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Introduction/Using the toolkit

This toolkit is intended to give pro-Israel campaigners the essential information and advice needed to campaign for Israel both all-year-round and in the event of a crisis when Israel hits the headlines.

It consists of “how to” guides setting out the basics of each kind of campaign activity and fact sheets about key aspects of Israel’s case.

We will send out supplements and updates as required which can be inserted into the toolkit folder.

The absolute key to us shifting opinions on Israel is to develop individual personal relationships with people. This will make us better placed to influence them.

There is an understandable desire by everyone to do the glamorous national side of campaigning for Israel: speaking to the media, speaking to MPs.

But this means in the past we have neglected the base of opinion formers that creates the political environment that MPs and the media are influenced by, and who are often more accessible to ordinary supporters of Israel. These people include our neighbours, work colleagues, local opinion formers, and our local MPs and ward councillors.

Although the Jewish community in the UK has over 2,000 national organisations, it lacks a grassroots network advocating for Israel.

This is a massive drawback because in a democracy decision-makers are influenced by grassroots public opinion or what they think the public think.

To change the balance of public opinion in the UK we need everyone who supports Israel to develop relationships in their local area, reaching out to the wider non Jewish community, especially with opinion formers.

For most supporters of Israel, the most useful thing you can do is to focus on those local relationships. The single most useful tactic is “dining for Israel” (see the section later on) because this is the most personalised way of engaging with people. We need you to reach out to your non-Jewish friends and colleagues, and to your local MP, councillors and other opinion-formers.

If your local MP supports Israel in a crisis, they need the political cover of being able to demonstrate public support from their constituents for their stance.

Write to them and thank them. During Operation Cast Lead the then Hendon MP Andrew Dismore had the largest number of Jewish constituents of any MP but received no letters supporting Israel or thanking him for his stance until after the crisis, and may letters of criticism. We make it more difficult for our friends to speak up for us when we don’t communicate with them.

Remember you don’t need to be an expert to have influence- nobody knows everything, so don’t worry and don’t pretend. Be yourself and smile!

Section 1

“How to” Guides - Influencing people

Who can you influence?

The starting point is to analyse who your friends and contacts are.

After mapping who you know, you need to categorise what you know about their views about Israel:

- If they are already supporters, you need to think about how to mobilise them to campaign alongside you.
- If you don't know where they stand, or you know they are undecided, you need to work out which arguments for Israel will resonate most with them based on what you know about their views on other issues.
- If you know they are instinctively hostile, you need to assess whether they are so committed to this view that they are not worth arguing with, or whether they are open to hearing the other side of the story.

Once you have made this assessment, you need to decide what form of communication will work best with which person. In some cases it might be very formal lobbying, such as attending an MP or other local elected representatives public surgery or writing to them. In other cases, particularly with personal friends it could be far more informal, for instance a discussion over a drink or at a dinner party.

You also need to look at who you don't know but should know. Who are the potential influencers in your area? Think in terms of local MPs, councillors, churches and other faith groups, newspaper editors. Look at ways you can engage with them on an all-year-round basis so that when a crisis comes involving Israel they already know you, will listen to you and respect your opinions.

People often over-focus on elected representatives and overlook the wider circle of local opinion-formers who are listened to and can influence those elected representatives. The letters page in your local paper will often give you a good idea of who the vocal local opinion-formers are. These are a set of people to try to engage with and cultivate. It is worth thinking carefully about who is most appropriate to contact them if they have not been contacted before: think about who in your local network of supporters would be most likely to get a meeting or have their invitation accepted by a target local opinion-former contact.

How to influence people

There are a number of key steps to consider every time you try to influence someone:

- 1) Decide exactly what your goal or objective is.
- 2) Define your message.
- 3) Identify your target audience.
- 4) Tailor your message to the audience.
- 5) Identify the most effective delivery mechanism for that message and that audience – is it a letter, a meeting, a phone call, media coverage?
- 6) Execute the communication
- 7) Evaluate how well it worked – did you shift opinions?

Social psychologist Dr Robert Cialdini has spent his entire career researching the science of influence earning him an international reputation as an expert in the fields of persuasion, compliance, and negotiation.

His book "Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion" (William Morrow & Co, revised edition. 1993) is an excellent guide to how to influence and persuade people.

In it, he identifies six fundamental principles that determine human behaviour and therefore need to be remembered when trying to influence people:

- 1) Reciprocation. People try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided them.(Respect and listening can come into this category)
- 2) Consistency. People feel a nearly obsessive desire to be, and appear to be, consistent with what they have already done or a stance they have already taken.
- 3) Social proof. One way in which people decide what is correct is to find out what other people think is correct (especially when they view those others as similar to themselves- this is where role models come in, like Stephen Fry for example).
- 4) Liking. People prefer to say yes to requests from someone they know and like.
- 5) Authority or 'perceived authority', confidence and being seen as an authoritative source. Almost all people have a deep-seated sense of duty to authority.
- 6) Scarcity. Opportunities seem more valuable to people when their availability is limited. (exclusivity- hence personal invitations to your home for dinner)

Dining for Israel

One of the most effective ways to engage people in a discussion about Israel is to invite them into your own home for dinner.

We would suggest you invite a mixed group with half the guests being supporters of Israel who will be patient enough to spend time trying to convince the other half who should be people who are undecided.

The JC ran an interesting article about organising dinner parties to discuss Israel, which is well worth reading:

<http://www.thejc.com/lifestyle/lifestyle-features/42738/how-ease-division-over-israel-have-a-dinner-party>

Remember this is all about relationships. People are very flattered to be invited to dinner. Don't underestimate your own influence. Most people want to be asked. Most people are not hostile to Israel. Unless you reach out you will never be able to persuade people of Israel's case and it leaves the field clear for our and Israel's opponents' messages.

Lobbying MPs

There are a number of ways in which you can lobby MPs (and other elected representatives and candidates for public office) Please do not be daunted: the most powerful tool in our democracy is a handwritten letter to your MP. We are all capable of being influential.

- Writing them a letter (all at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA) or email (all MPs' email addresses are on the <http://www.parliament.uk/> website)
- Asking to meet them at their local surgery in the constituency- usually at the Town Hall or a local library. It will be on their website or in the local paper (check they are happy to see people about issues as well as just personal casework)
- Asking to meet them at the House of Commons
- Asking them to visit a community organisation you are involved in
- Ask them to your home or for dinner

The more personal the communication, the more chance it will get read i.e. personally tailored letters have more impact than postcard campaigns or generic letters. Make friends with them.

You need to research the MP you are going to approach and work out what angle to take:

- Do they have a relevant policy interest? - Google their own websites/ House of Commons website, what debates have they taken part in? What EDM's have they signed?
- Are they a member of a relevant All Party Group?
- Have they ever spoken for or against Israel in the Commons?

Good starting points for research about MPs, including contact details are <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/> and <http://www.parliament.uk/>.

All MPs have to get re-elected so they care about what their constituents think. The main reason they will agree to see someone is if you are one of their constituents – always state this at the start of any communication. If you can evidence that there are a reasonable number of local voters who share your views on Israel this will have an impact. Please remember that MPs are representatives not delegates though – they may have their own strong views already and will react very badly to bullying, electoral threats or coercion!

Any contact with an MP, other elected representative or candidate needs to have an “ask”. You need to think about what you want them to do. Do you want them to

- Write to a local paper
- Vote in a particular way?
- Sign an Early Day Motion?
- Speak in a debate?
- Table a Written or Oral Question to Ministers?
- Lobby Officials or Ministers or Shadow Ministers in writing or in person?
- Come to a meeting
- Sign a petition
- Or ‘not’ to do the above, depending on the issue

Section 2

“How to” Guides – Communications skills

General Communication Skills

Know your audience - whether talking to an individual or a group. Good communicators know what their audience thinks, why they think it and how they react; they know how to tailor their message.

Establish your objective before you start, again it is the same for a group or an individual. You need to know what you are trying to achieve, then you can establish the message and structure your conversation or presentation accordingly.

It is difficult to teach communication skills – you have to learn from experience. So as always, practice is essential, both to improve your skills generally and also to make the best of each individual presentation you make. To be effective you need to get over your embarrassment. Confidence is key to effective communications, your audience will be able to tell if you are unsure and they may misread this and doubt your message. If you are unconfident it undermines your message. However, there is a fine line between this and arrogance which is a turn off and alienates your audience and undermines your mission. You have to respect your audience, if you don't why should they respect you?

What you say to people should be concise, to the point and tell an interesting story.

In addition to the obvious things like content and visual aids, the following are just as important as the audience will be subconsciously taking them in:

- Your voice - how you say it is as important as what you say. You should also watch your volume and tone.
- Body language - your body movements express what your attitudes and thoughts really are.
- Appearance - first impressions influence people's attitudes to you. Dress appropriately for the occasion. What you wear should complement your message and not detract from it.

For a presentation:

Prepare what you are going to say carefully and logically, just as you would for a written report. Think about what the main points and what the objectives of the talk are. Make a list of these two things as your starting point.

If you are making a presentation, write it out in rough. Review the draft. You will find things that are irrelevant or superfluous - delete them. Check the story is consistent and flows smoothly. If there are things you cannot easily express, possibly because of doubt about your understanding, it is better to leave them unsaid.

Try not to read from a script. Instead prepare cue cards which have key words and phrases on them. Blank postcards are ideal for this. Don't forget to number the cards in case you drop them.

Rehearse your presentation - to yourself at first and then in front of some friends or colleagues. You cannot rehearse enough, you have to practice all the time.

Audience participation is also a good way of gauging where the audience is. By asking them questions it ensures you know what they are thinking and allows you to adapt your presentation if necessary.

Never pretend to know everything, it isn't credible and you lose respect. Being honest when you don't know something or are unsure gets the audience on side. It creates a sense of trust which means when you do know something, even when it contradicts what they think- they will listen to you.

Greet the audience (for example, 'Good morning, ladies and gentlemen'), and tell them who you are. Good presentations then follow this formula:

- Tell the audience what you are going to be telling them
- Then tell them
- At the end reaffirm what you have told them.

Keep to the time allowed. If you can, keep it short. It's better to under-run than over-run.

Speak clearly. Don't shout or whisper - judge the acoustics of the room.

Don't rush, or talk deliberately slowly. Be natural.

Deliberately pause at key points - this has the effect of emphasising the importance of a particular point you are making.

Avoid jokes - always disastrous unless you are a natural expert.

To make a presentation interesting, change your delivery, but not too obviously, e.g.:

- speed
- pitch of voice

Use your hands to emphasize points but don't indulge in too much hand waving.

People can, over time, develop irritating habits. Ask colleagues occasionally what they think of your style.

Look at the audience as much as possible, but don't fix on an individual - it can be intimidating. Pitch your presentation towards the back of the audience, especially in larger rooms.

Avoid moving about too much. Pacing up and down can unnerve the audience, although some animation is desirable.

Keep an eye on the audience's body language. Know when to stop and also when to cut out a piece of a presentation.

The importance of constant communication

Don't forget the 80/20 rule! For every 20% of "doing" in a campaign, you need 80% of communicating what you are doing. This is because it takes constant repetition before a message sinks in. That's why top politicians constantly repeat quite simple sound bites: they have to say the same thing dozens of times before it registers in the consciousness of their target audience. As frustrating as it may seem, if you think you have communicated your messages enough, think again. Don't presume people know what your messages are already: check.

Personal communication is essential

The more personal the way in which you communicate with someone, the more successful it will be.

Sending people emails is not enough – you need to follow-up emails with phone calls or meetings.

A hand-written letter carries a lot more weight than an email.

Dos and Don'ts in a Crisis

The nature of the Middle East means that we often have to speak up for Israel because there is a crisis it is involved in.

In a crisis – DON'T:

- Panic
- Lose your temper
- Shout – it alienates people
- Write or call without checking your facts first
- Presume people know things – most people in the UK don't follow the detail of events in the Middle East and presumptions of knowledge can alienate people who are ill-informed but not hostile

In a crisis – DO:

- Look at BICOM's email updates for the latest facts about the situation and the key arguments
- Forward the BICOM email updates to your contacts
- Check for further info on the BICOM website
- Make sure your local MP knows where you stand by writing to them and attending their surgery
- Write to newspapers arguing Israel's side of the story (including your local newspaper if it carries letters about non-local issues)
- Take part in radio phone-ins
- Comment on blogs, or write a blog post if you have a blog
- State your views on Twitter, Facebook and other social media
- Stay calm – rational argument trumps emotional outbursts
- Show respect for other viewpoints however annoying they may be
- Remember that if you are not telling someone the facts, it may be that no one else is
- Remember that the better the relationship you have built up with people before a crisis, the better chance they will listen to what you are saying during a crisis. Similarly it is very difficult to suddenly start communicating with people during a crisis who you haven't cultivated before
- Finally, remember your friends and family- don't presume others are talking to people. The most important thing you can do is talk to people locally. Don't shy away from conversations but make it easy for people to approach you and ask questions.

