



PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

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ABOUT CFI

Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) works to promote its twin aims of supporting Israel and promoting Conservatism in the UK. With more than 2,000 activists as members, CFI is active at every level of the Conservative 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.

Prime Minister David Cameron (December 2014): “For the past 40 years, CFI has been there for this Party, bringing us together, getting behind our candidates and taking people to Israel, because nothing comes closer to helping you understand that country than actually visiting”.



Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond (October 2014): “It is important to me that the Conservative Party has a good relationship with Israel and with CFI. You do a great job for the Party and I want to thank you for everything that you’ve done, and even more for everything that you will do in the future”.

CFI WORKING WITH MPS

CFI is first and foremost a campaigning organisation. We campaign on a wide range of policy issues and work to ensure that Israel's case is heard amongst all sections of the Conservative Party.

Delegations to Israel and the Palestinian Authority are an integral part of CFI's work. The purpose of these trips is to enable Conservative MPs and parliamentary candidates to see the facts on the ground in the region, and better understand first-hand the complexities of the situation. The visits are not only political, but also cultural and historical, and include time spent in the Palestinian Authority meeting senior Palestinian politicians and officials. It is our aim that delegates should return not with all the answers, but with more informed questions. 37 Conservative MPs and PPCs visited Israel with CFI in 2014 on seven delegations.

In Parliament, CFI offers a busy schedule of briefing events with Israeli officials and other specialist speakers from Israel, including academics and journalists. We work with MPs to forge links between the Conservative Party and Israeli politicians from across the political spectrum.

CFI regularly provides the parliamentary party with tailored briefings for parliamentary questions and debates, as well as providing information about key issues and the latest events in the region.

CFI assist MPs in producing articles about Israel for publication in national newspapers, magazines and leading Conservative websites.

CONTACTS

CFI's team is available to support your work as an MP. We can be contacted as follows:

James Gurd

Political Director
james@cfoi.co.uk
Tel: 020 7262 2493

Sedef Akademir

Research and Events Officer
sedef@cfoi.co.uk
Tel: 020 7262 2493

CFI Website: www.cfoi.co.uk

CFI Twitter: @CFoI

CFI Facebook: www.facebook.com/conservativefriendsofisrael

UK-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

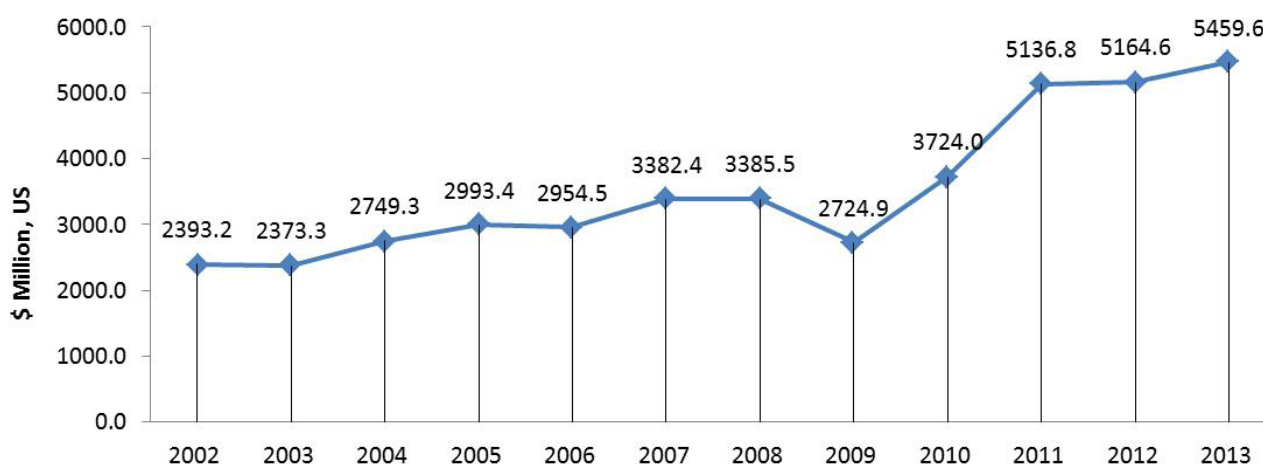
The United Kingdom and Israel have strong and extensive ties in trade, science, technology, intelligence, defence and education. Bilateral links between the two countries have flourished since 2010, with a series of deals signed to increase cooperation and share expertise in several fields.

Prime Minister David Cameron (March 2014): “I am proud to be pursuing the strongest and deepest possible relationship between our two countries; from our trade, which has doubled in a decade and is now worth £5 billion a year, to the world-leading partnerships between our scientists, academics and high-tech specialists. Britain and Israel share a commitment to driving the growth of high-tech startups... Israel’s technology is protecting British and NATO troops in Afghanistan, it is providing Britain’s National Health Service with one in six of its prescription medicines through Teva [Pharmaceutical Industries]. Together British and Israeli technical expertise can achieve so much more”.

Bilateral Trade:

Bilateral business relations between the UK and Israel are extremely strong and the countries have become close trade partners. Israel is now the UK’s largest individual trading partner in the Near East and North Africa.

- Trade between the UK and Israel is at a record high, with total bilateral trade amounting to £3.8 billion in 2014 an increase of more than 7% from 2013.
- In 2014, there was a 4.8% increase in imports to the UK from Israel and a 12.9% increase in exports from the UK to Israel.
- Over the past 10 years, the value of bilateral trade in both directions has increased by 60%.
- More than 300 Israeli companies are currently operating in the UK, with over 50 raising capital on the London Stock Exchange.
- Israel is one of the top 20 countries investing in the UK, with its investments exceeding those of Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea and Saudi Arabia.



Graphical representation of Israel's bilateral trade with the UK between 2002 and 2013 (\$)

High-Tech and Health Partnership:

Over the last two decades, Israel has become renowned for its high-tech capacity, particularly in telecommunications, information technology, bio-medical equipment and environmental sciences.

