been subordinated to the president's will. Aged 89, Abbas only recently named Rawhi Fattouh as his interim successor in case "the post of P.A. President become vacant."
41. **The weakness of the Palestinian judicial system and the lack of parliamentary oversight contributes to corruption and the weak rule of law**, which together stymie investment and economic growth. Government jobs are used as political favours and public funds, much of it from international aid, are directed toward the enrichment of officials.
42. **Broad executive powers should be delegated to the prime minister and cabinet**, following models laid out in Palestinian Basic Law and the 2003 Roadmap peace initiative, including over security forces, public finances and administration. A prime minister who can command the trust and confidence of international donors to carry out a meaningful reform agenda should be appointed.
43. **As part of governance reform, the PA should respect human rights, political dissent and a free media.** PA authorities systematically mistreat and torture Palestinians in detention, as well as suppressing freedom of expression and freedom of the media.
44. **Both the PA and the Palestinian economy are heavily dependent upon Israel**, with economic relations governed by the Paris Protocol, a stop-gap measure designed to expire in 1998. The economy is also heavily dependent on aid and over-centralised, with a close connection between economic and political elites. This weakens economic competition, impedes social mobility, and facilitates corruption. Women are underrepresented in the labour force.
45. **Working to improve Palestine's economy also requires Israeli cooperation.** Israeli government threats to end banking co-operation should end, taxes collected on behalf of the PA should be remitted in full, and Israel should restore permits to West Bankers to work in Israel as far as possible in line with its security requirements. Israel should clamp down on the violence of extremist settlers. International sanctions on violent Jewish extremists are justified and should continue. Over the medium term, as part of coordinated trade-offs including regional states, Israeli steps to strengthen the PA should include removing illegal settlement outposts, halting construction outside the settlement blocks and transferring parts of Area C to Area B.

⁹ https://www.inss.org.il/strategic_assessment/punitive-measures/

¹⁰ The proposals in this section draw extensively on papers by [authored](#) by Ghaith al-Omari and Neomi Neumann for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Israeli think-tank [Mitvim](#)

46. **The PA should cease its policy of paying salaries to convicted terrorists and their families, which has led the Israeli government to withhold the transfer of Palestinian tax revenues.** This costly policy deprives desperately stretched Palestinian public services of vital investment, and compromises international donors who, while not directly funding the payments, effectively subsidise them by freeing up cash for the PA to spend on them. It incentivises violence and glorifies terrorist acts, while undermining the case in Israel for strengthening the PA.
47. **The PA should also radically reform its educational curriculum, removing content that incites violence and glorifies jihad, martyrdom and terrorism.** Repeated assessments of the Palestinian school curriculum by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, which analyses content against standards for peace and tolerance derived from UNESCO and UN declarations, underline that the new curriculum introduced in 2016-18 “exerts pressure over young Palestinians to acts of violence in a more extensive and sophisticated manner”.¹¹ An independent report commissioned by the EU from the Georg Eckert Institute also found evidence of antisemitic tropes, incitement to violence and the justification of terrorism.¹²
48. **Core to UK efforts to support Palestinian statehood must be a new partnership agreement with the PA.** This must include a commitment on the part of the PA to far-reaching reform measures as previously outlined. Crucially, the agreement must address officially sanctioned incitement by the PA – this would be consistent with a UK agenda to target incitement to violence on all sides.
49. **A strengthened PA will be better able to take over the functions of UNRWA.** This agency has irreversibly lost the trust of Israelis across the political spectrum because of the direct participation of some of its employees in the 7 October attacks, and the extensive evidence of its deep infiltration by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Long before 7 October, UNRWA faced fundamental questions due to failures of governance, perpetual funding crises, and questions over its mandate. Of particular concern is how UNRWA seeks to implement the full and complete “right of return” to pre-1967 Israel for the six million Palestinians it has registered, the majority of whom were not born in Israel and many of whom are children of parents who weren’t born in Israel. Such a position is incompatible with a negotiated two-state solution for two peoples. It is widely accepted that a solution to the issue of refugees can be found through a just financial settlement, as well as allowing Palestinian refugees to return to a future Palestinian state alongside a symbolic number returning to Israel. This assumption has been implicit in both the 2000 Camp David negotiations and the 2008 Olmert proposals at the culmination of Annapolis peace process, that came very close to a final peace settlement. In the short-term, the humanitarian situation in Gaza meant the UK government was right to restore funding to UNRWA, tied to reform. But the UK should now work with like-minded states on a fundamental review of the mandate, structure and governance of UNRWA, and ultimately on transferring its functions in the Gaza Strip and West Bank to the PA or other agencies. The transition from PA to Palestinian state should mean, by definition, that Palestinians – certainly those living in PA-controlled areas – should not receive services from UNRWA as refugees but receive services from the PA as citizens. Much-needed support from UN agencies, NGOs and other states should be provided the same way as in other countries. It is not the amount of assistance, but how it is given, which must change.