Letter Writing

Letters to the editor are an easy, quick way to share your opinions. It's something any member of the public with a spare 15 minutes can do. A letter should remain short, focused, and only have one central point. You should also address a specific article, editorial, or op-ed in the newspaper and it is important to send the letter in by email as quickly as possible (preferably the same day the article appears in the newspaper). Each specific newspaper will have its own regulations, which you can usually find on their website, but you should expect to write a letter that is about 150 words long and to include your contact information for verification purposes.

Here are some quick tips:

- Keep it short and to the point
- Address a specific article, editorial, or op-ed
- Write and send the letter ASAP
- Follow the newspaper's specific letter to the editor regulations
- Letters from members of the public are more powerful than from those already known to have a political agenda
- Keep coming back when opponents pen a reply (readers love to follow a letters battle and expect a written challenge to be answered)
- If you are writing to someone you know you need to personalize the letter. The more you make it specific to the individual the more likely you are to get the person you are writing to to engage and respond.
- Don't presume that people know things

Dealing with the media

We don't expect every supporter of Israel to engage with the media. If you don't feel confident doing it, it is better to pass off the opportunity to spokespeople who are experienced in media relations.

But if you do get the opportunity to appear in the media, here are some useful tips:

Interviews

When doing media interviews:

Prior to the interview

- Think about what you are trying to communicate
- Find out as much as you can about the journalist and their views and interests
- Ask about the format of the interview: how many questions, how long, live or pre-recorded. Ask for a set of questions in advance.
- Make sure you prepare your message and stick to it (repeat it several times!).
- At all times remember the audience and not the interviewer. You are in someone's living room or kitchen- you need to talk as you would when a guest in someone else's home.

When asked uncomfortable questions

- Try and get some facts and figures to back-up your messages.
- Just state the facts
- Facts and figures must be relevant
- Never lose your temper, always remain calm

Make sure you are

- Prepared
- Clear
- Convincing
- Credible
- Focused

Forms of evidence/support

- Personal experience stories are very effective
- Use third party endorsements to enhance your credibility – have a list of supporters/quotes ready if you can
- Don't use jargon – Keep it simple!

Deliver sound bites first

- Decide on two or three key messages.
- Make the strongest point first
- Then support it...
- Best way to cope with a journalist is to...
- Sound bite
- Support points
- Repeat sound bite

Flagging Key messages

Do say:

- The most important point is...
- The big picture here is...
- One thing to remember is...
- Let's put things into perspective...
- Use "First let me address your question on..."

Don't say:

- As I've already said
- As I said earlier

Rules of engagement

Dos

- Prepare
- Take control but also listen and acknowledge
- Set key messages
- Keep repeating them

Don'ts

- Let your guard down
- Lose your temper
- Hope you can "wing it"
- Attack Israel's critics

Remember the three Cs!

1. Control
2. Credibility
3. Confidence

Telephone interviews

- Prepare and know you're talking points.
- Cross off your key points as you go.
- Stand up.
- Never forget you're in an interview.

Off the record

- A journalist is never off duty and neither are you
- Remember the journalist always has his own need for a good story in mind when he is asking you questions. So if you do not want to see it in print -do not say it.

Photos and Press Releases

You might want to get coverage in a local newspaper for your campaign activities. A press release has far more chance of getting coverage if there is a photo opportunity, or a good quality photo you can supply, too.

- Use visual props that people will associate with your campaign.
- Phone the newspaper's photographer and discuss with them what would make a great picture.
- Press releases need to include:
- An embargo/release date if relevant
- The basics of the story: what is happening, where and when, and who is involved
- A quote from a named spokesperson
- Your contact details for further inquiries
- After sending press releases call up journalist to discuss the campaign and how you can keep them informed about what you are doing.
- Chase up reporters after an event to check they'll be featuring your story.
- Remember that you need to keep to the production schedule of the local media if you want them to carry your stories. A copy deadline is sacrosanct and the media are rarely interested in week-old, 'stale' news stories.
- Even when you are dealing with an international issue like Israel you need to have a local link or example to capture the interest of the local media.
- Unusual news angles and photographs help to attract the interest of the media but do not be tempted into doing anything too 'zany' just to oblige a photographer or journalist. Inappropriate comments or photographs can come back 'to bite you' years later.

Remember, if you have cultivated a relationship you are far more likely to get stuff in the paper. Journalists are human beings doing a job and if you help them get good stories they will value you as a contact.

Basics of leaflets and direct mail

Leaflets are a good, cheap traditional way of getting your message direct to people in the street or in their homes, particularly if you are finding it tough to get media coverage.

The average leaflet has a lifespan of six seconds – the time it takes to carry what is assumed to be junk mail from the door to the waste bin.

- Any message in a leaflet needs to be summarised in a very big and eye-catching headline.
- Remember your target audience and use an appropriate style. A lively tabloid style with short punchy articles is far more likely to be read and remembered than dense worthy text.
- Black and white or two colour materials are cheaper to produce than full colour materials so it is always worth considering if a piece of printed material needs to be produced in colour.
- All printed materials involve significant print and production costs and it is important that they are targeted and delivered only to those people and areas that can justify the necessary expense
- Remember that printed materials take time to produce and distribute so a realistic production and distribution timetable is required for all printed materials and the question of topicality and continued relevance is a factor.

Leaflets should generally:

- Be easy to read
- Be illustrated with eye-catching pictures
- Not contain too many words
- Be well designed and laid out
- Look good visually – stand out from the crowd.
- Make the leaflets as locally specific as possible
- Seeing people they know in a photo creates interest and gets people to pay attention.

If you have a set of names and addresses, it is a lot better to send people enveloped letters (known as direct mail even if hand-delivered rather than posted) as they are more likely to read these than a leaflet. Even a letter addressed to “the resident” works better than a leaflet.

Top tips:

- Decide who the people are you want to write to.
- Who within these groups make up the target groups for your campaign?
- Decide what is the message of your direct mail?
- Decide on the tone of voice and what information to include.
- Write in the language style your target group will best respond to.
- Choose photos that will have meaning for your readers and are connected to the issues you are writing about
- Use clear and snappy headlines with local content to generate reader interest
- Tell people how they can get involved in the campaign.
- Include a method for people to respond to you (reply coupon, phone number, website and email address)
- Follow up on all responses and keep people informed about the progress of the campaign.
- Thank people for any support they give.

Basics of sending campaign emails

Emails are the quickest way of keeping your network of supporters up to date. However, they often get deleted without being read, so need to be followed up with more personal contact.

- If you are keeping personal data such as email addresses, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioners' Office because of the Data Protection Act (http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations.aspx)
- Always blind copy emails (i.e. put the addresses in the BCC line)
- Always give people the chance to opt out of receiving further emails
- Collect people's email addresses when you are campaigning
- Work with local community groups
- Ask supporters to forward your emails to their friends and sign up their friends and family to your email list
- What do you know about the people you are emailing?
- Where did you get their email details from? Discuss the level of information you need to include in an initial email and then how you can follow this up.
- Even though you want the email to feel personal don't write more than is necessary. Get to the main point quickly, you don't need long introductions.
- Keep the paragraphs short in number and short in length.
- Sum up the main details of the campaign and what action you are going to take.
- Why have you sent this email? Be clear what it is you are asking people to do and why they should do.
- Think about who you are writing to? (Do you need to introduce yourself, the campaign and the key issues?)
- Adapt your style to suit your audience. Is this a solicited or unsolicited email?
- Make the email feel personal. Even if you are writing to a group of people you want it to feel like you are communicating to an individual.
- What's the tone of the email? You don't want to be over familiar but email isn't as formal as a letter, use your natural voice so people get a real sense of who you are.
- Set time aside to keep on top of the email responses you receive, and respond to them promptly, and be consistent with your tone of voice.
- How often do you need to update people on the progress of the campaign? How urgent is this issue for the audience – is that you need to update them daily, weekly, monthly or just when something happens?

Using social media

Many people, particularly if they are younger, increasingly look online to get news and views and to network and debate. If you feel comfortable using social media, it is an important space for advocacy of Israel's case.

Blogs

The blogging community is among the most important audiences that we can reach out to. You should engage blogs at every opportunity from commenting on existing blog posts to creating original entries.

More important may be your ability to be our eyes and ears in the blogosphere and respond, even if it is only a few lines, in the comment section of the many blogs throughout the Internet. Just like you respond to scurrilous e-mails that are sent to your inbox, we encourage you to respond to your local blogs and other online community forums.

You may also wish to consider starting your own blog or having a personal blog on a major blog (many blogs and campaign sites allow this).

Here are some quick tips: Blog early and often Blog comments can be as short as a couple of lines, while a full blog entry can be short or as long as a standard op-ed (700 words) Blog locally

The two main platforms for creating a blog of your own are www.blogger.com and www.wordpress.com. Both are very easy to use and the sites talk you through setting up a blog step-by-step.

You can build readership for your own blog by:

- Commenting on other blogs and linking back to your one
- Promoting the link to your blog or to specific posts you have written in emails, on Twitter and on Facebook and quoting your blog address in off-line material such as letters to the press or leaflets
- Emailing writers of other blogs to draw their attention to your best posts

You can use Google blog search (<http://blogsearch.google.com/>) to search for blogs that are talking about Israel or a specific issue, and use it to set up email monitoring alerts.

Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging site where you write pithy comments in less than 140 characters. It is a very democratic medium in that anyone can use it to interact directly with senior politicians and journalists.

It is easy to sign up here <http://twitter.com/>

Start by following the feed from people you expect to express views on Israel. Argue with them if you disagree with them, or retweet their views if like them. BICOM's Twitter feed is: @BritainIsrael

Facebook

Facebook is a social-networking site. You can sign up here: <http://www.facebook.com/>

Facebook can be used like Twitter to broadcast your views to your online "friends" or comment on views that they express.

It also has features enabling users to set up groups and events and support causes, which is a great way to organise Israel supporters online.

BICOM has its own Facebook page.

Dealing with anti-Israel arguments

There are situations where it is essential to react directly to anti-Israel incidents and rhetoric. But you must do so with the upmost care. You have to determine what is malicious and what is ignorance and deal with them very differently. Also, you must at all times remember the audience that will be hearing or reading your response. Even if the individual is malicious you can still lose a bigger audience if you reply in the wrong way. Remember two wrongs do not make a right. Keep you cool. Be patient. Respond with accurate information in a succinct fashion to specific anti-Israel materials in the media. Remember, do not make it personal, i.e. about the person, as it annoys the audience, stick to the issue. In the media it is most effective to do so in the form of letters to the editor.

Be sure to frequently cite unbiased sources in your arguments; using only overtly pro-Israel sources invites criticism and allows readers to easily dismiss your arguments. Independent sources no matter how irritating are always more trusted. Also people who have no reason to support your argument or Israel are also good to quote. They are your unusual suspects, the opinion formers that people listen to when they talk, even if they aren't experts on the issue.

Research anti-Israel speakers or writers. Come prepared with pointed questions and to challenge inaccuracies.

When anti-Semitic materials and/or rhetoric appear, you should publicly condemn them. Keep in mind that not all anti-Israel material is anti-Semitic. When in doubt, contact Jewish organisations for guidance about when criticism of Israel becomes anti-Semitism.

Be careful with the language and rhetoric you use. It is easy to fall into arguments concerning "us" and "them" and to generalize about whether Muslims or Palestinians, when you are actually only referring to specific groups, political organisations, terrorist organisations, and so on. You should also be aware when talking to non Jewish audiences as you can presume too much knowledge and that leads to miscommunication and irritation in the audience. Other words to be careful of using are: "you" and "we". At all times you need to be clear about who and what you are referring to.

It is also important to differentiate between advocacy of a Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution, or concern for the welfare and rights of Palestinians; criticism of specific actions by Israel; and attempts to delegitimise Israel's right to exist as a state. You must not use ridicule or be shrill in responding as it will alienate those people who are undecided but not anti. Someone who is interested enough to ask questions is someone who you can reason with, but you must not make the mistake of presuming everyone is an enemy. People are on the whole just ignorant but not stupid. They need you to talk and gently educate them.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complicated topic. In order to strategically respond to the anti-Israel campaign, you must educate yourself and your peers on the nuances of the issues. However, remember no one knows everything. To admit you don't know something actually gains the respect of your audience.

Making a Speech

Occasionally there may be opportunities to address a meeting about the case for Israel or even to go head-to-head with people who disagree.

Only agree to speak if you feel comfortable about it: otherwise try to get an experienced speaker from a national organisation.