The country is home to the second highest density of startups (3,500+) anywhere in the world outside of Silicon

Valley. Israel has over 700 medical device companies, and leads the world in medical device patents per capita.

The British and Israeli Governments are committed to building a partnership in high-tech between the two countries. Strong links in the fields of science and technology have been spearheaded by schemes such as the UK-Israel Tech Hub; Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange (BIRAX); and a top-level UK-Israel Life Sciences Council, bringing Israeli and British scientists together for joint research projects.

- Israel's Teva Pharmaceutical Industries provides the NHS with one in six of its prescription medicines, making it the NHS's largest supplier of generic drugs.
- In March 2014, Prime Minister David Cameron announced a new £12.5 million joint research fund for dementia with Israel's Teva Pharmaceutical Industries.
- In January 2015, the UK-Israel Tech Hub launched the TeXchange 2015 initiative for Israeli financial technology startups, providing them a chance to showcase their work in the UK.
- £3.2 million funding for eight joint medical research projects using stem cells, by British and Israeli scientists, was announced in February 2015.
- The BIRAX Regenerative Medicine Initiative is a £10 million, five-year programme (launched in 2013) that funds cutting edge research using stem cell therapies to combat some of the world's most deadly diseases. It brings together Israeli and British scientists through the funding of joint research projects.

Prime Minister David Cameron (February 2015): "The United Kingdom is proud to be Israel's partner in science. In so many areas our scientists are working together and engaged in some of the most significant projects of our age".

Cyber Security:

Israel is a world leader in cyber security – second only to the United States in providing the most products to fight cybercrime. Over 200 Israeli companies specialise in cyber security, accounting for £1.9 billion worth of exports in 2013.

- The UK and Israel in 2014 signed a Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral digital cooperation, committing to work together and exchange information on digital government to help citizens, businesses and their respective economies.
- In March 2015, the Cabinet Office announced that three UK-Israel academic collaboration projects will receive £1.2 million of joint cyber research funding from the Government.

Academic Cooperation:

With both nations boasting active fields of research and development, the countries have issued a joint commitment to academic cooperation in the field of education.

- In 2013, the UK and Israel signed a five-year agreement to boost cooperation over English language studies, aiming to reach thousands of teachers in Israel.

Former Education Secretary, Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP (December 2013): "Education cooperation is a good example of the flourishing bilateral links between the UK and Israel. Whether it be trade, tech, science and now education, the cooperation growing between us is evidence of a relationship getting stronger".

ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY

Israel is currently the only functioning democracy in the Middle East.

Israel is a multiracial, multi-ethnic democracy, where Arab, Druze and other minorities are guaranteed equal rights under law. Israel's Declaration of Independence grants "all Israel's inhabitants equality of social and political rights irrespective of religion, race or gender".

There are no legal restrictions on movement, employment, or sexual and marital relations for any of Israel's citizens. All Israeli citizens, from every minority, vote in elections on an equal basis.

Israel's Arab Minority:

Israel's 1.7 million-strong Arab minority - 20% of the total population - participates fully in Israel's political system, faring far better than minorities in other countries in the Middle East. There are currently 17 Israeli Arab members in the 120-seat Knesset, an increase from 12 in the previous Knesset.

Arabic is Israel's official second language; road signs are in Hebrew and Arabic. Universities and hospitals across Israel are integrated, with Israeli Arabs and Jewish Israelis studying and being treated side by side. Racial discrimination is against the law, with Israeli Arabs serving as the heads of hospital departments, university professors, senior police and army officers, and an Arab judge sits on the country's Supreme Court.

Polling consistently shows that a vast majority of Israeli Arabs would support a constitution that maintained Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with equal rights for minorities. 77% of Israeli Arabs responded to a poll by Harvard University in 2008 stating that they prefer living in Israel to any other country in the world.

Freedom of Religion:

Israel is comprised of people who practice a variety of faiths, and all enjoy full rights to do so without fear of persecution or unequal treatment under the law. Israel, as a country committed to the free practice of religion for all, stands as an oasis of religious freedom in the Middle East.

While Christianity faces extinction throughout much of the Middle East, Israel's Christian population has increased a thousandfold since the country was established in 1948. It is the only country in the region with an increasing Christian population.

Freedom of Speech:

Israel values freedom of speech, and allows people from all backgrounds and political ideologies to express themselves without fear.

Opponents of Zionism and the State of Israel have freedom of speech and are permitted to form political organisations within the country.

Israel's media is vibrant, independent, and freely criticises government policy, and the country boasts an active civil society with demonstrations widely permitted.

Prime Minister David Cameron (March 2014): "Israel is a vulnerable country and yet, against all odds, it has become an oasis of freedom where the call to prayer mingles with church bells, where Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, echo down narrow streets. What an incredible nation this is – and we are a true friend".

IRAN

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a theocratic regime based on the principle of rule by Islamic jurists. Since the election of Hassan Rouhani as President in June 2013, Iran's relations with the international community have slowly improved while its domestic human rights abuses, nuclear programme, and support for international terrorism continue unchecked.

While Iran's president runs the economy and influences day-to-day decision-making, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say on most major issues, including national security and Iran's nuclear programme.

Nuclear Talks (2013-15):

Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, U.S. and UK) have been participating in intensive talks about the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme for the last few years with a view to reach a negotiated, permanent nuclear agreement. This concerted diplomatic effort follows the signing of the interim Joint Plan of Action (JPA) in November 2013, which was originally intended to allow six months of negotiations to reach a final agreement.

