

# SUBMISSION REGARDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	2
About Campaign Against Antisemitism	5
Background	6
Support for Hamas in the UK	8
The hostages	10
Proscriptions of terrorist organisations	12
Recommendations	19

## SUMMARY

Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) is a registered charity (charity number 1163790) dedicated to exposing and countering antisemitism through education and enforcement of the law. We do that through pioneering litigation, innovative communications campaigns, research and policy work and education at all levels. CAA operates nationally.

On 7th October 2023, Hamas, an antisemitic, genocidal terrorist group, carried out a barbaric attack in Southern Israel. It was the worst antisemitic massacre since the Holocaust. Among the victims were eighteen British citizens. Indeed, more British citizens were killed on 7th October 2023 than in any foreign terror attack since 9/11. The terrorists also took over 250 people hostage – including Emily Damari, a British-Israeli national then aged 27, who was held for 471 days – nearly 60 of whom remain in captivity in Gaza today.

Hamas was proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000 in full by the British Government in November 2021, following a campaign by CAA and others. As such, the Government should treat Hamas as an illegitimate entity and ensure that any policy that it pursues ultimately aims towards a world in which Hamas does not exist. It would be unconscionable for the British Government to risk appearing to endorse a group that is proscribed in the UK as a respectable partner abroad. Any suggestion that Hamas is a legitimate partner for the UK risks exacerbating extremely worrying trends here in the UK.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) must make greater efforts to ensure the safe and swift return of all of the remaining hostages. The previous and current governments in the UK have repeatedly pledged to work to release the hostages, but neither has taken any visible steps to do so – and to do so in a way that does not legitimise or empower Hamas. Pressure on Iran, Qatar and Egypt, all of which have relations with and leverage over Hamas has not been applied; reliance on direct dealings with an organisation like Hamas, an antisemitic terror group that is proscribed in the UK, can only send mixed signals to the British public, British Jews and the international community. This is to say nothing of the danger of rewarding terrorists who kidnap Jews, a method of extortion to which the Jewish people have been subject for centuries, with Israeli Jews tragically being no exception.

While Hamas led the 7th October 2023 massacre, it was not the only terror organisation involved. Several other organisations not currently proscribed in the UK as terrorist organisations under the Terrorism Act 2000 have either claimed involvement in the terrorist attack on 7th October 2023 (including the abduction of hostages) or are reported as having been involved. Clearly, these organisations must be proscribed in full.

It is time for Britain to outlaw them and send a message that antisemitic terrorism has consequences.

Hamas is an offshoot of the Society of the Muslim Brothers, popularly known as the Muslim Brotherhood. This organisation is proscribed in a number of countries, and the UK should follow suit. Our representative polling shows that more than four-fifths (85%) of British Jews think that the British Government should proscribe the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group.

We have previously written to the Home Office, including in January 2024, calling for a proscription of Ansar Allah (the Houthis). The Houthis are a terror group backed by Iran with a long history of violent attacks in a number of different countries, and whose slogan is “Death to America, Death to Israel, Damn the Jews.” Our representative polling shows that 94% of British Jews back our calls to the British Government to proscribe the Houthis.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is proscribed as a terrorist organisation in the US, Canada, Israel, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Britain must finally follow suit. We have called for the proscription of the IRGC for some time. Prior to the 2024 General Election, the then Shadow Home Secretary and Shadow Foreign Secretary pledged to apply a full ban on the IRGC. Labour figures rightly set out this policy as a contrast to the Conservative Government, which hesitated to introduce a ban. But since the election of the Labour Government, no action has yet been taken on the proscription of the IRGC.

Any British funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) must be carefully vetted to ensure that it does not directly or indirectly benefit terrorist organisations or promote antisemitism, in addition to rigorous safeguards against corruption. In view of UNRWA’s record, it is extremely difficult to see how these outcomes can be satisfactorily guaranteed.

As one of its first acts in office following the 2024 General Election, the new Government announced the resumption of funding to UNRWA, which had been suspended by the previous Government. We wrote to the FCDO in September 2024 to confirm whether legal advice was sought and obtained regarding the decision to resume funding to UNRWA and to request that the Foreign Secretary follows his own recent precedent and publishes a summary of the legal advice. Regrettably, the FCDO has refused to provide any information as to whether legal advice was sought or obtained, or its content. We would be grateful if the Committee would similarly urge the FCDO, in the spirit of transparency and consistency, to disclose whether legal advice was sought or obtained and to publish a summary of its content. British taxpayers naturally have a right to reassurance regarding the risks of funding UNRWA, given all that we now know. British

Jews in particular have a clear and significant interest in understanding how the British Government is guaranteeing that funds to UNRWA are not being used to directly or indirectly benefit terrorist organisations or promote antisemitism.