Things to consider if invited to debate Israel:

- How many people will attend the event?
- What will their starting point be? Debates tend to attract people who already have strong views, so think carefully about how much time you commit to attending an event with an audience whose mind will be largely made up.
- Make sure you are up to date on the latest briefings on the BICOM website.
- Identify the key message that you want people to take away from the meeting, and make sure that you keep bringing the argument back to that message.
- Know your opponent, and think about what angle he or she is going to approach the debate from, and be ready with some rebuttal lines.
- Take some campaign literature with your contact details on it so that you have something to give to people who may wish to contact you.
- Prepare by writing an opening speech and rehearsing it to friends – time it as it is easy to overestimate how much you can say if there is a time limit.
- Keep it simple
- React to the audience not to the others on the panel
- Keep calm
- Do not ridicule or attack someone personally as it annoys the audience.
- Smile, people respond to positive body language, it also communicates quiet confidence.

Section 3

“How to” Guides – Local organising

Setting up a local campaign group

If you are ready and know some other local supporters of Israel you might want to think about setting up a local campaign group. This is how to do it:

- You should create a list of local supporters of Israel with whom you should regularly communicate. Make sure that all events are clearly posted with location, purpose and start and finish times. Email is the easiest form of communication but don't over do it. Don't send more than one email a week, and preferably send it at the same time each week. For supporters who are not on email, have a monthly mail out or a phone tree to keep them in touch.
- Meet together monthly or quarterly to agree future actions and who is responsible for them.
- It's a good idea to have one person who is locally responsible for recruiting and organising volunteers, but they shouldn't be the only person to do this work.
- Every activity must have someone who is responsible for it. When planning a grid of activities include the name of who will organise the meeting, the street stall or the letter-writing session. Undertaking a survey of supporters will identify their skills and interests.
- Investing in training of supporters who want to help in organising activities will mean that the weight of the tasks will be spread amongst more volunteers.
- Plan a range of campaign events on a grid for the year ahead. Some people like street stalls because they like talking to the public whilst others will prefer stuffing envelopes over a cup of tea. Make sure supporters have a range of options.
- You need to make sure people know about all your events at least three weeks in advance.
- Supplement bulletins by talking to supporters directly. Experience shows that the only real way to get people to help you is to ask them personally, either on the doorstep or on the phone.
- Some people may have a specific reason for not helping out – perhaps they are having a busy time at work. No does not mean never. If people say no during a phone around, they should still be called next time you are working through the list unless they have given a reason to excuse themselves permanently.
- When speaking to supporters you need to have a robust system for collecting information about what they are willing to do. You should also keep a record of when you spoke to them last and what was agreed.
- Make it personal
- Remember not everyone is as committed as you so ensure there is plenty of fun in what you do. People get involved to be in a social group, as well as to work on an issue they care about.

Organising a local meeting

House Meetings

House Meetings have been used, predominantly in America, as a way to build up small campaigning groups within a community.

Holding the event in a local home will make the event seem very personal and will demonstrate that you are reaching out to engage with the people you are inviting. Find out if a local supporter is happy to have you hold the event in their kitchen or living room. Alternatively, a local hotspot like a café or a community venue provide neutral and familiar territory.

Top Tips

- welcome everyone and be friendly
- have an agenda and don't let the meeting over-run
- make sure you have a supporter there ready to help you encourage discussion
- be ready with a series of questions or topics to discuss so that the conversation doesn't dry up
- have a sign in sheet ready so you get names and contact details of people who have attended so you can follow up anything they raise, especially email addresses
- make notes of issues that people are interested in so that you can send them relevant updates after the event
- think about the place you are holding the meeting – have refreshments available to keep people comfortable, arrange seating in a non-intimidating way, and remember this is an informal discussion group

Supporter Mobilisation Meetings

You should aim to have events that are specifically about involving known supporters of Israel in pro-Israel campaign activity.

The event must be: attractive so that people come, social so that people bond and become part of the team, purposeful every event that you do must have a clear campaigning purpose.

Ideas that work for getting people to come to a supporter mobilisation event include:

- beginning with a good speaker
- showing an interesting film
- selecting an unusual venue for an event so that people might want to see inside the building.

If possible try to avoid having an entry price so there is no barrier to people coming. Make sure you get the name and contact details of everyone who attends.

Invest in food and drink and organising the event so people can mix. Name tags help new people meet each other. Once people bond and they feel part of the team and then they are more likely to come to your subsequent events.

Attach an activity to the event with a key campaign purpose. Get a speaker to give a short speech saying why we need to be doing the activity that is the focus of the event e.g. everyone going away and writing to their MP.

Organising a Street Stall

You might want to get attention for your campaigning and promote Israel's case with a stall at a community event, or even a public stall on a local high street.

Things to consider:

- What specific aspects of the case for Israel will you be talking to people about?
- Where and when will it be best to have a stall?
- Do you need permission?
- What will your stall comprise of?
- How many and which volunteers will you need to help you?

Make sure you are hosting your stall at the busiest time and location possible. If it is a public site rather than at an event, go and visit it the week before. Decide where you will pitch your stall so you are visible, but not obstructing the pavement or flow of people.

For a street stall, make sure you have permission to hold it there. It is courteous to contact the head of the environment department at the council and let them know that you will be holding a number of street stalls locally. Make sure you stress that you will not obstruct pavements or the flow of people. Shopping centers and supermarkets are also ideal locations, however you will need specific permission each time you host a street stall inside them. Please also be aware you will need permission to be on bus or train station property, however you can be nearby to contact commuters. You will not be allowed to hold a street stall on private property unless you have the owner's permission.

You will need:

- Pasting table or similar.
- Posters, signs, banners.
- Clipboards, petition and sign up sheets.
- Leaflets.
- Stickers.
- Sellotape, scissors, string.
- About four volunteers for the duration of the stall. Ask volunteers if they will help for an hour and give them an allotted time.

Top tips:

- Smile and look welcoming.
- Invite everyone to sign your petition, pledge support, or whatever your call to action is. Encourage them to include their mobile number or email address, as well as, their postal address details. Any form that collects personal data in this way needs a disclaimer on it authorising you to use the data to re-contact people.
- Don't stand behind the stall or table. Be proactive and approach people and talk to them.
- Don't crowd the stall. Your team should be dispersed, talking to as many people as possible.
- Try not to let your volunteer's just talk to each other; people are less likely to come up to them.

Section 4

“How to” Guides – Influencing other organisations

Communicating with other faith groups

The priority for pro-Israel campaigners in engaging with faith groups should be to build on personal relationships that you already have with people of other faiths. There is no point duplicating existing groups and mechanisms for interfaith dialogue that have already been sent up: do your research and speak to local Rabbis and other community leaders to find out what mechanisms for engaging with other faiths already exist in your area.

Faith leaders and members of faith groups often have a multiplying effect, in the sense that they can spread positive messages to wide networks easily. The scale and regularity of faith group networks, through services, house groups and community meetings means that engaging with one group can often lead to a whole network being opened up to you.

Engaging on a personal level with group leaders will be of immense importance. It will be helpful to attend these meetings with a Rabbi who already has dialogue with their counterparts from other faiths, a friendly supporter from the congregation or a national organisation such as Christian Friends of Israel.

In conjunction with the relevant group leaders, organise an event with the wider faith community. This can be a meeting at the place of worship, a house meeting or listening panel, or a coffee morning, depending on what local faith group leaders think is appropriate. This meeting must be strongly based on the premise of building long term dialogue.

House Meeting formats are already a well established part of many faith groups and practices. For example for a large number of the “new” churches, weekly house meetings are as important as the main Sunday gathering. House meetings give the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with a small number of people. This dynamic can be used incredibly well if the discussion based nature of the groups is used to best effect.

Approach meetings from the perspective that you are engaging in a listening exercise to learn, or gain a greater understanding of the concerns of the particular faith community that you are meeting regarding Israel.

First contact is all important. If faith groups are of the persuasion to engage in the issue of Israel, it will usually be from the point of view that they have something to offer rather than something to learn. Stressing that any meeting will be part of a long-term dialogue is vital.

Do your research and tailor your approach to the individual faith group you are meeting. When speaking to individual groups, using the word “faith” instead of “Christianity” or “Islam” often plays badly, as there is a perception that you are “watering down” deeply held beliefs. Don’t be afraid to use religious language.

Christian Friends of Israel UK can be contacted via their website:
<http://www.cfi.org.uk/contactus.php>

Joining a political party

If you support a particular political party, joining it gives you a voice in its internal structures and the opportunity to influence its stance on Israel.

All the major political parties can be joined online:

Conservative Party

http://www.conservatives.com/Get_involved/Join.aspx or

- £25 standard rate
- £5 Youth (under 23)

Labour Party

<https://secure2.labour.org.uk/join/> or 08705 900 200

- £41 Standard rate
- £20.50 Reduced rate (unwaged and pensioners)
- £0.01 Youth (under 27 or in full-time education)
- £20.50 Trade Union, political levy payer or affiliate member

The Labour Party has a specifically Zionist affiliated organisation, the Jewish Labour Movement (the successor to Poale Zion). Membership details are here: <http://www.jlm.org.uk/join-us/>

Liberal Democrats

https://www.libdems.org.uk/join_us.aspx or 020 7227 1335

- £12 Standard rate
- £6 Concessionary subscription (available to anyone who receives, or is entitled to receive, state benefits (other than state pension or child benefit); anyone who is a student in full-time education; or anyone under 26)

Just like most membership organizations they are more readily influenced from the inside.

If you really want to affect policy one of the best ways is joining a political party. However, it isn’t for everyone so do not join unless you support that particular party.

Joining a trade union

As democratic, member-run organisations, unions can and do take stances on international issues, including Israel.

To find the right union for you and your job, you can call the TUC's 'Join a Union' line 0870 600 4 882 (national rate, 8am - 9pm Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm Saturday) or use workSMART's online tools to help you choose.

There is a list of all trade unions affiliated to the TUC online here: http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/unions_main.cfm, this includes a brief description of which occupations they recruit from.

Some professions e.g. teaching, journalism, have specialist unions that only represent that profession.

If your occupation does not have a specific union, the largest unions will usually have a general section that would be happy to recruit you.

These are:

Unite

www.unitetheunion.org.uk

(recruits in manufacturing, engineering, energy, construction, IT, defence aerospace, motor industry, civil aviation, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, steel and metals, shipbuilding, scientists, technologists, professional and managerial staff, electronics and telecommunications, tobacco, food and drink, textiles, ceramics, paper, printing, professional staff in universities, commercial sales, the voluntary sector, banking and financial services, and the National Health Service, administrative, clerical, technical and supervisory; agriculture; building, construction and civil engineering; chemical, oil and rubber manufacture; civil air transport; docks and waterways; food, drink and tobacco; general workers; passenger services; power and engineering; public services; road transport commercial; textiles; vehicle building and automotive)

Unison

www.unison.org.uk

(recruits in local government, health care, the water, gas and electricity industries, further and higher education, schools, transport, voluntary sector, housing associations, police support staff)

GMB

www.gmb.org.uk

(recruits in public services - primarily NHS, local government, care education; also engineering, construction, shipbuilding, energy, catering, security, civil air transport, aerospace, defence, clothing, textiles, retail, hotel, chemicals, utilities, offshore, food production and distribution)

Organising on Campus

The Union of Jewish Student's (UJS) mission is: 'To create meaningful Jewish campus experiences and inspire Jewish students to make an enduring commitment to their Jewish identity, Israel and the community.'

UJS serves as the sole communal body representing all Jewish students to the Jewish and wider community. As a Union directed by its members, UJS' priority is to meet the needs and demands of its members both individually and through Jewish Societies (J-Soc).

Our primary focus is over fifty J-Socs throughout the UK. UJS offers each J-Soc the expertise, guidance and resources to enrich Jewish student life on campus.

UJS can be contacted here: <http://www.ujs.org.uk/contact-us/>

Trade Unions are membership organizations and are best influenced from the inside. They are a very closed community and do not react well to people or groups from outside telling them to do things. However, it is different from individual union members.

You will be surprised by how many ordinary trade union members locally are not aware of their National Unions policy. Do not presume that just because someone is a member they are active or aware or agree. They are very receptive to people reaching out and befriending them- being interested in what they think.

It is only by joining and building relationships that we can challenge the presumption that ordinary union members are anti-Israel.



Section 5

Fact Sheets

Fact Sheet: Jewishness, Zionism & Racism

Zionism is the national movement of the Jewish people, calling for sovereign Jewish life in the land of Israel. The origin of the word 'Zionism' is the biblical word 'Zion', often used as a synonym for Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

Historically, Zionism as a political movement emerged as part of the growth of national movements in the last quarter of the 19th century. Jews aspired to establish an independent and sovereign entity in the land of their ancestors. Zionist leaders, most notably the Hungarian-born Theodor Herzl, hoped that the fulfilment of such aspirations would end centuries of anti-Jewish persecution and allow for the renewal of Jewish culture, language and traditions.