On April 2nd 2015, the P5+1 and Iran announced the proposed parameters of a future comprehensive nuclear deal determining limits on Iran's nuclear programme to be negotiated and signed before June 30th 2015. However, both sides have since disagreed on fundamental issues, including Iran's use of advanced centrifuges, the pace of sanctions relief, and provisions for inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

a) International Concerns

- The IAEA, the UN Security Council and many Western countries have long-standing concerns that Iran's nuclear programme is intended for military purposes.
- The scope and breadth of Iran's nuclear programme are indicators that it is not for exclusively civilian purposes. The programme features key components required to facilitate the domestic construction of a nuclear weapon, including possession of large quantities of enriched materials, as well as the development and possession of a delivery mechanism, such as a ballistic missile.
- Iran must respond to these legitimate concerns and categorically demonstrate the exclusively peaceful, civilian nature of its nuclear programme and intentions before it can be considered a 'normal' non-nuclear weapon state.
- Iran has a long history of reneging on its international nuclear agreements, including during negotiations with the P5+1.
- International Atomic Energy Agency
 - o The IAEA has long suspected Iran of conducting nuclear tests with so-called 'possible military dimensions' (PMDs).
 - o In November 2014, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano called on Iran to "increase its cooperation with the agency and to provide timely access to all relevant information, documentation, sites, material and personnel".
 - o Iran has repeatedly denied IAEA inspectors access to key nuclear-related sites, including Parchin, where it is believed to have conducted tests involving high-explosive triggers for nuclear weapons.

b) What Does a Nuclear Agreement Need to Achieve?

- Any permanent nuclear agreement must leave Iran's critical nuclear assets significantly reduced and enforce severe limitation upon Iran's 'breakout' capability - Iran's ability to escape all restrictions on its nuclear programme and quickly produce a nuclear weapon.
- The longer the 'breakout' time the greater the chance that any Iranian dash for a nuclear bomb would be detected by the IAEA in a timely fashion.

c) Principle Concerns with the Framework Parameters

- The proposed parameters for a nuclear deal have been strongly criticised by Israel, the Arab Gulf states and many nuclear experts.
- The parameters fall well short of the goals originally set by the P5+1 and U.S. President Barack Obama.
 - o In 2012, President Obama declared that “the deal we’ll accept is that they [Iran] end their nuclear programme” and “abide by the UN Resolutions”, demanding that Iran cease all uranium enrichment and dismantle its nuclear plants.

i Length of Agreement / ‘Threshold Nuclear State’:

- o Many of the terms of the proposed agreement would be time-limited to ten years, after which the deal would ‘sunset’ and the restrictions on many critical parts of Iran’s nuclear programme would be lifted – this is a major shortcoming.
- o The Islamic Republic will instantly become a ‘threshold nuclear state’ the moment the deal expires.
- o The proposed deal would legitimise Iran’s nuclear activities — including stockpiling of low-enriched uranium and operating a plutonium reactor — that have no civilian necessity.

ii Uranium Enrichment:

- o The proposed limitations on Iran’s enrichment programme need considerable strengthening.
- o Iran’s nuclear infrastructure will remain intact, though some of it will be temporarily mothballed for ten years.
 - Iran will retain 6,104 first-generation IR-1 centrifuges, with 5,060 of these enriching uranium for ten years.
 - In 13-15 years, Iran will be allowed to have an industrial-sized nuclear capacity with a breakout time close to zero.
 - None of Iran’s nuclear facilities — including the Fordow uranium enrichment centre buried under a mountain — will be closed.
 - Not one of the country’s 19,000 centrifuges will be dismantled.
- o Tehran’s large stockpile of enriched uranium will be “reduced” but not necessarily shipped out of the country.

iii Research and Development:

- o Iran will be allowed to develop advanced centrifuges that can enrich faster, which would lead to a shorter ‘breakout’ period, making it much more difficult for the IAEA to detect and respond to an Iranian ‘breakout’.

iv Plutonium Production and Arak:

- o It remains unclear whether the IAEA will be permitted access to the Arak site to ensure Iran is fulfilling its obligations – the Agency has been denied access since August 2011.
- o Iran has only agreed not to build additional heavy water reactors - capable of producing plutonium for a nuclear bomb - for a period 15 years.

v Verification and PMDs:

- o The proposed verification programme is insufficiently robust and Iran’s failure to address concerns over the ‘potential military dimensions’ to its nuclear activities undermines the IAEA’s ability to verify Iran’s nuclear programme and accurately calculate its ‘breakout’ time.
- o Iran needs to make concrete progress on the disclosure of its weaponisation activities prior to receiving sanctions relief because an agreement that ignores Iran’s past weaponisation work would risk being unverifiable.

vi Sanctions:

- o The proposed nuclear framework would see an irreversible relaxation of the sanctions regime, which brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place.

- o Iran will have negotiated permanent sanctions relief in exchange for temporary constraints on its nuclear activity.
- o A final nuclear deal must make clear that all UN sanctions will be immediately and automatically reimposed if Iran violates the terms of an agreement – this should be a central tenet of any final deal.

vii Omissions:

- o The proposed framework entirely fails to address a number of critical issues, including Iran's development of ballistic missiles, human rights abuses and support of international terror groups.
- o Iran's extensive ballistic missile programme – a nuclear weapons delivery system – has been omitted from the nuclear talks, despite being in breach of UN Security Council Resolution 1929.

d) UK Government Position

As a member of the P5+1, the UK has played a leading role in the international community's handling of the Iranian nuclear issue. The British Government now stands to play a decisive part in shaping the terms of a final nuclear agreement with Iran – it must ensure that any such deal is the right one.

Prime Minister David Cameron (March 2014): "I share your deep scepticism and great concern about Iran. I am not starry-eyed about the new regime. A nuclear-armed Iran is a threat to the whole world, not just to Israel. And with Israel and all our allies, Britain will ensure that is never allowed to happen".

Prime Minister David Cameron (October 2012): "Let's be clear about the facts. Iran is flouting six United Nations Resolutions. The regime's claim that its nuclear programme is intended for purely civilian purposes is not remotely credible".

Terrorism:

Iran is a leading sponsor of state terrorism, providing financial and material support to Islamist terror groups across the Middle East, including Hamas and Hezbollah.

The Iranian regime actively sponsors international terror groups committed to the destruction of Israel, which can act as proxies for the country.

