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# Local Lobby of MPs for Palestine

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## Your briefing

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If you have any questions contact:  
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## INTRODUCTION

**From 21-30 November we are encouraging supporters of Palestinian human rights to lobby their MPs in their local areas.**

### What is the Palestine Action Week?

To coincide with 29 November which is the UN Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

This Palestine Action week is a way to tell your MP that Palestinian rights matter.

During this week you can choose to support a number of actions:

- Sign our petition asking the UN to end its contracts with G4S. This is because G4S is complicit with human rights abuses against Palestinians in Israeli prisons
- Meet with your MP in their local constituency to lobby for Palestinian human rights
- Ask your MP to support Palestinian rights by taking up the issue in Parliament

There are more detailed policy briefings about these issues further on in your pack.

**What difference will lobbying my MP make? Palestinian human rights continue to be violated by the Israeli Government, every minute, every hour, every day.** It is clear from the latest actions of Israel's Government that this will not change without external pressure. That pressure will not come from the USA, so it must come from European countries like ours. Britain's historic obligation to Palestine and our role in international politics means we are key to achieving change.

Support for Palestine is growing all the time: there has been a sea-change in support for Palestinian human rights in Parliament. Noticeably in recent debates including the one on 21 July 2014 when so many MPs referred in their speeches to their constituent's emails on the subject.

We now have a new Parliament, with many newly elected MPs – some of whom are supportive, others who know very little about the situation in Palestine. They have been elected to represent

their constituents, so it is our job to inform them and to persuade them to respect Palestinian human rights, and implement international law.

Your support will make a huge difference. If you invite your family and friends you can multiply that!

### What now?

**1 Get in touch with your MP using our e-tool**  
<http://act.palestinecampaign.org/lobby/councils>

**2 Ask your family & friends to join you**

**3 If you are free to come to our rally in Parliament in London please join us:**  
Tuesday 24 November 2015

### Frequently asked questions

#### Who can lobby their MP?

If you're eligible to vote in General Elections you can lobby your local MP.

#### Do I need to be an expert?

No! Your MP regularly meets local people who care passionately about an issue, but they shouldn't expect you to know everything. But you will want to be well prepared. We have created this briefing to help you.

#### How long will my meeting last?

The meeting will normally last about half an hour, sometimes more, sometimes less. You may meet your MP with others lobbying on the same issue – MPs like to see constituents together.

#### Will I meet my MP?

Some MPs send their assistants or researchers to meet constituents if they can't make it. Don't be disappointed - staff prepare most letters and briefings for their MP, so they are a key person to engage with.

#### My MP hasn't replied to my request for a meeting. What should I do?

If your MP hasn't replied send a reminder, then phone Parliament on 020 7219 3000 and ask to speak to their office. **Check their contact details**  
[www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/)

### **If my MP is unavailable what should I do?**

Ask to meet them during December instead. If they ignore or refuse your request write to your local paper's letters page letting them know how let down you feel by your MP's unwillingness to engage with their constituents on important human rights issues.

### **What is it like?**

Lobbying your MP is one of the best ways to show solidarity with the Palestinian people and we are sure you will get a lot out of the experience.

### **Book your meeting now**

Get in touch with your MP using our e-tool <http://act.palestinecampaign.org/lobby/councils>

### **Let us know when your meeting is**

As soon as you know when and where your MP is meeting you please get in touch and let us know. Please get in touch via email: [sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org)

If you have any **accessibility needs** please tell your MP's office in advance, as not all constituency offices are fully adapted. If you have any problems resolving this please email [sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org) or call 020 7700 6192.

### **How to lobby your MP**

**Thank your MP** for taking the time to see you

**Find out how long they have to talk to you.** If you are seeing your MP with other people you will need to allow time for them to make their points.

**Ensure they know your key message:** we need action not words to defend Palestinian human rights.

**Focus** on one of two of the key issues enclosed in this briefing.

**Take time to listen to their views** – but do interrupt if they are taking up all the time.

**Prepare one or two actions** that you would like them to take. Do research to choose these. For example, if they are a Government Minister they won't ask questions or sign motions/EDMs, so ask them to write and talk to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary instead. If they are very active on the issue, ask them to call a debate on the issues you are discussing.

**Take a photograph** with them if possible.

**Leave them a copy of the below briefing** You can also download a copy here: [palestinecampaign.org/lobby2](http://palestinecampaign.org/lobby2).