The persecution of Jews was a constant of European life in the medieval period. Jews were demonised as the killers of Christ, banned from most professions, frequently confined to ghettos, periodically subjected to pogroms and expelled from one country after another. Many Jews hoped the onset of modernity, which led to emancipation for Jews in many countries, would bring about an end to anti-Jewish prejudice in Europe. However, in the modern period anti-Semitism did not disappear. It took on new forms, such as the belief that Jews were racially inferior, or involved in a global conspiracy. Jews in Europe were subject to waves of pogroms and persecution in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Herzl himself was driven to found the Zionist movement after witnessing anti-Semitism in France. In a famous case in 1894, a Jewish captain in the French army, Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely convicted of treason. Dreyfus was publicly disgraced at a ceremony in Paris, where crowds of onlookers chanted 'Death to the Jews'. Only later was he acquitted.

Herzl was the first to bring the Jewish need for an independent sovereign state to world attention. He turned the historical Jewish dream of returning to Israel into a modern political movement. He convened the first World Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. As a democratic movement from its inception, the broad umbrella of Zionism always included secular and religious Jews, as well as those subscribing to political views from across the spectrum. Threads of the wide range of views within Zionism can still be seen today in the complex party political structure in the State of Israel.

The establishment of the State of Israel marked the realisation of Zionism's central political goal of attaining an internationally recognised, legally secured home for the Jewish people in their historical homeland, where Jews would be free from persecution and able to develop their national identity. Zionism retains its relevance today as the Jewish state still seeks to build a home for the Jewish people that is at peace with its neighbours and able to fulfil its potential as a cultural and spiritual beacon for the Jewish people. Most Jews around the world consider themselves supporters of Zionism, in that they support the existence and development of Israel as the state and homeland for the Jewish people.

At various times, certain groups have tried to delegitimise Zionism by falsely smearing it as a racist ideology, or inaccurately characterising it as a colonial movement. One of the premises of Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people, who have a shared language, culture, history and historical homeland, constitute a nation. As such, they have equal rights to other nations, including the right to self-determination. To describe Zionism as racist is to discriminate against Jews by uniquely denying their rights to national self-determination.

Zionists sought to end the status of Jews as a persecuted minority, by re-establishing a majority in Palestine through immigration, settlement and peaceful agreement with the local Arabs. Most of the Jews who moved to Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel came not as colonisers, but as refugees fleeing persecution in various parts of Europe. They did not seek to subjugate the local population, but hoped that the lives of all the residents of the area would be improved by the influx of Jewish immigrants. The early Zionists believed that there was ample room in Palestine to support Jewish immigration, without compromising the interests of the local Arab population. The area was a relatively small and underdeveloped part of the Ottoman Empire, with no independent government or unified political structure. Jews did not enter Palestine by force, but purchased land and built new communities.

Mainstream Zionists always believed that a non-Jewish minority would live alongside the Jewish people as citizens with full and equal rights. This principle was enshrined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, which promised Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel 'full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.' Today that vision is expressed in Israel. Non-Jewish residents of the State of Israel have Israeli citizenship by right and approximately 20% of the citizens of Israel are Arabs and other minorities. The spouses and children of Israeli citizens, whatever their faith, are also entitled to citizenship.

In order to fulfil its goal of being a homeland and refuge for the Jewish people, Israel grants citizenship to any Jew who wishes to live in Israel. This right is extended to the children and grandchildren of Jews and their spouses, even if they themselves are not Jewish. It is also possible to become a citizen of Israel through naturalisation in some cases.

Fact Sheet: UK Government Policy towards Israel

- Foreign Secretary William Hague's recent speech to a Chatham House conference on Britain-Israel relations, whilst clearly intending to reassure Israel about Britain's Middle East policies, revealed certain gaps in perspective between Britain and Israel on the peace process.
- Hague maintained his pressure on the US to lay out terms of reference for a two-state solution through the Quartet, whilst giving a cool response to the idea of an interim proposal.
- Possibly trying to anticipate Israeli concerns, Hague revised his version of the terms of reference, by stating that a solution to the refugee issue should be 'realistic', and by emphasising that peace should be based on 'two states for two peoples.'

Introduction

On Wednesday 30 March, Foreign Secretary William Hague addressed a special conference convened by Chatham House to mark 60 years of formal diplomatic relations between Britain and Israel. His speech was clearly intended to reassure Israelis about British commitment to Israel's security and the bilateral relationship. At the same time it was an attempt by Hague to make a case to an Israeli audience, as to why the dramatic changes in the region make progress on the peace process increasingly urgent. In so doing, however, he revealed certain gaps in perspective between Britain and Israel, and possibly between Britain and the US, over how best to advance the peace process in the coming months.

UK pressing for Quartet terms of reference

A key theme of William Hague's speech was Britain's view that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is an urgent priority, and that the changes in the region only add to its importance. The Foreign Secretary noted that change in the region 'combines the immense potential for greater democracy and human development with the risk of violence and threat to human life that we see so represented to an extreme degree in Libya.' The Foreign Office appears to believe that the growing uncertainty in the region will push a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians even further out of reach. Britain, along with France and Germany, is openly pressing the US to lay out terms of reference which will define the parameters for a two-state solution through the Quartet. In a policy speech in December Hillary Clinton stressed the importance of negotiations, and said that the US would not attempt to impose a solution. In February the US ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, appeared to explicitly reject the option of Quartet terms of reference. But with the next Quartet meeting due this month, it is now unclear where the US stands. In the absence of direct talks, the pressure for Quartet proposed terms of reference is growing. Given the failure of the Obama administration to bring about meaningful negotiations, and fatigue within the US government over the issue, the US might see laying down international parameters as an opportunity to create at least the perception of progress.

What will transpire in the Quartet may be affected by ongoing discussions between the US and Israel over a possible Israeli diplomatic initiative. The details of the initiative being considered by Israel are still not pinned down, and mixed messages from the Israeli government have frustrated some in the international community. But officials in the Prime Minister's office indicate that a package of interim measures is being considered that would increase Palestinian control over the West Bank, whilst continuing the search for a permanent status agreement. Netanyahu is also believed to be considering a statement clarifying his position on borders.

Whether Israel decides to present a plan will depend to a considerable degree on whether the US supports it. Until now the US has been sceptical about interim measures. Their support is likely to depend on how far reaching the Israeli proposals are, and whether the administration believes they will be sufficient to bring momentum back to bilateral negotiations. If US support can be secured, the Israeli proposals could be unveiled at a forthcoming visit by Prime Minister Netanyahu to Washington in May.

The Palestinians have rejected interim measures. Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad recently told the Wall Street Journal, 'Unless we have an adequate definition of the terms of a final settlement, it's not going to fly.' They continue to campaign for the international community to recognise Palestinian statehood based on the 1967 borders.

In his speech on 30 March, William Hague made clear he did not believe interim measures would be sufficient, and pressed the US to back the European proposal for international terms of reference. So far Israel has resisted internationally imposed terms of reference. They have argued that the final status issues should be agreed in bilateral talks between the sides and not prejudged by the international community. They have also argued that the Palestinians will have no reason to return to talks if they think they can get the international community to impose their terms on Israel. Israeli officials also point out that whilst there is international enthusiasm to lay out terms of reference on borders, the issue where Israel is expected to concede, there is no parallel enthusiasm to set down international terms on refugees, where the Palestinians will have to concede.

Britain's terms of reference - a shift on refugees?

Britain's terms of reference, as set out by Hague in his Chatham House speech, were subtly different to previous versions, possibly reflecting a desire to make Israel more comfortable with them. In his Chatham House speech Hague said:

The UK, France and Germany have set out our views on what those principles should be two states for two peoples based on: 1967 borders with equivalent land swaps, security arrangements that protect Israel whilst respecting Palestinian sovereignty by ending the Occupation; a fair realistic and agreed solution for refugees and Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

In particular it was noticeable that Hague inserted the word 'realistic' into the language on refugees. In recent statements Hague used the phrase, 'just, fair and agreed solution' to the issue of refugees. Adding the term 'realistic' could be interpreted as a shift to recognise Israeli concerns over the refugee issue. Israel opposes the Palestinian right of return, which would undermine Israel's viability as a Jewish and democratic state. It is widely accepted that this demand is incompatible with a final status agreement.

Hague made another comment which appeared to lean towards Israel's position on this issue. He explicitly characterised the two-state solution as being aimed at establishing 'two states for two peoples'. This implies acceptance of the Israeli position that a future agreement should secure Israel's future as the nation state of the Jewish people, and Palestine should be the state of the Palestinians, and the solution for Palestinian refugees. As BICOM Senior Visiting Fellow, and former Israeli negotiator, Dr. Tal Becker recently set out in a paper written for the Washington Institute, this does not mean an exclusively Jewish state. Rather it implies that Israel would express the Jewish people's right of self-determination in their own state, whilst still protecting the equal rights of non-Jewish minorities, and Palestine would give expression to the Palestinian right of self-determination.

Palestinian leaders have recently objected to the 'two states for two peoples' formulation precisely because it appears to prejudice the issue of the right of return. There was a sharp disagreement over the issue between Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon and Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad at a UN meeting in 2009, when Ayalon insisted the phrase 'two states for two peoples' be included in a joint communiqué.

However, Hague stopped short of endorsing Prime Minister Netanyahu's position that as part of final status deal, the Palestinians should recognise Israel's status as a Jewish state. Whilst President Obama explicitly spoke about Israel as a Jewish state in a speech to the UN in 2010, Britain has conspicuously avoided doing so in the past couple of years. This is despite the fact that as Prime Minister, Gordon Brown spoke without reservation about Israel's character as a Jewish state. Instead Hague fell back on wording which echoed the 1917 Balfour Declaration, by expressing his support for Israel as, 'a homeland for the Jewish people.' This ambiguous wording, in itself, falls well short of the Israeli position.

The gap between British and Israeli views of the process

Britain continues to call for the two sides to return to bilateral talks as soon as possible. In theory, this is in line with Israel's position, which is also in favour of an immediate return to talks without preconditions. Britain is not backing the Palestinian position that Israel must first resume its settlement freeze before talks begin. The UK has also explicitly rejected unilateral measures by either side.

But Israeli officials argue that in practice, Britain is undermining the return to talks by pushing for internationally endorsed terms of reference, and by granting unilateral diplomatic gestures for the Palestinians such as the recent upgrade of their mission in London. Such measures, Israelis argue, encourage Palestinian intransigence. The Palestinians are building up to securing some form of international endorsement of statehood based on 1967 borders at the UN in September. Any encouragement for this strategy, Israelis argue, reduces the pressure on the Palestinians to return to direct talks.

It is notable in this context that the UK has, in the past few weeks, downgraded its expectations for what can be achieved by September. In mid-February the Foreign Secretary's stated goal was, 'an agreement on all final status issues and the welcoming of Palestine as a full member by September 2011.' In his Chatham House speech on 30 March, the ambition was more modest, calling more vaguely for 'progress' by September.

But whilst the Foreign Secretary has scaled back his ambitions for September, he is not embracing the apparent Israeli move to propose an interim measure. He said in his speech, 'There has been talk about whether interim solutions will suffice. Let me be clear that I do not believe they will. Final status issues have to be resolved.'

In Israel, whilst there is a sense that a diplomatic initiative would help improve Israel's international standing, there is widespread scepticism that the current regional environment is conducive to reaching a final status agreement. The instability of countries surrounding Israel has created new security concerns that will weigh on the minds of Israeli policy makers when it comes to the issue of territorial concessions.

The Palestinians are also affected by the regional change. The Palestinian Authority faces heightened concern for its own domestic legitimacy, making it more wary of the difficult concessions involved in the peace process. Whilst there is renewed talk of Palestinian unity, senior Fatah officials in Ramallah assess that Hamas is unlikely to compromise on Fatah's demands for new elections as it waits to see if a new and more friendly government emerges in Egypt.

Conclusion

In this context, it is not clear how a Quartet statement proposing terms of reference, as suggested by Britain, Germany and France, will help get the sides back into a meaningful negotiation process. If internationally proposed terms of reference will help reassure the Palestinians about the final destination of the peace process, and give them the confidence to return to talks, then this might be a reason to put them on the table. As yet, however, the Palestinians have given no clear indication that they are ready to enter direct talks with Netanyahu, even if the Quartet provides the terms of reference.

It is clear that the UK would prefer to see a final status agreement over an interim step forward. But circumstances in the region seem to militate against a final status agreement in the near future. Quartet endorsed terms of reference, and resolutions at the UN, may define the parameters of a Palestinian state on paper, but it is not clear how they will bring progress on the ground. Many observers believe the Palestinians will not enter direct talks with Netanyahu in the current context, regardless of what the international community does to encourage them. Therefore, if Israel gains support from the US for an interim proposal, European policy makers will have to assess whether it is better to get behind it, in the hope that it will ultimately move the parties towards the realisation of a two-state solution.

Fact Sheet: Iran

Iran, which is a Persian speaking, Shi'ite Muslim country, has been led by a radical and fundamentalist Islamic leadership since 1979. The regime subscribes to a theocratic ideology that is fiercely anti-Western and opposed to the very existence of a Jewish state in the region.