- **Arms Smuggling:** Iran operates a complex network of weapons smuggling routes throughout the region in defiance of four UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835).
- **Hamas:** Iran has provided weapons, training, and funding to Hamas and other Palestinian terror groups, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). The Iranian regime has historically financed Hamas with \$250-\$300 million annually. Intelligence sources state that Iran has sent Hamas's military wing tens of millions of dollars in 2015 to rebuild terror infrastructure, including tunnels. Hamas officials have publicly thanked Iran for its support.
- **Hezbollah:** Iran openly supports the Lebanon-based Hezbollah terror group by providing financial assistance (reportedly up to \$200 million a year), weapons, ammunition and military training. It supplies the organisation's massive arsenal of short- and medium-range rockets, estimated at over 100,000.
- **Syria:** Iran has actively assisted President Bashar al-Assad's crackdown on opposition forces – providing military training, military officials, and financial support.

Tobias Ellwood MP, Minister for the Middle East (November 2014): We have serious concerns over evidence of ongoing Iranian support for a number of terrorist groups in the Middle East, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the military wings of Hezbollah and Hamas. Such activity is in contravention of UN sanctions and undermines regional security".

Human Rights Abuses:

In June 2013, Hassan Rouhani was elected as the President of Iran, replacing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after eight years. He was regarded as a moderate candidate in the election and welcomed with “cautious optimism” by many in the progressive Iranian population and the West.

However, since 2014, executions have soared and Iran now leads the world in executions per capita – second only to China, dampening hopes for human rights reforms under President Rouhani.

- **Capital Punishment:** Executions have drastically increased since the beginning of 2014. The US-based Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre put the total number of executions in 2014 at 720, with several being executed in public. Amnesty International said it has recorded “numerous cases” in which the death penalty had been used to oppress the activities of Iran’s ethnic and religious minorities.
- **Political Prisoners:** Iran continues to detain many civil society activists and leading opposition figures, including the 2009 presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi. The regime has also continually denied entry to the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights over several years.
- **Press Freedom:** Iran’s press is state-controlled and freedom has been all but eliminated. According to the World Press Freedom Index for 2014, Iran ranked 173rd out of 180 nations. There has so far been no implementation of the promises to improve freedom of information made by President Rouhani.
- **Sex and Gender Rights:** Homosexuality is illegal and punishable by death in Iran. It is mandatory for all women to veil their hair in Iran, and women are punished for poor wearing of the hijab. 25-year-old British-Iranian woman Ghoncheh Ghavami has been jailed in notorious Evin Prison since 30th June 2014, for attending a men’s volleyball match. Women are allowed to enter the public sphere and employment, and today more women than men are pursuing higher education in Iran.
- **Religious Freedom:** Government actions continue to create a threatening atmosphere for some religious minorities, with particularly harsh abuses against the 300,000-strong Baha’i faith in Iran, which is not recognised as a religion by Iran. By law and practice, religious minorities are not allowed to be elected to a representative body or to hold senior government or military positions. Five of a total 270 seats in the Majlis (Parliament) are reserved for religious minorities – three for Christians, one for Jewish faith and one Zoroastrian. All of the minority religious groups, including Sunni Muslims, are barred from being elected president.

Tobias Ellwood MP, Minister for the Middle East (November 2014): “Iran’s human rights situation remains dire. We are particularly concerned by the sharp rise in the number of executions over the past year, the ongoing suppression of freedom of expression and treatment of religious and other minority groups. There have been some limited positive steps under President Rouhani’s Government, but we are clear much more needs to be done to ensure all Iranians enjoy the rights and freedoms they are entitled to”.

HAMAS

Hamas ("Islamic Resistance Movement"), the Sunni Islamist organisation governing the Gaza Strip, is one of the largest stumbling blocks to the ongoing Middle East Peace Process.

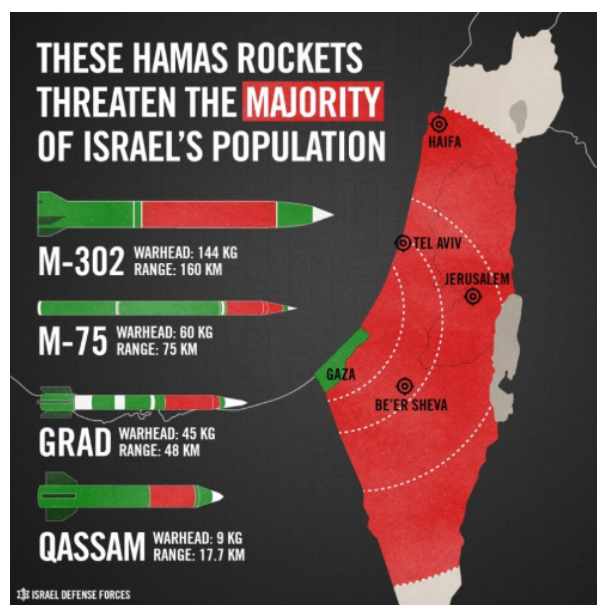
Hamas was formed during the First Intifada (1987) as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The group has been in absolute control of the Gaza Strip since June 2007 when it brutally removed Fatah officials from the territory in a bloody civil war following its victory in the January 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections.

Hamas is internationally designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK, U.S., EU, Australia, Canada, Jordan, Egypt and Israel.

Hamas is reportedly in the process of rearming and constructing new terror tunnels in preparation for a future round of conflict with Israel. The group has recently been found test firing domestically produced rockets into the Mediterranean Sea.