### **After your meeting**

**Please fill in the feedback form** at the back of this pack and email it to [sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:sara.apps@palestinecampaign.org) or send it to November Lobby Feedback, PSC, PO BOX BM PSA, London, WC1N 3XX

## Public support for Palestine

During last summer, whilst Gaza was under military attack, there was widespread horror and opposition to Israel's bombing and invasion.

Protests took place right across the country, including three national demonstrations in London, with around 100,000 taking part in the first two, and 150,000 taking part in the demonstration on 9 August 2015.

At the height of Israel's bombing more than **42,000 people signed our open letter to the BBC**, asking journalists to explain the context of Israel's occupation and blockade on Gaza. Around **100,000 wrote to their MPs** demanding an end to the bombing and a military embargo on Israel. Some MPs received over 1500 emails from their constituents.

In the **eleven days** before the vote for recognition in October 2014, during the last Parliament, **57,000 e-letters** were sent urging MPs to vote to recognise Palestine. In the best attended un-whipped backbench debate ever, MPs voted overwhelmingly to recognise Palestine (**274 in favour -12 against**).

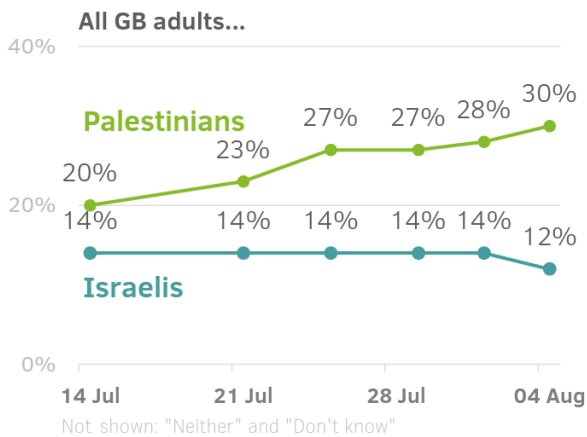
## Public support is growing

Apart from the devastating consequences of Israel's military assault on every person living in Gaza, the impact on public opinion should not be under-estimated, either on the views of Palestinians, or within the UK and EU.

Successive opinion polls of UK citizens have consistently showed more support for Palestinians, and disapproval of Israel's policies. The graphic below, from YouGov, shows how sympathy in Britain with Palestinians increased dramatically over just three weeks last summer, in response to the death and destruction being wreaked on Gaza by Israeli troops. This increase in sympathy for Palestinians was seen right across the political spectrum.

### Shifting sympathies in Britain

*Thinking of the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, do your own sympathies lie more with the Israelis or more with the Palestinians?*



YouGov | yougov.com

### By voting intention...

	% Sympathetic to the Palestinians		
	Jul 13-14	Aug 3-4	Change
Con	15	23	+8
Lab	26	41	+15
Lib Dem	38	40	+2
UKIP	11	18	+7

August 2014

## Conservative Party attacks on local democracy

**The Conservative Party has announced plans to effectively block local councils from divesting in companies complicit with Israel's occupation and settlements.**

It has announced that it will implement this in two ways:

They plan to amend the Local Government Pension Scheme to say that boycott, divestment and sanctions ('BDS') should only be used where formal legal sanctions, embargoes and restrictions have been put in place by the Government.

The Cabinet Office Procurement Policy will similarly be revised to advise local councils 'that boycotts in procurement policy are inappropriate, outside where formal legal sanctions, embargoes and restrictions have been put in place by the Government.'

[Procurement guidance relates to England. Local government pension regulations relate to England and Wales.]

What this means for Palestinian human rights campaigning:

- This is the first major policy attack by the UK Government on the Palestinian call for Boycott, divestment and sanctions
- As well as failing to meaningfully discourage Israel from violating human rights, the Government will be banning other arms of government from taking effective action
- This would prevent many Councils from supporting pensions divestment campaigns and taking international human rights into account when procuring public services
- It could be the first of many attacks on our civil liberties and local government

**This runs counter to UK Government and international policy.** The government is committed to supporting the UN Guidelines on Business and Human Rights which encourages government bodies not to invest in or award contracts to companies that violate human rights.

It also runs counter to **UK policy on Israeli settlements.** The UK Government issued business guidance in November 2013 which said that:

"...There are therefore clear risks related to economic and financial activities in the settlements, and we do not encourage or offer support to such activity. Financial transactions, investments, purchases, procurements as well as other economic activities (including in services like tourism) in Israeli settlements or benefiting Israeli settlements, entail legal and economic risks stemming from the fact that the Israeli settlements, according to international law, are built on occupied land and are not recognised as a legitimate part of Israel's territory."