Iran is a country with ten times Israel's population, nearly 80 times Israel's size, and 10% of the world's oil. It aims to be the strongest power in the region and to export its radical ideology throughout the world. Iran's leaders frequently call for the eradication of the State of Israel and have promoted anti-Semitism including denial of the Holocaust.

Destabilising the region

Iran's ambitions are not only of concern to Israel. Iran opposes internationally-backed efforts to bring stability across the region, by supporting violent anti-Western forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon. The British government has linked Iran to attacks on its troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its sailors were abducted and taken to Iran from international waters in 2007. Iran's missile programme has developed long-range weapons that can reach many parts of Europe.

Iran views terrorism as a legitimate means to further its ideological and strategic aims. Iran opposes any Arab peace agreements or recognition of Israel and assists Islamist terrorist groups and organisations that strive to attack Israel, sabotage the peace process and destabilise the regimes of the more pragmatic Arab countries. The Iranian regime arms, funds and provides military training to the Lebanese Shi'ite terrorist organisation Hezbollah, which shares its ideology and acts in coordination with the Iranian government. Iran supplied Hezbollah with the missiles and rockets that hit major cities and towns in the north of Israel in the Second Lebanon War of 2006, killing and injuring hundreds of Israelis. Iran supports Palestinian terrorist organisations such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It provided them with military and financial assistance in their violent activity against Israel. Iran also has a close strategic relationship with Syria.

Iran's nuclear programme

The danger posed by Iran to stability in the region threatens to be greatly enhanced by its rapid development of nuclear weapons technology. Iran claims that its nuclear programme is purely for civilian purposes, but in 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which monitors nuclear programmes on behalf of the UN, discovered that Iran had been systematically lying about the true extent of its programme for many years. In 2009 it was revealed that Iran had continued to deceive the world, when a secret uranium enrichment facility was exposed in Qom by Western intelligence agencies. Iran has repeatedly refused to explain evidence held by the IAEA that it has been developing nuclear weapons technology. Most Western governments believe that Iran's true goal is the development of nuclear weapons capability.

The UN Security Council has demanded that Iran cease its uranium enrichment programme (which could provide it with the raw material for a nuclear bomb), and fully disclose the extent of its nuclear programme. Iran has refused to do so, and in 2010 the Security Council passed a fourth binding resolution imposing sanctions on Iran for its continued non-compliance. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, along with Germany, have made a series of offers to provide political and economic assistance to Iran if it accedes to international demands. So far these have been repeatedly rejected. The threat that Iran might use a nuclear weapon, or pass on the technology to one of its terrorist clients, would make it much harder to counter Iran's malign influence in the region.

Fact Sheet: Hamas

Hamas is a radical Islamist organisation that emerged from the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood during the early stages of the First Intifada. Its charter was issued in 1988, setting out the goals and vision of the organisation. It includes a firm and explicit rejection of the very idea of a peace process, which would involve the surrender of 'Islamic land' and the recognition of Israel's right to exist on it. The central aim of Hamas is to establish an Islamic state in all territory defined as 'Palestine' (from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River) through armed struggle. Hamas is fiercely anti-Semitic and its charter blames Jews for all kinds of evils, including the First and Second World Wars.

Hamas has become a leading perpetrator of terrorist attacks against Israel, as well as against suspected Palestinian 'collaborators' and Fatah rivals. Hamas has carried out suicide bombings and attacks against Israel since the early 1990s. In recent years, its principal method of violence has been the firing of mortars and rockets at Israeli towns close to the Gaza border. Hamas's military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, has been proscribed under the UK's Terrorism Act 2000 since February 2001. The organisation is also outlawed in its entirety by the EU and US.

Hamas is responsible for the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was taken from inside Israel in a cross-border raid in June 2006.

The Quartet - the EU, US, Russia and the UN - demands that Hamas renounces violence, acknowledges Israel's right to exist and recognises previous agreements between Israel and the PA. Hamas has refused these demands. These are not arbitrary principles. They are equivalent to the commitments made by the PLO at the beginning of the Oslo peace process in the 1990s. They are the logical premise for moving towards a peaceful two-state solution. The Israeli government has repeatedly and explicitly recognised the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to their own sovereign state. Hamas is expected to equally recognise Israel's right to exist.

Hamas leaders occasionally talk of a long-term 'hudna' (temporary ceasefire) with Israel. However, they have never given any sign that they are ready to accommodate the existence of Israel as part of a permanent solution to the conflict.

Fact Sheet: Security

After the failure of the Camp David negotiations in 2000, the Second Intifada broke out and brought with it a wave of suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks to Israel. Whilst Israel has experienced terrorism throughout its history, it had never been so intense. In 2002, a fatal suicide bombing was carried out in Israel nearly every two weeks. The attackers invariably came from the West Bank. In response, Israel decided to build a security barrier in order to stop terrorists from entering Israel from the West Bank. This contributed to a dramatic reduction in successful terrorist attacks inside Israel. All but 5% of the barrier is an electronically monitored fence and the rest is a wall.

The purpose of the security barrier is to prevent attacks on Israeli citizens. Whilst the final border between Israel and the Palestinians has to be resolved by negotiations, the route of the security barrier is determined by the need to save Israeli lives by preventing Palestinian terrorists from reaching Israeli towns and cities. In 2004, the Israeli Supreme Court made a landmark ruling, which concluded the fence was legal, on the strict grounds that its purpose was to protect lives. The court determined that the route should not cause disproportionate harm to the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank. On the basis of this ruling, the route of the fence was changed in many places to minimise the impact on Palestinian life. The revised route follows the route of the Green Line (the 1949 armistice line) in many areas and includes less than 10% of the West Bank territory.

Palestinians living in the West Bank are able to appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court against the route of the fence where it causes disruption to their lives, and have successfully done so in some cases. Attempts are made to minimise disruption caused by the fence, for example by building agricultural gates which allow Palestinian farmers to access their land.

Fact Sheet: The IDF

Is it accountable and does it act without regard for international law?

Israel has been drawn into conflicts with irregular forces in urban environments. In recent operations in the Gaza Strip and in southern Lebanon, Israel has acted primarily to prevent the firing of rockets at its towns and cities. As with British and American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, Israel faces complex problems in fighting against forces which deliberately hide among the civilian population.

The IDF considers itself bound by international humanitarian law and makes use of all available measures to distinguish combatants from non-combatants and to act with proportionality. Its soldiers are required to act according to its ethical code, known as 'The Spirit of the IDF'. This code includes the principle of the 'Purity of Arms', according to which forces are expected to do all they can to prevent harm to non-combatants. This task is deliberately made difficult by the tactics of the militant groups Israel is confronting. Both Hamas in Gaza, and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon deliberately embed themselves within civilian populations in order to make it harder for Israel to act against them.

During Operation Cast Lead, Israel's military operation to stop rocket fire from Gaza at the beginning of 2009, Hamas fighters used the civilian population as cover. They fired rockets at Israel from civilian areas, established bases and weapons stores in mosques, apartment buildings, and hospitals and booby trapped civilian neighbourhoods. Fighters removed their uniforms so it would be impossible for the Israeli forces to distinguish combatants and non-combatants.

Israel used a range of techniques to try and overcome these challenges. These included issuing widespread warnings to civilians with leaflet drops, and telephoning residents of individual buildings to warn them they were going to be targeted. Over 1,000 Palestinians were killed in the operation. NGOs have claimed that the majority of those killed were civilians. Israel has compiled a list of fatalities indicating that fewer than a third were civilians. Israel maintains that most were operatives in Hamas's military and security system.

After the operation the Israeli military launched a number of investigations to examine lessons that could be learned to further reduce the harm to civilians. These included better coordination with humanitarian agencies and better control over the use of weapons which caused harm to civilians, such as white phosphorous. In July 2010 Israel announced that to better ensure its own adherence with its humanitarian responsibilities, a humanitarian officer would be introduced to combat units at battalion level.

Israel has declared that it is committed to investigating all credible allegations of misconduct against its armed forces, whether they come from Palestinian sources, the media, or NGOs. Responsibility for IDF investigations falls to the Military Advocate General (MAG), a legal officer with the rank of Major General who heads an independent legal branch within the IDF. The Military Advocate General is appointed directly by the Defence Minister and is outside the IDF command structure. He determines whether a case warrants a full criminal investigation.

The decisions of the Military Advocate General are subject to review by Israel's civilian Attorney General, who is also an independent figure. A complainant or non-governmental organisation may trigger the review of the Attorney General by simply sending a letter directly to the Attorney General. Both the decisions of the Military Advocate General and the Attorney General are subject to judicial review by Israel's Supreme Court, which can be petitioned by any interested party including Israelis and Palestinians alike, and NGOs. One hundred and fifty allegations were investigated following Operation Cast Lead, Israel's major military operation to stop rocket attacks from Gaza. These have resulted in disciplinary and criminal proceedings against IDF soldiers and officers in some cases.

Israel also has a strong legacy of independent judicial and state inquiries into the conduct of military and political leaders in times of conflict. In two recent examples, major inquiries were led by former Supreme Court judges into the Second Lebanon War in 2006 and the Gaza flotilla incident in 2010 in which nine Turkish activists were killed.

Change in North Africa and the Middle East

BICOM EXPERT VIEW: TURMOIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST - AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE

By Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Michael Herzog

Across the Middle East, dramatic events of historic magnitude are unfolding. Across the globe, governments are wondering where the erupting revolutionary energy will lead this region, so rich with oil and so poor with democracy and governance. Where will it hit next? Will the initial wave of enthusiasm bear the fruits of democracy or ultimately give way to non-democratic forces and further radicalisation?

Whilst pundits are debating these questions, it is worth reminding ourselves of what Chou Enlai, the first prime minister of Communist China, once quipped when asked to comment on the French revolution: "It is too early to make a judgement..."

However, it is quite evident that people across the Middle East, long frustrated by oppressive regimes, are rising against a variety of basic maladies characterising the region¹: the denial of dignity to the people and the lack of proper, clean governance, as well as basic freedoms, jobs and social safety nets. This revolution is mostly carried out by young masses that connect, inspire and organise through the internet and social networks. Yet, in a region lacking a culture or tradition of democracy and without coherent leadership and platform, beyond toppling rulers, it is not clear where this revolution is headed.

Even though the upheaval is focused inwards, Israel strongly believes it will feel a direct impact. Israelis have always held that a democratic Middle East will improve the prospects for peace and stability across the region and for Israel in particular. Nevertheless, they tend to focus on concerns rather than hopes, given their proximity to the revolutionary theatres, the strategic challenges they have been facing and their experiences over the years. Most of all, they are concerned about the transition from dictatorship to democracy in a region so rife with anti-democratic forces.

Egypt: The Test Case

Egypt is viewed by Israel as the most important test case for transition in the region. Not only is Egypt an immediate neighbour, sharing a 150-mile-long border with Israel, but it is also the heart of the Arab world and a hugely important regional actor. Egypt has always been the vanguard of emerging trends in the Middle East, as the birthplace of authoritarian military rule, Pan-Arabism, Islamism and now popular revolt against dictatorship. After the 1973 war, Egypt, with the backbone of an alliance with the United States, became the leader of the moderate Arab camp, the first to sign a peace treaty with Israel and an important supporter of Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. The Israel-Egypt peace treaty significantly widened Israel's margin of security, since it removed the threat of war with the strongest Arab military force.

The fact that the transition in Egypt is managed by the military and secular forces has tempered initial Israeli worries of a possible Islamist takeover or the abrogation of the peace treaty. The military have publicly pledged to adhere to the peace treaty and advocate maintaining close ties with the US. However, Israelis still have good reason to be concerned about the following:

- **The nature of relations in the face of regional challenges:** Even though Egypt dictated a cold peace, in recent years Egypt and Israel developed close coordination in order to counter radical Islamism in the region, most noteworthy vis-a-vis Hamas rule in Gaza, which both have considered a threat to their national security. All of this coordination is now under question. Strong anti-Israel sentiments in the Egyptian public - long fostered by Mubarak's regime - are likely to express themselves in the policy of any future Egyptian government, and Egypt-in-transition will be unable to play the same significant supportive role in the peace process. This is all the more true if the Muslim Brotherhood, who object to the very concept of peace with Israel, become part of a ruling coalition.
- **Deteriorating security situation in the Sinai:** The power vacuum in Cairo has allowed for a dangerous deterioration in the security situation in the Sinai, manifesting itself in a series of violent clashes between Bedouin elements and Egyptian security forces. In one incident, an armed group from Gaza was reportedly arrested on its way to attack Israeli targets. Smuggling through the Egypt-Gaza border has also intensified. Israel sees mounting terror threats from Sinai.

- **The nature of bilateral commercial relations:** Almost one-fifth of Israel's electric power generation has been imported from Egypt as natural gas. The flow of gas through a northern Sinai pipeline was stopped on 5 February after the nearby Egypt-Jordan natural gas pipeline was sabotaged. There were repeated delays in its resumption, leading Israelis to suspect that political, and not just technical or security considerations were involved. The question poses itself: what does this mean for future energy, economic and trade relations?