- **Rejectionist:** Hamas's founding charter calls for the destruction of the Jewish State, and the organisation has repeatedly opposed peace efforts between Israel and the PA.
- **War Crimes:** Hamas commits a double war crime when it fires rockets towards Israeli civilians from densely populated civilian areas across Gaza. Hamas's deliberate policy of locating weapons storage facilities and launching sites within population areas places Palestinian civilians at great risk and is an international war crime. A March 2015 Amnesty International report accused Hamas of committing war crimes by indiscriminately firing rockets at Israeli civilians and displaying "flagrant disregard for international law" during last summer's 50-day Operation Protective Edge conflict.
- **Responsibility:** As the de facto ruler of the Gaza Strip, Israel holds Hamas responsible for any terrorist activity emanating from the enclave. Israel has placed restrictions on movement from and imports into the Gaza Strip since 2007, after Hamas violently seized control of the area and then used imported materials to construct weapons and military infrastructure.
- **Quartet Principles:** Hamas continue to reject the Quartet Principles, which stipulate that the group must recognise the State of Israel, abide by previous diplomatic agreements and renounce violence. With its ideology intact, Hamas cannot be a partner for peace and will ensure that any Middle East peace is short-lived.
- **Human Rights Abuses:** According to a May 2015 Amnesty International report, Hamas carried out a brutal campaign of human rights abuses in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge (2014), including abductions, torture and extrajudicial killings of 23 Palestinian civilians.

Rocket Attacks:



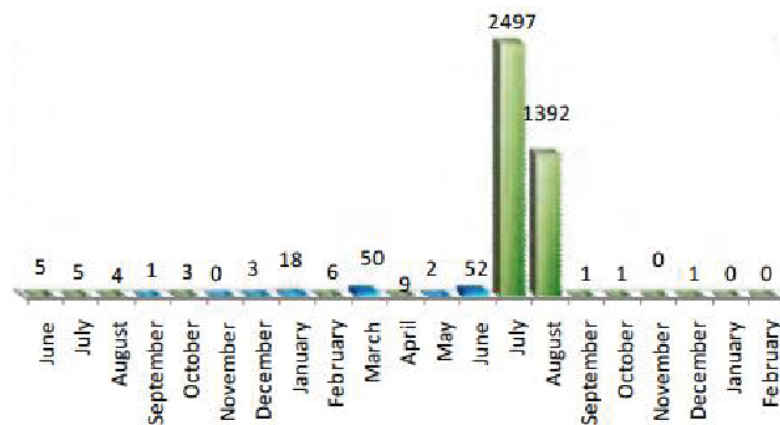
Range of Hamas's rockets

Indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel by Gaza-based Palestinian terror groups has continued for more than a decade, with rocket attacks threatening more than 70% of Israelis.

Hamas's rockets are capable of reaching Jerusalem (55 miles from Gaza), Tel Aviv (45 miles from Gaza) and even Haifa (100 miles from Gaza).

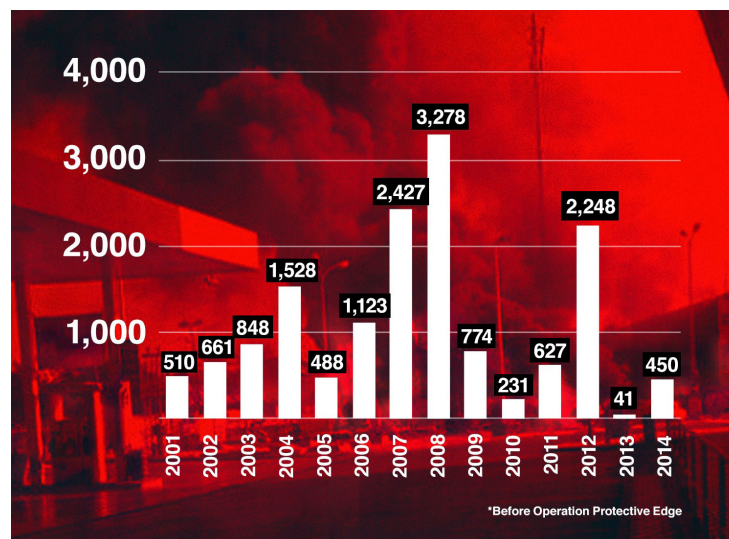
Each round of conflict has been precipitated by dramatic escalations of Hamas rocket fire into Israel:

- In 2014, a total of 5,014 rockets were fired at Israel. 450 rockets and mortars were fired in the weeks leading up to Operation Protective Edge, and a total of 4,564 rockets were fired into Israel during the 50-days of Operation Protective Edge in July and August.



Number of rockets that hit Israel each month from June 2013 to February 2015

- Since 2001, more than 19,000 rockets and mortars have landed in Israel; an average of four rockets every single day.
- Since Israel unilaterally withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, terrorists have fired more than 10,000 rockets into Israel.



Hamas rocket fire 2001-2014 (before Operation Protective Edge)

Terror Tunnels:

Hamas has developed a sophisticated network of interconnecting concrete-reinforced military tunnels to be used for terror attacks against Israel. These cross-border tunnels were used in the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Halit in 2006, and a number of terror attacks during Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

The IDF detected and destroyed as many as 32 terror tunnels, and an additional 66 access shafts, during Operation Protective Edge – the discovery and destruction of these tunnels was the IDF's stated objective of its ground operation.

Hamas uses these tunnels to:

- Carry out cross-border terror attacks inside Israel with goals that include mass-casualty attacks and hostage-taking.
- Launch rockets from beneath ground to make detection harder.
- Conceal and move its rocket arsenal underground.
- Conceal militants and military officials and their movement, as well as facilitate communication.

UK Government Position:

The UK recognises Hamas as a terrorist organisation, and Prime Minister David Cameron has strongly supported Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas rocket attacks.

Prime Minister David Cameron (November 2014): "During the summer, Hamas rained down rockets on Israel, built extensive tunnels to kidnap and murder, and repeatedly refused to accept ceasefires. As Prime Minister Netanyahu has said: 'Israel uses missile defence to protect its civilians. Hamas uses civilians to protect their missiles'. There can never be any equivalence between the two".

Prime Minister David Cameron (September 2014): "We will continue to support Israel's right to defend itself... Support for a lasting settlement that includes a Palestinian state does not mean we should ever support the terrorist tactics of Hamas, which has rained down rockets on Israel and continually refused to accept ceasefires".

HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah (“Party of God”) is a radical Shi’a Islamist terror group based in Lebanon. The Iranian-backed organisation has de facto control of Lebanon’s Government and boasts the country’s largest military infrastructure. Lebanon is an extremely volatile country riddled with sectarian tensions and foreign interference, and continues to pose a strategic threat on Israel’s northern border.

