

UPDATE 2021/22

PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON AND ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER YAIR LAPID CELEBRATE UK-ISRAEL FRIENDSHIP AT CFI ANNUAL BUSINESS LUNCH 2021

CFI's 2021 ended on a high as Prime Minister Boris Johnson celebrated the UK-Israel partnership at our first Annual Business Lunch since 2018 – attended by 650 guests, including 200 Conservative parliamentarians and 12 Cabinet members.

Prime Minister Johnson underlined: "All my life I've been a defender and supporter of Israel. I'm very proud the government I lead is also a strong defender and supporter of Israel. It's a relationship getting stronger all the time". In his wide-ranging speech that received a standing ovation from the 650-strong audience, the Prime Minister described the UK and Israel as "science superpowers united in values", welcomed the two countries leading the way in COVID-19 vaccine take-up, reaffirmed his support of Israel's right to defend itself, and condemned Antisemitism.

CFI was delighted to welcome Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs Yair Lapid MK as a surprise guest speaker at the lunch. The two friends, who had first met in Israel on a CFI delegation 17 years ago, were presented with chanukiot by CFI Honorary President Lord Polak CBE to mark the festival of Chanukah.

We were honoured to be joined for the first time by Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) H.E. Mansoor Abulhoul, Ambassador of Bahrain H.E. Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, and Jordanian diplomat Bilal Nouredin.



CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

Despite ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, the Conservative Government and Conservative parliamentarians have remained committed to keeping Israel on the agenda and ensuring that the UK-Israel relationship goes from strength to strength.



Hamas Proscription

CFI strongly welcomed Home Secretary Priti Patel's "hugely important" decision to proscribe Hamas as a terrorist organisation in its entirety in November. The Home Secretary confirmed that the UK "can no longer disaggregate" the group's so-called military and political wings. The UK proscribed Hamas's military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades, in 2001, but the designation did not extend to the terror group's political arm.



Supporting Israel's Right to Defend Itself

During May's conflict between Israel and terror groups in Gaza, the UK Government "unequivocally" condemned the Hamas rocket attacks against Israel and supported the Jewish State's right to defend itself. Conservative MPs and peers stood up in Parliament and in the media to counter misinformation about the conflict, voice support for Israel's right to self-defence, and condemn a rise in Antisemitic incidents during the conflict.



UK-Israel Strategic Partnership

CFI was delighted to welcome the launch of a new 10-year UK-Israel strategic partnership at the end of November. The new agreement was signed by Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid in London, elevating the UK-Israel relationship to a Strategic Partnership. The new agreement pledges closer cooperation in cybersecurity, technology, defence, trade, and science.

THANK YOU ANDREW HELLER

CFI is saying farewell to our Chairman Andrew Heller, who has announced he will be retiring after 13 years and will be succeeded by Stephen Massey from 1st April. Andrew has been central to the successful expansion of the organisation and its activities, as well as many landmark achievements in the UK-Israel relationship. CFI would like to thank him for everything he has achieved.

Andrew Heller: "After a memorable 13 years, I have decided to retire as Chairman of Conservative Friends of Israel. During my time as Chairman, Israel has changed beyond recognition and the support of the Conservative Party for Israel has grown ever stronger. There is so much of which I am proud and it has been a privilege to work with some extraordinarily talented people, both in Parliament and within the CFI offices. I know that I am leaving the organisation in the best position it has ever been and I very much look forward to watching Stephen and the team continuing its success".





Countering Iran's Nuclear Threat

Shortly after becoming Foreign Secretary, Rt. Hon. Liz Truss MP emphasised at CFI's Conservative Party Conference reception in October the UK's commitment to stopping Iran from becoming a nuclear power, working "night and day with our friends and allies across the world to stop that from happening".

Opposing Anti-Israel Boycotts

The Government is moving forward with legislation to stop public bodies engaging in anti-Israel Boycotts, Divestments, Sanctions (BDS), honouring the Conservative manifesto pledge.