Whilst the US, Europe and the international community had little if any say in the uprising itself, they have an important role to play in ensuring that transition in Egypt is directed towards democracy, maintains peaceful relations with Israel and does not give a free pass to radical Islamist forces in the region. Egypt relies heavily on outside assistance, mainly economic, and this should be used to help guide transition. In this context, given the US deficit and economic difficulties coupled with Egyptian public sensitivities, the EU should play a more dominant role through its existing vehicles to push for simultaneous political and economic reforms, so as to ease transition. They should also update the joint EU-Egypt Action Plan of 2007 with new priorities and larger upfront investments, and generate funds for reconstruction and development. For its part, the US would do well to recalibrate its assistance to Egypt to focus more on democracy, civil society, governance and economic needs, and relatively less on military assistance.

The Regional Context

The regional upheaval erupted in the midst of an ongoing critical struggle between the pragmatic Arab centre, led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and the radical axis led by Iran. Even before the eruption, the pragmatic Arab centre had weakened due to aging leaderships in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, a fragile Jordan and a divided Palestinian Authority. This picture was exacerbated by a growing regional perception of decline in American power and influence.

The void was filled partly by radical forces but mostly by actors such as Turkey, Qatar and even Syria, who positioned themselves between the conflicting axes and sometimes as go-betweens. In so doing, they essentially helped the more radical forces. This manifested itself, for example, when Turkey ran an independent initiative to mediate with Iran over its nuclear programme, in contradiction to US-EU moves to promote UN Security Council sanctions against Iran.

With Egypt now in transition and Saudi Arabia fearing the next wave, the pragmatic Arab centre is hardly existent and the perception of American weakness has deepened. Extremist forces across the region may be energised unless they themselves face the heat of revolutionary fervour.

What could and should be done to avert serious disruption to the strategic balance in the Middle East?

First, the international community should invest in regional transition, help balance it, and encourage reform in autocracies closer to the West and important to it, such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan. It would also do well to invest in programmes designed to promote democratic values. It should strive to apply basic universal rules and lay a threshold for the inclusion of Islamist forces in the democratic process, so as to mitigate the risk of those processes being abused or hijacked.

Second, the outcome in Libya, now centre stage in the Middle East, is critical to where the region as a whole will be headed. If Gaddafi wins the civil war by slaughtering his own people as the West stand idly by, rising masses across the region, especially in Iran, may lose heart in their struggle and faith in the West. Autocratic rulers will conclude that the best way to survive is to use brutal force.

Third, Iran should also feel the heat. Elevating current international sanctions to include human rights and democracy violations, in the spirit of winds blowing throughout the region, would send a powerful message of support and encouragement to reform-seeking people in Iran.

Finally, the international community should help reset the stage for the resumption of the Israeli-Arab peace process.

The Peace Process

Israelis are publicly debating whether the regional turmoil calls for an effort to revive the peace process with the Palestinians or a wait-and-see approach in a period of regional transition. Key to this is the consideration of whether the fundamental stability to sustain agreements exists, or whether a lack of moderate Arab backing for the process and seeming American weakness make this unlikely.

After some vacillation, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu appears to have concluded that the former approach is more suitable to the moment. Not moving entails high risks and there are also potential opportunities in the new situation. Where Netanyahu will take this conclusion is not yet clear.

Further stalemate will enhance Palestinian unilateralism. This unilateral push for international recognition of Palestinian statehood would likely undermine the prospects of future negotiations at the expense of both sides' interests and deepen the current trend of Israel's isolation and delegitimation. Furthermore, under the banner of liberty now hoisted across the Middle East, Palestinians may be driven to yet another popular uprising. The parties should be encouraged to return to the table rather than adopt a unilateral approach, which may escalate the situation rather than lead to actual Palestinian statehood.

Fresh concerns about regional stability may be pushing both parties to reconsider their positions. Here lies an opportunity. The parties, however, need help from the outside, by way of a coordinated American-European effort, in determining agreed-upon terms of reference for the peace talks and providing an international umbrella for their resumption. Simultaneously, all parties should increase support for the bottom-up capacity and institution-building process led by Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad in the West Bank.

It is also time to revisit the Israeli-Syrian peace track. Given the shaky regional balance of power, it is now doubly important to drive Syria away from its alliance with Iran and Hezbollah towards the moderate camp, and to help stabilise the explosive situation in Lebanon.

One conclusion is shared by most Israelis: peace treaties should encompass peoples, not only governments, and be fortified by solid security arrangements.

Conclusion

The Middle East has embarked on a long, difficult journey, rife with risks and opportunities. Mindful of the risks, known all too well to Israelis, the international community, under the leadership of the US and Europe and together with regional partners, should seize the moment. They should play an active role so as to help guide transition in the region towards both democracy and stability. The stakes are all too high and the outcome of the regional struggle of forces is far from being determined.

Since 1993, Brigadier General (Ret.) Michael Herzog has participated in most of Israel's negotiations with the Palestinians, Jordanians and Syrians, whilst serving in senior positions in Israel's Ministry of Defence. He participated in the Wye Plantation summit, the Camp David summit, the Taba negotiations, the Annapolis summit and subsequent negotiations.

From June 2009 to March 2010, he served as special emissary for Israel's prime minister and minister of defence in the efforts to relaunch the peace process. As well as being a Senior Visiting Fellow at BICOM, he is an International Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Fact Sheet: BDS

A boycott would do nothing to contribute to the advancement of a peaceful and just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Far from helping the Palestinians, a boycott would hinder the development of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians on which prospects for future peace and security rely. The goal of peace depends on two sides, Israelis and Palestinians, working together with international support towards the mutual goal of a negotiated two-state solution. An environment of rejection and misdirected pressure targeted at Israel is counterproductive to an internationally-backed peace process premised on the development of mutual understanding and respect for both sides.

An academic and cultural boycott, which has been promoted by various trade unions and other activists, contradicts the principles of scientific ethics and the open spirit of international cooperation between scientists, artists and others. It is particularly counterproductive to target Israel's academic community, which has a proud record of promoting honest debate, criticism and self-examination within Israeli society. Israel's universities have a significant Arab student intake and are important forums for interaction and cooperation between Jews and Arabs. Arab citizens of Israel have increasingly risen to high ranks within Israeli academia.

Whereas Israel, an open and democratic state in which Jewish and Arab citizens enjoy equal rights, and which embraces free academic inquiry, has been threatened with a boycott, no other country is subject to such a campaign. Prominent Palestinian academics such as Sari Nusseibeh, President of Al Quds University in East Jerusalem, have been firm critics of the movement to boycott Israeli universities and academics.

Similarly, an economic boycott cannot help the Palestinian people, whose future prosperity depends on creating an atmosphere of economic and political cooperation. Since Israel's establishment, the Arab world has tried to use an economic boycott to isolate and weaken Israel economically, and thus make the state non-viable. Whilst Egypt and Jordan have direct trade links with Israel, most Arab states are reluctant to trade directly with Israel. The Roadmap peace plan specifically calls for the normalisation of relations between the Arab states and Israel, including the return of trade links.

Fact Sheet: International Law

- In a major turnaround, Judge Richard Goldstone has withdrawn the accusation that Israel intentionally targeted civilians in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead.
- In a Washington Post article, he accepted that Israel 'dedicated significant resources' to investigations into accusations made against its forces, and that the results, 'indicate that civilians were not intentionally targeted.'
- He maintains that Hamas intentionally targeted Israel civilians and has done nothing to respond to accusations that they committed war crimes.

What has Judge Goldstone said?

- In an article for the Washington Post on Friday 1 April, Judge Richard Goldstone withdrew the central accusations made against Israel in the report he conducted for the UN Human Rights Council into Operation Cast Lead.
- His article follows the final report of a committee of experts, commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council to look at Israel and Hamas's responses to the Goldstone Report. This committee was led by former New York judge Mary McGowan Davis. Judge Goldstone acknowledges that the committee of experts report shows that:
- The IDF's investigations into accusations made against its forces, 'indicate that civilians were not intentionally targeted as a matter of policy.'
- Judge Goldstone accepts the findings of the committee of experts, 'that "Israel has dedicated significant resources to investigate over 400 allegations of operational misconduct in Gaza" while "the de facto authorities (i.e., Hamas) have not conducted any investigations into the launching of rocket and mortar attacks against Israel."'
- Goldstone states that had he regretted that his inquiry did not have access to the evidence now available from Israel's internal inquiries, because, 'it probably would have influenced our findings about intentionality and war crimes.'
- With regards to the number of Palestinian casualties who were civilians, Goldstone states: 'The Israeli military's numbers have turned out to be similar to those recently furnished by Hamas.'

Background

- The Goldstone Report into the conduct of Israel and Hamas during Operation Cast Lead was commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council and published in September 2009.
- It claimed that there was evidence of war crimes against both Israel and Hamas.
- The most damaging claim made against Israeli forces, now withdrawn by Goldstone, was that the IDF deliberately targeted civilians in Gaza as a matter of policy.
- Israel refused to cooperate with the inquiry because of the inherent bias against Israel in the Human Rights Council which commissioned it. The Council, which includes among its members China, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and until recently Libya, is widely regarded as biased against Israel, a point explicitly accepted by Goldstone in his article.
- Israel completely rejected the report when it was published, both because of the bias of the Human Rights Council, and due to its flawed methodology, based on unsubstantiated testimonies from Palestinians in Gaza and NGOs.
- Israel nonetheless committed to investigate all the individual cases brought by Goldstone, and has published several reports based on its inquiries. Israel has already enacted several changes in its military procedures to try and learn lessons from incidents where civilians were unintentionally hurt.
- Israel also undertook to review its own processes of internal inquiry. The Turkel Commission set up to investigate the Mavi Marmara incident, on which Lord Trimble serves as an international advisor, was also commissioned to examine this issue. It is due to report on this issue later this year.

Fact Sheet: History

The land of Israel has always been integral to Jewish religious, cultural and national life and remains so to this day. In the Jewish tradition, the land of Israel is central to the covenantal relationship between the Children of Israel and God. The Five Books of Moses, known to Jews as the Torah, tells how the 12 tribes of Israel, the precursors to the Jewish people, entered the land having been freed from slavery in Egypt. The first unified Israelite kingdom was founded under the rule of King Saul, around 1000 BCE. His successor David established Jerusalem as his capital. There, David's son Solomon built the First Jewish Temple as the centre of Jewish religious life. The First Temple stood until 586 BCE, when it was destroyed by the Babylonians. The Second Temple was consecrated on the same spot in 520 BCE, and stood at the centre of Jewish life and worship until it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE.

The destruction of both the First and Second Temples were catastrophic events in Jewish history, in which thousands of Jews were killed and exiled, and which led to the existence of Jewish communities around the world. But even after the destruction of the Second Temple, there was a continuous presence of Jews in Israel. Throughout the centuries, major Jewish cultural achievements were made by Jews who lived there. These include the compilation of the Jerusalem Talmud, dating to the 4th century, and the establishment of Tzfat as a centre for the development of the Jewish mystical tradition in the 16th century.

Jews around the world made remembering the Temple in Jerusalem and the hope for an eventual return to the land of Israel - also referred to as 'Zion' - central to all aspects of their religious worship and liturgy. Jewish prayers are always conducted facing towards Jerusalem. For most Jews through the ages, travelling to Israel was an impossible dream. In their prayers, traditions, poetry and scriptures, Jews from around the world expressed their yearning and longing to return

Since the end of the 19th century, Jews have come from all parts of the world to live in Israel. Jews use the Hebrew word 'aliya', which means 'going up', to refer to the act of moving to Israel. Whilst most Jews in Israel were either massacred or dispersed following the failed Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans in the Second Century, Jews continued to live in the area in smaller numbers. In 1880, the overall population in the area was approximately 570,000, and mostly Arab. The Jewish population of Palestine was then around 10,000. Most lived in Jerusalem where there was a Jewish majority, with smaller communities in Tzfat, Tiberias and Jaffa.

The first significant movements for Jewish settlement in Palestine came in response to an upsurge in anti-Jewish violence in Russia (the pogroms) following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. This so-called 'First Aliya' saw the Jewish population of Palestine swell to approximately 25,000 by 1903, with many of the immigrants establishing new agricultural communities.

The Zionist movement gathered momentum among the Jews of Europe in the early 20th Century. A second wave of immigrants, fleeing great poverty and persecution in Eastern Europe, particularly Russia and Romania, arrived in Palestine between 1904 and 1914. Around 40,000 in total, these immigrants were typically young, secular and inspired by socialist ideals. They sought agricultural work, believing that both personal and national redemption could be achieved through physical toil on the land of Israel. The life they chose was beset with great poverty, disease and hardship. Many left in disappointment, but by 1914 the Jewish population had risen to 90,000.