Hezbollah does not recognise the existence of the State of Israel and is committed to its destruction. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah is known for his venomous rhetoric and has called repeatedly for the destruction of the State of Israel.

The organisation further seeks to violently impose its ideology on Muslims and forge a radical Iranian-style Islamic state, and drive out Western and other non-Islamic influences from the Muslim world.

Hezbollah’s extensive military infrastructure in southern Lebanon is a clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

The organisation is currently deeply engaged in supporting President Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria, providing thousands of fighters, of which an estimated 600 have been killed.

Terrorism:

Hezbollah terrorists remain a significant threat to regional stability.

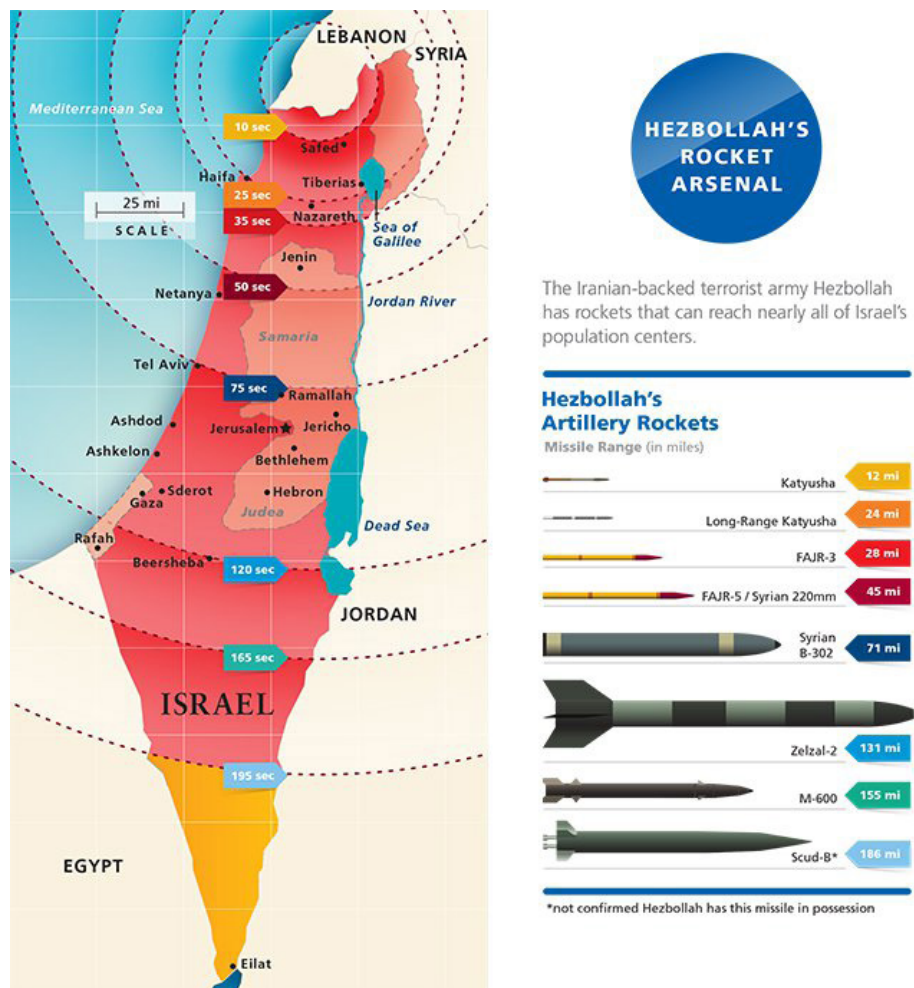
The U.S., Canada, Netherlands, Egypt and Israel designate the entirety of Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation, making no distinction between apparent ‘military’ or ‘political’ wings. In July 2013, the EU proscribed Hezbollah’s ‘military wing’ after a UK-led effort.

- Hezbollah has a history of international terror attacks, including the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, Argentina that killed 85 and wounded 300, and the 1994 suicide bombing on a commuter aircraft in Panama, which killed 21, including 12 Jews.
- Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the 1983 bombing of the multinational force in Beirut that killed 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French soldiers.
- Hezbollah’s complicity in the 2012 Burgas resort terror attack that killed 5 Israeli tourists was confirmed by the Bulgarian Government in February 2013.
- The abduction of two Israeli soldiers in 2006 led to the Second Lebanon War and cross-border skirmishes continue despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force (UNIFIL).
- The transfer of high-tech weaponry to Hezbollah from war-torn Syria has become an issue of increasing concern for Israel and the international community.
- Hezbollah operates a series of military training facilities in southern Lebanon and regularly carries out military drills. The exact armed strength of Hezbollah is unknown, but estimates range from 10,000 up to 65,000 fighters.
- In October 2014, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on the Israel-Lebanon border that injured two IDF soldiers.
- In May 2015, Hezbollah officials invited a Lebanese reporter to view its new and upgraded tunnel network in southern Lebanon, primarily developed with the aim of launching rockets at Israel.

Rocket Attacks:

Hezbollah has acquired a large arsenal of rockets and the threat of rocket fire on Israel’s northern border with Lebanon remains real. International concerns have grown that advanced weaponry is being transferred from Syria to Hezbollah under the cover of civil war in Syria. As many as 4,000 Grad-type Katyusha rockets were launched deep into Israel by Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War (2006), killing 44 civilians.

- Hezbollah has amassed an estimated arsenal of 100,000 rockets; five times what it had in the 2006 Second Lebanon War, according to the IDF.
- Hezbollah's possession of advanced long-range missiles, including Scud ballistic missiles, means that every city in Israel is now within range.
- Hezbollah is also understood to possess advanced anti-tank guided missiles, as well as anti-aircraft assets and anti-ship cruise missiles.
- According to Israeli security officials, recent satellite imagery shows that Hezbollah has moved military positions and 100,000 rockets into villages in southern Lebanon. Israeli officials warn that this amounts to the organisation using Lebanese civilians as a human shield.