Fighting Anti-Israel Bias Internationally

Prime Minister Boris Johnson in April confirmed UK opposition to a controversial ICC investigation into Israel, in a letter to CFI. CFI had raised concerns about the ICC's investigation in two letters to Prime Minister Boris Johnson (February and March) and in a meeting with then-Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, urging the UK to issue a public condemnation of the probe. 33 Conservative Parliamentarians raised concerns over the ICC, and 15 MPs sent private letters to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.

The UK opposed anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, voting against the Israel-specific Agenda Item 7 at the



46th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in March. The UK voted against all three resolutions and forced a division on two of these.

In October, the UK voted against a resolution welcoming the Durban Declaration presented at the UNHRC, underlining that "regrettably, for far too long, the UN has downplayed the scourge of Antisemitism". CFI welcomed Foreign Secretary Truss's leadership on the issue, stating that the UK "sent an unmistakable message that it will tackle Antisemitism wherever it occurs".

WELCOME STEPHEN MASSEY

Stephen has served as Treasurer of CFI since 2010 and is a patron of the Hampstead and Kilburn Conservative Association. Professionally, Stephen is Chairman of Canaccord Genuity Ltd, an investment banking and wealth management firm, and deputy chairman of Windmill Hill Asset Management. He will become Chairman of CFI from 1st April ahead of CFI's first parliamentary delegation to Israel since before the pandemic. Stephen brings an invaluable wealth of experience to the position and we congratulate him on his appointment.

Stephen Massey: "I am honoured to become CFI's next Chairman and lead such a vital organisation. Israel and the Conservative Party are deeply important to me and I relish the opportunity to expand the fantastic relationship between these two great countries. Anyone present at CFI's Business Lunch in November will have seen the incredible strength of support Israel has within the Party and I am looking forward to shortly resuming our important Israel delegation programme. I am deeply grateful to Andrew for his exemplary leadership of CFI and for all he has achieved with the organisation over the last 13 years".



CFI EVENTS



CFI Virtual Briefing with Israel's then-Deputy Health Minister Yoav Kisch



CFI lunch with Israeli Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador



Foreign Secretary Rt. Hon. Liz Truss MP addressing CFI Conference Reception

January-March

CFI hosted a webinar for CFI supporters with Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP in January, then-Health Secretary Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock MP in March, and a Q&A event for Conservative parliamentarians with the UK Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Neil Wigan OBE.

Webinars with experts and senior political figures were also hosted during this period, including Israel's Deputy Health Minister Yoav Kisch MK, Jerusalem Post journalist Seth Frantzman, Israeli political scientist Professor Reuven Hazan ahead of Israel's General Election, and then-IDF Spokesperson Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus.

April-September

During the spring and summer months, CFI hosted virtual briefings for Conservative parliamentarians with prominent Palestinian pollster Dr Khalil Shikaki, as well as a Q&A with Times of Israel Founding Editor David Horovitz. Webinars for CFI supporters with a string of Cabinet Ministers were also hosted.

In September, over 30 Conservative MPs and Lords attended a CFI lunch in Parliament to welcome the new Deputy Ambassador of Israel to the UK, Oren Marmorstein, and meet Israeli Ambassador H.E. Tzipi Hotovely.

October-December

In October, CFI was very happy to make a return to Conservative Party Conference in Manchester. As many as 500 Conservative activists attended CFI's packed Conservative Party Conference Reception to hear Foreign Secretary Rt. Hon. Liz Truss MP address the event, alongside 10 Cabinet members. Foreign Secretary Truss asserted: "The United Kingdom wants to build with our friends and allies around the world, and there is no closer friend and ally than the State of Israel".

In November, CFI hosted a special screening of the new film *Upheaval: The Journey of Menachem Begin*, with an insightful Q&A with author and academic Ed Husain and Producer Rachel Greenberg.

CFI IN PARLIAMENT

CFI had another busy year in Parliament as we worked with many Conservative parliamentarians to campaign on key issues including Iran's nuclear activities and funding of terror groups; supporting Israel's right to self-defence; condemning incitement in Palestinian Authority textbooks and supporting peaceful coexistence.

At least 103 Conservative MPs and Lords made helpful contributions in various debates and question sessions in Parliament in support of CFI's campaign issues, including 45 from the 2019 intake of parliamentarians.