Growing anti-Semitic hostility throughout Europe spurred increasing numbers of Jewish refugees to move to Palestine throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Many Jews were murdered in Ukraine in the aftermath of First World War. Other European countries enacted anti-Semitic legislation throughout the 1920s. In 1924, Poland began to impose severe economic restrictions on its three million Jews. But as more and more Jews faced discrimination in Europe, doors of immigration were closed elsewhere, including new restrictions on immigration to the United States. In 1933, the Nazi Party came to power in Germany and immediately began enforcing anti-Semitic laws. This created a new and unprecedented wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine. By 1936, the Jewish population of Palestine was approaching 400,000, close to 30% of the total. However, with war looming, and Britain keen not to alienate the Arab world, in 1939 Jewish immigration to Palestine was severely restricted by the British.

By 1945, the Nazi Holocaust had exterminated approximately six million Jews in Europe. After the war, well over 100,000 surviving Jews were in displaced persons camps. Tens of thousands of these survivors attempted to bypass the British blockade to enter Palestine. Many of those that failed were forcibly interned by the British in detention camps in Cyprus. After the State of Israel was established in 1948, its doors were opened to these refugees. Israel also absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jews who left as emigrants and refugees from countries in the Middle East and North Africa as a result of the War of Independence. In 1949, 45,000 Jews fled to Israel from Yemen, and in 1951-52, a further 130,000 arrived from Iraq.

Since Israel's independence the Jewish population has swelled through immigration from around the world and natural increase. Major waves of immigration have come from Morocco (250,000), North America (200,000) and Ethiopia (76,000), as well as significant contingents from South America and Europe. During the Communist era, Jews in the Soviet Union were prevented from moving to Israel. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, close to one million Jews moved to Israel from the former Soviet Union. 34,000 Jews have moved to Israel from Britain since 1948. By 2010, Israel's population exceeded 7.5 million, of whom 5.7 million were Jewish

The objective of establishing a Jewish homeland in Israel gained strong international support with the Balfour Declaration, issued by the British government in 1917. The British government's decision to support the foundation of a national home for the Jewish people was made known in the form of a letter written by then-foreign secretary Lord Balfour to Zionist leader Lord Rothschild. In September 1922, the League of Nations granted Britain a Mandate over Palestine, noting the 'historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine' and the 'grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country.' Under the British Mandate, three-quarters of the territory east of the Jordan River formed the Emirate of Transjordan (later the Kingdom of Jordan), and was closed to Jewish immigration. The remaining territory remained open to Jewish immigration.

As the Second World War drew closer, the British government, fearing the loss of allies in the Arab and Muslim world, moved away from supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine. Finally, in 1939, as the threat to the Jews of Europe reached new heights, Britain issued the MacDonald White Paper, in which Jewish immigration was severely restricted.

Between 1939 and 1945, the German Nazi Party, with its allies throughout Europe, murdered approximately six million of Europe's 11 million Jews. The Holocaust was a genocide carried out with ruthless efficiency on an industrial scale throughout Europe. The Jewish people had no place of refuge. Palestinian Arab leaders welcomed the Nazis' rise to power, believing that in opposition to the British and the Jews, they shared common interests. The most senior Palestinian leader, Haj Amin al-Husseini, cooperated with the Nazis, and in November 1941, met personally with Hitler in an attempt to forge an alliance. Meanwhile, 30,000 Palestinian Jews joined the British army to fight against the Nazis, despite the restrictions of the White Paper preventing Jewish immigration to Palestine.

After the war, many thousands of Jewish refugees who had survived the Holocaust were in refugee camps in Europe. Having been robbed of all property and rights, most were unable and unwilling to return to their countries of origin. Some who tried to return after the war were subjected to further attacks. Many of the refugees expressed their desire to move to Palestine.

In this climate, the Jewish Agency, which represented the Jewish community in Palestine, with American political support, called for 100,000 Jews to be allowed to enter Palestine. The British government refused to agree. This led to illegal Jewish immigration and a direct confrontation between the British government and the Jews of Palestine. Some Jewish extremist groups, the Irgun and Lechi, began to attack British military targets. The British forcefully suppressed all acts of Jewish resistance, at one stage arresting 3,000 people. Over 50,000 Jews who had survived the Holocaust and attempted to enter Palestine were forcibly interned in British camps in Cyprus. In 1946, the leader of the Jews in Palestine, David Ben-Gurion, attempted to unite Jewish resistance forces. The agreement broke down after the Irgun undertook its most notorious act, the bombing of the British headquarters at the King David Hotel. This act was denounced by the majority of Palestine's Jews.

In 1947, the British turned the question of the future of Palestine over to the United Nations, which established the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to determine its future. The UN recommended partition into a Jewish and an Arab state, with Jerusalem under international control. The plan would have created a Jewish state with a Jewish majority on the Mediterranean coast, western Galilee, and Negev Desert. On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly voted in favour of Resolution 181, to approve the UNSCOP plan, by 33 votes to 13.

The Jewish Agency, representing the Jews of Palestine, accepted the plan, but the Arab Higher Committee, the Palestinian Arabs' political representatives, rejected it. As the British Mandate formally ended, on 14 May 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel in line with the UN resolution.

Fact Sheet: The Peace Process

Every Israeli government since 2000 has publicly committed Israel to the two-state solution as the best way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This solution, as defined by the Clinton parameters in December 2000, is a solution which results in, 'the state of Palestine as the homeland of the Palestinian people and the state of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.' Since 2000 the two-state model has been accepted internationally and endorsed by UN Security Council Resolutions.

The principle of the two-state solution is that a Palestinian state will be created within the territory of Gaza and the West Bank, and will exist alongside and at peace with Israel. Repeated polls indicate that a majority of Israelis and Palestinians accept this idea, though it involves difficult compromises on both sides. For Israel it means giving up control of territory in the West Bank which is of great historic, cultural and strategic importance for the Jewish people. For Palestinians it means accepting that the solution for the Palestinian refugee problem lies not in refugees returning to Israel but in returning to a new Palestinian state.

However, the alternatives are not acceptable to most Israelis and Palestinians. Under the status quo, Palestinians that live under Israeli control in Gaza and the West Bank are denied the rights of citizenship. This in turn damages Israel's international standing. Many Israelis fear that as the population of Arabs in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank begins to overtake the population of Jews, the democratic legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state will be undermined. Furthermore, the conflict is a costly burden on Israeli society which most Israelis would like to see confined to history. For this reason they see the creation of a Palestinian state, which will secure the rights of Palestinian Arabs, as being in Israel's interest, as long as it comes with sufficient security guarantees. The alternative, of a single binational state of Jews and Arabs, is not acceptable to most Jews, who want the character of Israel as the homeland for the Jewish people to be secured.

The Arab Peace Initiative is a proposal originating with the Saudi government for resolving conflict between Israel, the Palestinians and the broader Arab world. The proposal, first adopted by the Arab League in 2002, presents conditions under which the states of the Arab League would be willing to make peace with Israel and normalise relations. The conditions are that Israel withdraw to 1967 boundaries, allowing for the creation of a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It also demands 'a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.'

Although this position represents a considerable advance from the days when the Arab League refused to even contemplate peace with Israel, the proposal was initially treated with caution in Israel for several reasons. One problem is that the initiative appears to call on Israel to accept its terms without negotiation. Whilst the agreement may be seen as a basis for negotiation, the terms as they stand are not acceptable to Israel. Israel accepts the principle of a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank but believes the final borders must be negotiated, and cannot be exactly as they were in 1967. Furthermore, UN General Assembly Resolution 194, dating back to 1949, suggests that Palestinian refugees should be allowed to return to Israel. For Israel to accept such a proposal today would spell the end of the Jewish majority in Israel and therefore the end of the Jewish state. Israel maintains that since it accepted the UN's Partition Plan of 1947, and it was the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states that started the war of 1948, it is they and not Israel who bear responsibility for the refugees. Israel further maintains that the principle of the two-state solution means that the Palestinian state, and not Israel, will be the national home of the Palestinian people and the destination for Palestinian refugees.

However, Israeli leaders have repeatedly called for direct negotiations with Arab states. At the UN General Assembly in 2008, Israel's President Shimon Peres called on the King of Saudi Arabia to further his initiative and invited 'all leaders to come and discuss peace in Jerusalem, which is holy to all of us.' 'Israel,' he added, 'shall gladly accept an Arab invitation at a designated venue where a meaningful dialogue may take place.'

In a speech in June 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on the leaders of the Arab countries to make peace and said, 'I am willing to meet at any time, at any place, in Damascus, in Riyadh, in Beirut, and in Jerusalem as well.'

Issues in the Peace Process

Borders

The PLO claim the West Bank and the Gaza Strip within pre-1967 borders for their state. Israel has accepted in principle the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. There is a broad consensus in Israel that the larger settlement blocs around Jerusalem and on key strategic points protecting Israel's narrow coastal plain should remain part of Israel. The Clinton Parameters in 2000 and the unofficial Geneva Accords in 2003 accepted this principle and suggested some form of land swap whereby the new Palestinian state would receive other territory from Israel in return for the settlement blocs. The Palestinians want territory within Israel to build a transport link that connects Gaza and the West Bank, and this could form part of an exchange deal. In 2008, under the Annapolis process, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas conducted negotiations along these lines, though there were gaps between the sides on how much land would be exchanged.

Security

Israel's recent experience of withdrawing from territory in the hope that it will bring peace has been very negative. After Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000, and from Gaza in 2005, Israel was subsequently attacked from both locations, in particular with rockets. Any deal to bring about Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank will have to address Israel's legitimate security fears. Israel will not be willing to allow the establishment of a military force in the West Bank or Gaza that could threaten Israel, and expects a future Palestinian state will be demilitarised. It will further expect a future Palestinian state to act decisively to prevent attacks on Israel originating from within its territory. Israel will also want to retain a military presence in the Jordan valley in the initial period after the creation of a Palestinian state to prevent arms smuggling into the West Bank. The Palestinians are opposed to an Israeli military presence, and have proposed a third party international presence instead.

Refugees

A peace deal will have to define a solution to the question of Palestinian refugees. The Palestinians claim the right of return for the descendants of refugees from the 1948 war to return to their homes in Israel. Israel does not believe it is responsible for resettling the refugees, believing their plight to be the responsibility of the Arab states that rejected the 1947 Partition Plan, started the war, and then refused to resettle the refugees created by that war in their own territory. In any case, no Israeli government will accept a solution that would allow millions of Palestinians to settle in Israel. This would effectively spell the end of the Jewish majority and the viability of Israel as a democratic Jewish state. Israel proposes that refugees be compensated with the help of the international community, and be resettled either in the new Palestinian state or in their country of residence. This is the principle of two-states for two peoples.

Water

The region has limited water resources and Israel currently depends on the West Bank for a significant part of its water supply. Any peace deal will have to address both the allocation and management of water from the Jordan River and the underground aquifers in the West Bank. In 2006, Israel began operating the largest desalination plant of its kind in the world on its Mediterranean coast and is building several more to address its water needs. This may make a solution on the question of water easier to address in the future.

Jerusalem

Both Israelis and Palestinians have a very strong cultural, historical and political attachment to Jerusalem and both claim it to be their capital. Particularly sensitive are the Old City and its religious sites. If Palestinian demands to return to pre-1967 borders were taken literally, it would result in the redivision of Jerusalem and the loss of Israeli sovereignty over the Old City, which is something that most Israelis would not be willing to contemplate. Both the Clinton Parameters and the Geneva Accords proposed a solution whereby Arab neighbourhoods would come under Palestinian sovereignty and Jewish neighbourhoods under Israeli sovereignty. Previous negotiations have proposed a special regime for the Old City.

Fact Sheet: Settlements

Israel has a long legacy of accepting territorial compromise as the way to solve its disputes in the region. The Jewish community of Palestine accepted the UN Partition Plan in 1947, and Israel accepted the land for peace formula set out in UN Security Council Resolution 242. Israel's position today is that the future borders should be the subject of negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians. Most Israelis expect that the most populous settlements, which sit on about 5% of the West Bank, will stay part of Israel.

The Clinton Parameters, which followed the Camp David peace talks of 2000, proposed a deal whereby Israel would keep the larger and most populous settlement blocs which it considers vital for its security, and would transfer other territory from Israeli to Palestinian sovereignty in return. This principle of a land swap was also accepted in the unofficial 2003 Geneva Accords, which were negotiated by Israeli and Palestinian peace campaigners. It was also the basis of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians during the Annapolis process over the course of 2008.

This would still mean Israel would have to withdraw from the more isolated settlements. Israel set a precedent for evacuating settlements in return for peace when it withdrew from the settlements that were built in the Sinai Peninsula after the Six Day War. This came as part of the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in which the Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egyptian hands. In the summer of 2005, Israel unilaterally evacuated all of its settlements in the Gaza Strip and part of the northern West Bank.