Range of Hezbollah's rockets

UK Government Position:

Hezbollah's 'military wing' is blacklisted as a terrorist organisation by the UK Government, following a drive led by former Foreign Secretary William Hague in 2013 for the EU to proscribe the organisation.

Prime Minister David Cameron (March 2014): "When I saw the threat Hezbollah represented to Israel and beyond, I forged a Europe-wide consensus to proscribe its military wing, a key step in the fight against this enemy on your [Israel's] borders".

PEACE PROCESS

American-sponsored peace talks ended in April 2014 when Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas refused to accept a framework peace agreement presented by the U.S.; signed 15 international agreements in an effort to achieve statehood outside of bilateral negotiations (the premise of the peace process since at least 1993); and announced a unity government between Fatah and the terror group Hamas, which rejects Israel's right to exist. Direct peace talks had restarted in August 2013 after a nearly three-year hiatus.

Immediately following his re-election in March 2015, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated his commitment to achieving a two-state solution, and pledged that his new coalition Government would prioritise restarting peace talks with the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (May 2015): "I don't support a one-state solution – I don't believe that's a solution at all. I support the vision of two states for two peoples – a demilitarised Palestinian state that recognises the Jewish State".

The five final-status issues of negotiations include: borders, the status of Jerusalem, settlements, security, and Palestinian sovereignty.

Palestinian Unilateralism:

The biggest current obstacles to the advancement of the peace process include Hamas's rearmament drive in Gaza, internal fighting between rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah, and continued Palestinian unilateral measures.

Israel supports the establishment of a Palestinian state, through the process of direct peace talks without preconditions.

The PA renewed counterproductive unilateral steps to gain statehood recognition at the United Nations in 2014. The PA is expected to resume its unilateral bid for statehood at the UN later this year.

Unilateral actions to recognise a State of Palestine before an agreement has been reached in direct talks between Israel and the PA, directly harm the peace process and the possibility of a lasting two-state solution. Unilateralism is the rejection of the peace process, not a means to revive it.

UK Government Position:

The UK Government does not favour Palestinian unilateral actions and has repeatedly stated that a Palestinian state will only be recognised after a final settlement has been agreed in direct peace talks.

Prime Minister David Cameron (October 2014): "I look forward to the day when Britain will recognise the State of Palestine, but it should only be part of the negotiations that bring about a two-state solution. That is what we all want to see; a State of Israel living happily and peacefully alongside a State of Palestine, and that is when we should do the recognition".

Tobias Ellwood MP, Minister for the Middle East (October 2014): "The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time most helpful to the peace process, because a negotiated end to the occupation is the most effective way for Palestinian aspirations of statehood to be met on the ground".

SETTLEMENTS

The question of Israeli settlements in the West Bank is one of the five final-status issues of negotiations, which also includes borders, the status of Jerusalem, security, and Palestinian sovereignty. While settlement expansion is counterproductive, the settlements issue is not a permanent obstacle to peace.

The vast majority of the Israeli settler population live in so-called 'settlement blocs', which are mostly located near the pre-1967 Green Line. Settlements occupy at most about 6% of the territory of the West Bank, with 1% located in East Jerusalem. 405,000 people in 47 localities (77% of settlers) reside in close proximity to the pre-1967 line. 200,000 Jews live in Jewish neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem.

Israel, driven by the policy of 'land for peace', has a track record of removing settlements and making land swaps in the interests of peace.

There is no existing officially recognised border between Israel and the Palestinian Territories - this is still disputed. Israel's existing boundaries with the West Bank and Gaza Strip are based on the Green Line, which refers to the demarcation lines set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the armies of Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The Green Line is not and was not intended to be a border. The 1949 Armistice Agreements were clear that they were not creating permanent borders.

Israel's History of Removing Settlements and Gestures:

Israel has evacuated and destroyed settlements in the past, to help give momentum to the peace process:

- **2009-2010:** Israel unilaterally implemented an unprecedented ten-month freeze in West Bank settlement construction, beginning in November 2009, in a bid to encourage the PA to return to the negotiation table. Throughout this period, Israel made repeated overtures and requests to the Palestinians to re-enter direct negotiations without preconditions, which was not reciprocated until the last month of the moratorium.
- **2005:** Israel unilaterally evacuated all settlements in Gaza (in which some 8,000 Israelis had resided), and it evacuated various settlements in the northern West Bank.
- **2000:** Israel agreed to the 'Clinton Parameters', proposing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in Gaza and virtually all the West Bank (97%), a land-link between the two, plus extra land from the Negev desert.
- **1982:** Israel destroyed the settlement of Yamit in the Sinai as part of the peace treaty with Egypt.

These actions were intended to demonstrate to the Palestinians, the Arab world and the wider world, that Israel was prepared to make painful sacrifices in the interests of peace.

If there were a credible and tangible peace process, with assurances of coexistence and of security, then the Israeli public would be willing to sacrifice settlements again.

Gaza Withdrawal:

Israel's evacuation of settlements in Gaza in 2005 did not reduce conflict; instead, violence and incitement against Israel intensified. Rocket fire actually escalated from 2005 onwards, with more than 10,000 rockets launched by terrorists since Israel's unilateral withdrawal.

Hamas and many Palestinian moderates portrayed the settlement withdrawal as a capitulation by Israel, and as an indication of Israel's long-term weakness and eventual demise.

If settlements were the real reason for the absence of peace, then the Palestinian reaction should have been the opposite. The experience of Israel's Gaza withdrawal demonstrates that the settlements cannot be seen as the root cause of the conflict.

PA INCITEMENT AND PRISONERS' SALARIES

PA Incitement:

Glorification of terror and violence against Jews and Israel has been extensively documented in the official Palestinian Authority-controlled media, as well as in school textbooks.

While PA officials readily speak to Western audiences of their determination to reach peace with Israel, a different message is presented to their domestic audience. Little attempt is made to educate Palestinian society towards peace and coexistence with Israel.