Please ask your MP to oppose these proposals which:

- Undermine local democracy at a time when the Government says that decisions should be made locally
- Repress citizen led justice campaigns. This is not the hallmark of a free, fair and democratic society
- Force Councils to put big business interests ahead of ethics and international law is also risky and bad business practice

### **What we are calling for:**

For the Government to drop these anti-democratic proposals

### **Ask your MP to:**

Raise this important issue with Ministers and in the Commons – through parliamentary questions or debates.

## Ending UK trade with settlements

The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an Occupying Power from transferring its civilian population into an occupied territory. Israel's illegal settlements are built on Palestinian land, often forcing Palestinians out of their homes and off their land. The UN, EU and UK repeatedly affirm these settlements are illegal and damaging to the chances of peace. So, given settlements are illegal, what are their goods doing in our shops?

**Key facts** Since the Israeli settlement programme began in 1972, the combined population of the settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has risen to over half a million. Settlements are built on Palestinian land, forcing Palestinians out of their homes and off their land.

Israel continues with settlement expansion undeterred by a series of strongly worded statements from the UK government. In October 2014, the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond released a statement saying 'The UK deplores Israel's decision to advance plans for 2,610 settlement units in Givat Hamatos... it will have serious implications for... Jerusalem being a shared capital in a future two-state peace agreement and will hinder the process.' These plans have now been given final approval and construction could start at any time.

As a consequence of the settlement programme, alongside many other actions by the Israeli Government, Palestinians face growing restrictions on their daily mobility, residency rights and on their ability to secure an income. Palestinian homes are being demolished on the basis of planning laws which restrict Palestinian residency rights in Jerusalem.

In 2013 the World Bank estimated that the current loss to the Palestinian economy as a result of the occupation is 35% of Palestinian GDP (about \$3.4 billion in 2011).

In spite of official criticism by European governments of Israel's human rights record and of its treatment of Palestinians, Europe continues to purchase goods produced in settlements on a significant scale. The Council of the European

Union has committed itself to ensure that – in line with international law – all agreements between the State of Israel and the European Union must state they do not apply to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, namely the Golan Heights, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Yet the EU imports approximately 15 times more from the illegal settlements than from the Palestinian economy. This is likely to continue despite the introduction of new EU labelling scheme which allows consumers to see whether some goods originated in illegal Israeli settlements.

Given that the EU is sustaining the occupied Palestinian territory through aid, it is inconsistent and counter-productive that it is also trading with the settlements. Our support of the occupied Palestinian territory whilst we are importing Israeli settlement produce means that - as UK tax payers - we are subsidising Israel's occupation.

At least 17 EU Governments have published online guidance warning their citizens and businesses about risks involved in trade and other economic links with illegal Israeli settlements. Al Haq, a legal human rights organisation with a focus on international law, states that the British and other EU Governments need to go further, as they have legal obligations to prevent the imports of settlement goods. Without doing this they are complicit with a breach of international law.

We need support from MPs to urge the British Government and the European Union to impose a total block on the import of goods produced in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. At the same time, we need the UK Government to work with its European partners to achieve Europe-wide action against settlement goods. We call on MPs to request Ministers to discuss this important issue with European colleagues and report back to Parliament.

### **What we are calling for:**

For the UK Government and Europe to impose trade restrictions on Israel so that goods produced in Israeli settlements do not enter the UK and the rest of Europe.



**What we want the UK Government to do:** Commit to a thorough review of all UK financial relationships with Israeli settlements

**Ask your MP to:**

- Support a parliamentary debate against Israeli settlements or on Palestinian human rights
- Sign Early Day Motions, or for example 720 –on the arbitrary detention of children
- Ask parliamentary questions

## Israeli Arms industry

We are campaigning for an end to the arms trade, and all military-industrial collaboration, with Israel.

Contrary to its own criteria, the UK government grants export licenses for British military hardware and components to be supplied to Israel. At the same time, it imports Israeli military hardware and components and also provides training, in the UK, for Israeli military personnel

**Key facts:**

The UK government has criteria, against which arms export licence applications are considered, which say a UK arms export licence should not be granted where:

- there is a clear risk of the equipment being used for “internal repression”
- the export would “provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts;” and
- there is a “clear risk that the intended recipient would use the proposed export aggressively against another country, or to assert by force a territorial claim”.