The progressive case for Israel

The following article appeared in the JC on 11 March 2011:

Israel – a progressive cause

By Robert Philpot

At the time of the founding of the state of Israel, David Ben Gurion said it was not enough for the Jewish state to be simply Jewish - it had to be fully democratic, offering full citizenship to all its peoples. It was a remarkable statement made at the very moment when Israel faced the first of the wars of survival which have periodically threatened its very existence.

Remarkable because, as the history of many nations, including our own, shows, the real test of a nation's commitment to democracy is not whether that commitment is made during times of peace and tranquility, but whether it can be sustained during times of war and difficulty.

Israel's steadfast adherence to liberal democratic principles, even at the hardest of times, is one that should be admired and supported by democrats everywhere.

This is especially so because - despite welcome developments in the Middle East over recent weeks - Israel remains the only democracy in a region where monarchical autocracies, zealous theocracies and military authoritarianism are the most prevalent form of government. But while democrats of all political persuasions should give their support to Israel, those of us on the left should do so particularly.

Israel is, after all, a country founded on social democratic principles; and the Israeli Labor Party, which, alongside our own Labour Party, is a member of the Socialist International, was the country's dominant political force for decades.

Indeed, it is because of those social democratic principles that Israel's attributes are undeniably progressive: a free and vibrant media; a robust and independent judiciary; strong trade unions; a generous welfare state; and a commitment to free, world-class education that enables Israel to have one of the highest-skilled workforces on earth.

Contrast, too, the equal rights which women, gays and lesbians and other minorities enjoy in Israel with the second-class citizenship and persecution meted out to such groups in most, if not all, of Israel's neighbours.

Sadly, of course, this view of Israel is not shared by everyone on the British left. A small but vocal and vociferous fringe seeks to demonise Israel and its people. Too often, alongside some on the right who have long harboured a dislike of Israel's progressivism, they appear able to use their power and influence in the media to distort debate not only about the Middle East peace process, but also about Britain's own foreign policy.

This is why, alongside Labour Friends of Israel, Progress believes the debate we are jointly hosting next week, on making the progressive case for Israel, is so important. We believe that it is essential that we not only demonstrate the support for Israel that exists within the Labour Party but, more importantly, challenge those who seek to deny Israel's right to exist and show why that point of view simply has no place at all in the Labour Party.

Equally, we believe it is important to assert Israel's right to defend itself and to have its rightful security concerns, and its efforts to promote peace, appreciated, not ignored.

The calls for boycotts and attempts to exploit our courts to exclude Israeli voices from public debate in this country are, of course, simply the most obvious manifestation of this anti-Israeli fringe. The boycott movement, particularly amongst some British trade unions, is also the most self-indulgent, for it would achieve nothing beyond harming the very people on whose behalf it is apparently being mounted.

Indeed, its most practical effect would be to stifle the growing co-operation, endorsed and supported by the International Trade Union Confederation, between Israeli and Palestinian trade unions, co-operation which provides the building blocks for trust and co-operation upon which a long-term peace settlement can be built.

But while it is self-indulgent, the boycott movement is also pernicious. The impact of the attempts to isolate and demonise Israel and its people are being felt week in, week out by Jewish people here in Britain in the form of rising anti-Semitism. This is something the left should unreservedly condemn, not attempt to excuse.

I would, of course, like to see Israelis elect a more progressive government than they currently have - something I would also like to see the British people do, too. But, in the spirit of its internationalist tradition, the real challenge for Labour is to support shared values where we see them and thus to work with progressive Israelis and Palestinians to promote a two-state solution.

That means supporting both those Palestinians who want a state committed to freedom and democracy, not Hamas' violent, dictatorial brand of Islamism, and those Israelis who are already attempting to reach out to them.

Section 6

Resources

Key Website Addresses

BICOM <http://www.bicom.org.uk/>

BICOM is an independent British organisation dedicated to creating a more supportive environment for Israel in Britain.

Academic Friends of Israel <http://www.academics-for-israel.org/>

The Academic Friends of Israel has been campaigning against the academic boycott of Israel since 2002.

Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism <http://www.thepcaa.org/>

The Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation (PCAAF) is a registered charity centred on the principle that the struggle against prejudice and discrimination is not just the responsibility of the victims. The PCAA provides secretariat support to the All-Party Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism.

Assembly of Masorti Synagogues <http://www.masorti.org.uk/>

Board of Deputies of British Jews <http://www.bod.org.uk/>

The Board of Deputies of British Jews exists to promote and defend the religious rights and civil liberties of British Jewry. As the community's democratically elected cross-communal organisation, the Board engages with Government, media and wider society, providing a unique means through which all British Jews can be heard and represented.

Christian Friends of Israel <http://www.cfi.org.uk/>

Christian Friends of Israel is a non-denominational Christian organization seeking to break down barriers and build bridges of genuine friendship with Israel and the UK Jewish community.

Community Security Trust <http://www.thecst.org.uk/>

CST provides physical security, training and advice for the protection of British Jews. CST assists victims of antisemitism and monitors antisemitic activities and incidents. CST represents British Jewry to Police, Government and media on antisemitism and security.

Conservative Friends of Israel <http://www.cfoi.co.uk/>

CFI works to promote its twin aims of supporting Israel and promoting Conservatism. With close to 2000 activists as members – alongside 80% of Tory MPs – CFI is active at every level of the Party. CFI organises numerous events in and around Westminster, takes Conservative parliamentarians and candidates on delegations to Israel, campaigns hard for Tory candidates in target seats, and works to ensure that Israel's case is fairly represented in Parliament.

Embassy of Israel <http://london.mfa.gov.il/>

Engage <http://engageonline.wordpress.com/>

Engage was created to arm people with arguments and facts that they could use to counter the propaganda of the boycott campaign within the Association of University Teachers. Engage grew from being a resource for that particular campaign into being a resource that aims to help people counter the boycott Israel campaign in general, as well as the assumptions and misrepresentations that lie behind it.

Fair Play Campaign Group <http://www.fairplaycg.org.uk/>

The Fair Play Campaign group was established by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council in December 2006. It works to coordinate activity against boycotts of Israel and other anti-Zionist campaigns.

Friends of Israel Initiative <http://www.friendsofisraelinitiative.org/>

Under the leadership of former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar a high level group met in Paris in the middle of 2010 to launch a new project in defense of Israel's right to exist. This "Friends of Israel Initiative" has been joined by such notable figures as Nobel Peace Prize Laureate David Trimble, Peru's former president Alejandro Toledo, Italian philosopher Marcello Pera, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton, British historian Andrew Roberts, and others. Their key aim is to counter the growing efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel and its right to live in peace within safe and defensible borders.

Israel Connect <http://www.israelconnect.co.uk/>

Israel Connect creates the opportunity for young professionals to network, whilst strengthening their identity with Israel through educational, cultural and social events.

JCC for London

<http://www.jcclondon.org.uk/>

The JCC (Jewish Community Centre) for London aims to provide Jews with a lasting sense of community and to promote the best of Jewish values. At its core is building Jewish life, through cultural, social, educational, and recreational Jewish activities. Social action is also central to the JCC movement – helping those in need both within and outside the Jewish community.

Jewish Chronicle

<http://www.thejc.com/>

Jewish Labour Movement

<http://www.jlm.org.uk/>

Founded in 2004 as the successor to Poale Zion, the JLM continues to demonstrate its commitment to Poale Zion's long-standing ideals in a manner appropriate for the twenty-first century. It views Zionism as the national liberation movement of the Jewish people and work to promote a secure, progressive, just and successful State of Israel. The JLM is an affiliate of the World Labour Zionist Movement. The JLM is the only Jewish entity affiliated to the Labour Party, both nationally and locally, and constantly presses the Party, both inside and outside government, to campaign vigorously against racism and especially the BNP, as well as promoting a viable peace plan to end the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Jewish Leadership Council

<http://www.thejlc.org/>

The JLC exists to strengthen the major institutions of British Jewry, to promote cooperation between them and to help the leadership of the community articulate a confident and compelling narrative of mainstream Jewish life in the United Kingdom.

Jewish National Fund

<http://www.jnf.co.uk/>

JNF is Israel's leading humanitarian and environmental charity. It raises funds for the building blocks of everyday life in Israel such as reservoirs, irrigation systems, desalination plants, forest planting, recycling schemes, roads, housing and healthcare centres.

Labour Friends of Israel

<http://www.lfi.org.uk/>

Labour Friends of Israel is an organisation of Labour supporters promoting a two state solution, with Israel, safe, secure and recognised within its borders, living peacefully alongside a democratic and viable Palestinian state.

Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel <http://ldfi.org.uk/>

The Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel exists to support and promote policies which lead to peace and security for Israel in the context of a comprehensive and lasting Middle East peace settlement. It works to encourage a strong understanding of Israel unique political situation as the only democracy in the Middle East. It seeks to develop a relationship of trust and mutual understanding between the Liberal Democrats and the Jewish Community.

Liberal Judaism

<http://www.liberaljudaism.org/>

Limmud

<http://www.limmud.org/>

Makom

<http://www.makomisrael.org/>

In 2004 North American Jewish communities and the Jewish Agency began a partnership now called Makom – the Israel Engagement Network. Through this network they have succeeded in laying intellectual groundwork and inspiring new initiatives that have significantly advanced the field of Israel education.

Movement for Reform Judaism

<http://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/>

New Israel Fund UK

<http://www.nif.org.uk/>

The New Israel Fund UK is the leading organization committed to equality and democracy for all Israelis. NIF are a partnership of Israelis and supporters of Israel worldwide, dedicated to a vision of Israel as both the Jewish homeland and a shared society at peace with itself and its neighbors. NIF strengthens organizations and leaders that work to achieve equality for all the citizens of the state; realize the civil and human rights of all, including Palestinian citizens of Israel; recognize and reinforce the essential pluralism of Israeli society; and empower groups on the economic margins of Israeli society.

Pro-Israel web portal

<http://www.pro-israel.org/>

Stand With Us UK

<http://www.standwithus.com/>

StandWithUs is an international organization dedicated to bringing peace to the Middle East by educating about Israel and challenging the misinformation that often surrounds the Middle East conflict.

Trade Union Friends of Israel <http://www.tufi.org.uk/>

TUFI was established to promote Israeli-Palestinian trade union co-operation and strengthen the links between the Israeli, Palestinian and British trade union movements.

Union of Jewish Students <http://www.ujis.org.uk/>

The Union of Jewish Student's (UJS) mission is: 'To create meaningful Jewish campus experiences and inspire Jewish students to make an enduring commitment to their Jewish identity, Israel and the community.' UJS serves as the sole communal body representing all Jewish students to the Jewish and wider community. As a Union directed by its members, UJS' priority is to meet the needs and demands of our members both individually and through Jewish Societies (J-Soc).

United Jewish Israel Appeal <http://www.ujia.org/>

UJIA's strategy is designed to help guarantee a sustainable and positive future for the people of the Galil and the Jewish community of the UK. Our programme is built around young people and education, which we see as the key to securing our future. The future of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora are dependent upon each other. UJIA creates the 'Living Bridge' between our communities.

United Synagogue <http://www.theus.org.uk/>

WIZO UK <http://www.wizouk.org>

WIZO.uk is the largest Jewish women's organisation in Great Britain and Ireland. WIZO is a non-party political movement of Zionist women providing a powerful voice on human rights issues and concerns relating to the status of women.

Zionist Central Council of Greater Manchester <http://www.zcc.org.uk/>

Zionist Federation <https://zionist.org.uk/>

The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland was established in 1899 to campaign for a permanent homeland for the Jewish people. The Zionist Federation today represents the UK Zionist Movement more than 120 organisations, and over 50,000 affiliated members. Its function is to support, co-ordinate and facilitate the work of all its affiliates nationwide, and to continue its commitment to the Zionist youth movements. The Zionist Federation aims to encourage the participation of Jews in Zionist activities including education, culture, Hebrew language and Israel information, underpinned by our belief that the main goal of Zionism is Aliyah. The Zionist Federation is an umbrella organisation encompassing most of the Zionist organizations and individuals in the country and, as such, represents the Zionist movement in the United Kingdom.



How to source and check sources

Israel is at the centre of a battle for public opinion, with the media (both traditional and online) as the battlefield. Because the media can influence public opinion, which directly affects foreign policy towards Israel, it is important to be alert to biased or unbalanced reporting.

Don't assume that everything you read in the media about Israel is factually accurate.

It is always best to double check reports with authoritative sources.

Similarly, when making the case for Israel, make sure any facts or figures you cite are from reputable sources and will stand up to scrutiny.

A good starting point is BICOM's own website:

<http://www.bicom.org.uk/context> has background information and links to other websites

<http://www.bicom.org.uk/news> has up-to-the-minute analysis and facts about events as they unfold

Primary sources for news about Israel include:

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA>

Israeli Embassy in London <http://london.mfa.gov.il/>

Ynet <http://www.ynetnews.com/home/>

Haaretz <http://www.haaretz.com/>

Jerusalem Post <http://www.jpost.com/>