Supporting civil society peace-making

¹¹ https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Curriculum_2017-Grades-5-11.pdf

¹² <https://www.gei.de/forschung/projekte/analyse-palaestinensischer-schulbuecher-paltex>

50. **Trust between Israelis and Palestinians had been declining in the years preceding the 7 October attacks and are now at their lowest ever level.** According to polling carried out in 2024, only 10 percent of Israeli Jews and six percent of Palestinians agree that it is possible to trust the other side.¹³
51. **Civil society must be put at the core of any strategy to create the conditions for a resilient, conflict-ending agreement in the long term.** Experience from South Africa, Colombia and Northern Ireland reveals civil society peacebuilding played a core role where lasting agreements were reached. It had a key impact on both the attitudes and political context which are the oxygen that real peace processes depend upon. It enhanced societal resilience and transformed political incentives by creating constituencies – and indeed leaders – who support peace and reconciliation.¹⁴
52. **The International Fund for Ireland was established 12 years before the Good Friday agreement and built the foundations and civic capacity that successful diplomacy needs.** Jonathan Powell rightly called the IFI “the great unsung hero” of the Good Friday Agreement. The IFI catalysed a sustained, long-term effort to build relationships and trust even as rejectionists attempted to push back against progress.
53. **Peacebuilding organisations have demonstrated their beneficial impact in Israel and Palestine.** Studies carried out by experts at Notre Dame University and George Washington University,¹⁵ demonstrate that peacebuilding projects – which range across a wide variety of fields, including tech, the environment, health and young people – significantly reverse fear and dehumanisation, create ideas and institutions that can break the political deadlock, and produce citizens who place conflict resolution at the top of their political agenda, and as a core part of their identities.
54. **Programme participants leave these initiatives with far higher trust and willingness to work with the other side.** For example, the Parents Circle is a group of bereaved Israelis and Palestinians who channel the power and moral force of their grief toward conflict resolution. Some 80 percent of the Israeli and Palestinian young people who participated in their History Through the Human Eye dialogue project were more willing to work for peace, 71 percent reported more trust and empathy for the other, and 77 percent had a greater belief that reconciliation is possible.¹⁶
55. **In the UK, LFI has long supported the Alliance for Middle East Peace’s initiative to establish an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace,** inspired by the Ireland model and aimed at funding and supporting peacebuilding organisations. There has been cross-party support in the UK for an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace for many years and recent significant investment from the US via the bipartisan 2020 Middle East Partnership for Peace Act.
56. **In December 2024, the Prime Minister announced at LFI’s annual lunch that the Foreign Secretary would convene an international meeting in the UK in 2025 in support of establishing this International Fund.** Such a step, alongside a UK commitment to offer resources to the Fund in partnership with others, would make the UK a leader in this critical

¹³ <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/989>

¹⁴ <https://www.lfi.org.uk/lfi-publishes-civil-society-and-a-new-israeli-palestinian-peace-process-an-agenda-for-a-labour-government/>

¹⁵ <https://www.lfi.org.uk/lfi-publishes-civil-society-and-a-new-israeli-palestinian-peace-process-an-agenda-for-a-labour-government/>

¹⁶ <https://www.lfi.org.uk/lfi-publishes-civil-society-and-a-new-israeli-palestinian-peace-process-an-agenda-for-a-labour-government/>

and often neglected area of peace-making. It would help create the conditions for political agreements between leaders to be both achievable and sustainable.

24th December 2024