No peace agreement will be able to guarantee peace in the medium- to long-term if a generation of Palestinians are growing up indoctrinated to hate Israel and Jews.

Incitement takes many forms: denial of Israel's right to exist; depiction of all of modern Israel as part of Palestine; glorification of past Palestinian terrorists; denial of Jewish and Israeli history and of connection to the land.

Both Israel and the Palestinians are legally bound to abstain from incitement and hostile propaganda in accordance with the Oslo Agreements and the 2003 Roadmap, which called on "all Palestinian institutions to end incitement against Israel". The PA's failure to deliver on its commitment to end incitement and hate education explicitly undermines the principles and conditions on which the peace process is built.

a) Incitement Examples

■ Demonisation of Israel and Jews (May 2015)

- o In May 2015, an official PA children's television show broadcast footage of a young Palestinian girl reciting a poem that branded Jews "barbaric monkeys" and "the most evil among creations". The poem went on to declare that Jerusalem would "vomit out" the "impure" Jews.
- o This is one of numerous examples of children on PA TV reciting hate poetry.



■ Glorification of Terror (March 2015)

- o The PA regularly honours Palestinian terrorists who have carried out and masterminded deadly terror attacks against Israeli civilians, by naming sports tournaments, town squares, and monuments in their honour.
- o In March 2015, the PA celebrated the anniversary of the deadliest terror attack in Israeli history, by dedicating a monument in a Ramallah square to the terrorist Dalal Mughrabi (see image below).
- o Dalal Mughrabi was the leader of the 1978 bus hijacking attack, known in Israel as the Coastal Road massacre, in which 38 Israeli civilians, including 13 children, were killed.



Prime Minister David Cameron (December 2012): “I have something else that needs to be made clear to the Palestinians. Britain will never tolerate the obscenity of a football tournament named after a suicide bomber who killed 20 Israelis in a restaurant. We must never tolerate incitement to terrorism”.

Prisoners' Salaries:

The Palestinian Authority rewards terrorism through its practice of paying monthly salaries to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons convicted of terror offences – this practice was first exposed in 2011. The PA is giving a strong financial incentive to terrorism, including through the misuse of fungible foreign financial assistance.

Contradicting its assurances to the international community, the PA continues to pay an estimated £84 million annually to convicted terrorists. These monthly salaries are paid to around 5,500 convicted terrorists, ranging from £230 to as much as £2,000 for those serving a 30-year sentence.

These payments were originally processed by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, which had the third highest monthly budget in the PA. In August 2014, under pressure from donor nations, the PA closed its Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, and announced the establishment of a new PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs, which they claimed would pay the salaries from alternative financial resources.

In 2013, then PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake, at a rally under the auspices of PA President Mahmoud Abbas in honor of released terrorists, mocked European donors for not wanting to fund terrorists' salaries: “The Europeans want their money that comes to us to remain clean - not to go to families of those they claim to be terrorists. [They] need to renounce this occupation mentality. These [prisoners] are heroes, self-sacrificing fighters (fedayeen), and fighters who fought so that we could live in dignity...”. [Official PA TV Live, November 2013]

a) Misuse of UK and Foreign Aid

- There is reason to believe that the PA's receipt of significant international aid enables it to use its own general budget to support terrorist or criminal activities.
 - o Britain is on target to give £343 million in aid to the PA between 2011 and 2015. The UK contributes £30 million each year into the PA's general budget.
- Since March 2013, the UK has ensured that money donated to the PA's general budget goes via the World Bank and into a special bank account that is used to pay the salaries of specific PA civil servants. Nonetheless, by providing money for the PA to spend on salaries, the UK is freeing up funds for the PA to spend as it sees fit, and this includes salaries to prisoners.
- It has been recommended that aid money should not go to the PA's fungible general budget, but be spent on specific projects where it cannot be misappropriated. This method of funding is employed by Canada which refuses to give aid donations to the PA's general budget.

BOYCOTTS

The UK is currently seen as a centre of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, whose campaign has actively sought to delegitimise Israel since 2005.

BDS is spearheaded by outspoken anti-Israel activists who have called on companies to cease business with Israel. The movement has also increasingly campaigned for academic and cultural boycotts on Israel, with several high-profile boycott incidents in recent years taking place in the UK.

The boycott campaign stands to be highly damaging for bilateral relations between Israel and the UK. Boycotts are a major infringement on the right to free speech and directly impact upon the ability for academic, scientific, business, and cultural cooperation between Britain and Israel.

Boycotts are ultimately damaging to the peace process, serving to strengthen extreme voices and weaken moderates, making a peaceful settlement between Palestinians and Israelis all the more difficult to achieve. BDS also unfairly holds all Israelis accountable for government policy, by assuming that the Israeli Government represents the views of every citizen.

The campaign has consistently opposed efforts to bring Israelis and Palestinians together to work towards peace, with BDS leaders advocating the boycott of cultural exchanges between Israeli and Palestinian artists, and condemning educational cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian universities. Coexistence projects are disparagingly branded as 'normalisation' by the BDS movement.

President Mahmoud Abbas stated in 2013 that the Palestinian Authority is officially opposed to boycotts of Israel: "We do not ask anyone to boycott Israel itself... We have relations with Israel, we have mutual recognition of Israel".

UK Government Position:

The UK Government strongly opposes boycotts of Israel.

Prime Minister David Cameron (March 2014): "I have a clear message – Britain opposes boycotts; whether it is trade unions campaigning for the exclusion of Israelis or universities trying to stifle academic exchange. Israel's place as a homeland for the Jewish people will never rest on hollow resolutions passed by amateur politicians... Delegitimising the State of Israel is wrong, it is abhorrent and together we will defeat it".

Business Secretary Sajid Javid (March 2015): "[I have] no tolerance for cultural boycotts of Israel... Whether cultural, educational or divestment, the answer is the same...[boycotts] are a form of the oldest hatred in the world".