Yet the government has been reluctant to refuse or revoke export licenses. Since 2010, it has licensed the export of £42m worth of military equipment to Israel. As well as exporting:

- The UK government has purchased, from Israel, targeting systems, drone technology and drones. The latter were developed by Israel’s Elbit Systems, in a joint venture with Thales UK under a contract awarded by the Ministry of Defence.
- Members of the Israeli military have attended education courses for military personnel in the UK.
- Israeli firms, including Elbit Systems, receive funding through 46 projects under the EU’s Framework Research Programme.

We want to see an end to the arms trade with Israel.

The refusal of all export licences to Israel (directly or via a third country) where the end-user is the IDF or military industry;

The revocation of any extant export licences to Israel (directly or via a third country) where the end-user is the IDF or military industry;

A ban on arms imports from Israel.

A ban on collaborations between UK-based companies and the IDF or Israeli military industry

**In order to help us achieve this, we are asking MPs to:**

- support calls for an early review of existing arms export licenses to Israel
- and a review of the policy of exporting arms to States on the FCO ‘watch list’ of countries of concern relating to their human rights record.

**Ask your MP to:**

- Raise this important issue with Ministers
- Support a parliamentary debate on Palestine
- Sign EDMs
- Ask parliamentary questions

## An end to the blockade on Gaza

Palestinians in Gaza have been living under Israel's siege for more than seven years, a blockade which effectively imprisons 1.8 million people on a strip of land.

### Key facts

As a consequence of the seven weeks of hostilities by the Israeli military on Palestinians in Gaza during July and August 2014, a total of 2,220<sup>1</sup> Palestinians, including 501 children, were killed. 71 Israelis were killed, including 66 soldiers. Around 11,000 Palestinians were injured; of these, up to 10% have suffered long-term impairment; over 96,000 homes of Palestinian refugees were damaged or destroyed during the conflict, according to a technical assessment completed by UNWRA in December 2014. Some 20,000 homes were totally destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, leading to the displacement of over 100,000 people.

We need support from MPs to press the Israeli and Egyptian governments to permit the free flow of goods and people to and from Gaza. Not only do we seek an end to the humanitarian crisis but also the ability of Palestinians to live normal lives - free to travel, meet relatives, work and have a family life without punitive restrictions. These restrictions represent a collective punishment for the 1.8m who live in the Gaza strip.

### What we are calling for:

An end to the blockade on Gaza

### What we are asking the UK Government to do:

For the UK Government to make public, urgent and sustained representations to Israel and Egypt to lift border restrictions and for the ceasefire agreement to be respected.

### Ask your MP to:

- Raise this important issue with Ministers
- Support a parliamentary debate on Palestine
- Sign Parliamentary motions
- Ask parliamentary questions

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<sup>1</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs annual report

## For all the issues

If your MP is a backbencher (ie doesn't have a role in Government or the Opposition) then ask him/her to:

- Support a parliamentary debate
- Join the All Party Group for Palestine
- Sign Parliamentary motions (EDMs)
- Ask parliamentary questions

If your MP is a frontbencher (ie has a role in Government or the shadow team) then ask him/her to:

- Write to the Foreign and DfID Secretaries of State
- Raise the Gaza blockade in Cabinet / shadow cabinet (when attending meetings)
- Raise the issues individually with Ministers and the Prime Minister

All MPs can:

- Attend and support local meetings and events
- Visit the West Bank and call for MPs to be able to enter Gaza



**Feedback form**

Your name

.....

Email

.....

**Name of your MP**

.....

Constituency

.....

**Which issue(s) did you raise with your MP:**

- New rules limiting Council freedom
- An end to the arms trade, and all military-industrial collaboration, with Israel
- An end to settlement trade
- Gaza

Other:

.....

**Is your MP willing to take Parliamentary action?**

- a) Sign Early Day Motions?  
Yes No
- b) Write to Ministers on your behalf?  
Yes No
- c) Table parliamentary questions?  
Yes No
- d) Apply for Adjournment/Westminster Hall debates? Yes No

**Is your MP willing to get involved nationally and locally by?**

- a) Join Britain-Palestine All Party Group?  
Yes No  already a member
- b) Join their political parties' group?  
Yes No Already a member
- c) Speak at / hold a local meeting?  
Yes No
- d) Visit the occupied Palestinian territory?  
Yes No

**For today, will your MP:**

- a) Submit a question to International Development Yes No
- b) Sign our #actionnotwords sheet (provided)  
Yes No
- c) Get a photograph with you Yes No

**In general, did you MP seem:**

- very supportive supportive neutral
- unsupportive

Further comment (please continue overleaf if necessary):

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Please return this to: Please return this form to:  
November Lobby Feedback, PSC Box BM PSA, London  
WC1N 3XX Fax: 0207 609 7779  
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