In addition to the material presented in this submission, we would be pleased to provide any other additional information, within our purview, that the Committee may find helpful, or to provide a witness should the Committee intend to hold a hearing.

## **ABOUT CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM**

Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) is a registered charity (charity number 1163790) dedicated to exposing and countering antisemitism through education and enforcement of the law. We do that through pioneering litigation, innovative communications campaigns, research and policy work and education at all levels. CAA operates nationally.

Representative polling of the Jewish community shows that 86% of British Jews believe that CAA is representative of their views on antisemitism, with more than half strongly believing that.<sup>1</sup>

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (the Committee) has sought submissions on what is described as the “Israeli-Palestinian conflict”, and specifically regarding whether the UK should promote a ceasefire and, if so, how, and whether lessons can be learned from UK policy to date.

As a UK charity focusing on antisemitism, we do not generally take positions on British foreign policy. However, the nature of Hamas — and its allies Hizballah and Ansar Allah (the Houthis) — as an antisemitic genocidal terrorist group, as well as the long and appalling antisemitic record of its patron, the Islamic Republic of Iran, brings aspects of this issue within our purview.

Moreover, the impact of this conflict between Iran and its proxies on the one hand, and Israel — the world’s only Jewish state — on the other, on Jews here in Britain, further compels us to provide the Committee with our insights.

We are grateful to the Committee for this opportunity to provide a submission. In addition to the material presented in this submission, we would be pleased to provide any other additional information, within our purview, that the Committee may find helpful, or to provide a witness should the Committee intend to hold a hearing.

For more information about our work or to schedule a meeting to discuss the fight against antisemitism, please e-mail [policy@antisemitism.org](mailto:policy@antisemitism.org). You can also find us on social media using the handle [@antisemitism](https://twitter.com/antisemitism), or visit our website at [antisemitism.org](https://antisemitism.org).

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-britains-failure-to-protect-its-jews/>

## BACKGROUND

On 7th October 2023, Hamas, an antisemitic, genocidal terrorist group, carried out a barbaric attack in Southern Israel. During the attack, Hamas terrorists fired rockets into Southern and Central Israel and led a campaign of abuse and murder of some 1,200 people in cold blood, including women, children and the elderly. They used sexual violence and other humiliating techniques to maximise the suffering of their victims, some of whom were burned alive, and recorded their acts with pride, having put into practice their radical antisemitic theology. This was the worst antisemitic massacre since the Holocaust.

Among the victims of Hamas were eighteen British citizens. Indeed, more British citizens were killed on 7th October 2023 than in any foreign terror attack since 9/11.<sup>2</sup> One might question whether the previous or current governments have acted in a way commensurate with this extraordinary statistic.

The terrorists also took over 250 people hostage — including Emily Damari, a British-Israeli national then aged 27, who was held for 471 days — nearly 60 of whom remain in captivity in Gaza today. Some have been released as part of temporary ceasefire arrangements and in exchange for the release of terrorists held in Israeli prisons — including some, belonging to the same organisations who carried out the massacre, with yet more Jewish blood on their hands — while others were rescued by Israeli forces.

The attack was led by Hamas but involved members of numerous other terrorist groups, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad; Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades; Mujahideen Brigades; Popular Resistance Committees; Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. We have called for the proscription of these groups in the UK (with the exception of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which, like Hamas, is already proscribed), but the previous Government failed to do so and the current Government has yet to act.

More astoundingly, the 7th October attack also included a considerable number of Gazan civilians, who participated in the massacre and looting. Civilians are also known to have helped abduct and hide hostages in Gaza. The involvement of Gazan civilians in this war is a particularly depressing and much-overlooked fact that the Committee would do well to reflect upon.

On 8th October 2023, Hizballah began firing rockets indiscriminately from Lebanon at Northern Israel. These rockets were aimed at civilian areas; the most heinous killed twelve Druze children in the Golan Heights. Hizballah's rockets prompted the evacuation of tens

---

<sup>2</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/uk-israel-appg-publishes-report-on-hamas-attack-of-7th-october-2023/>

of thousands of Israeli civilians from their homes, in addition to the tens of thousands evacuated from Southern Israel due to the Hamas attack from Gaza. Many of these people refused to return home because they did not believe that it was safe to do so while antisemitic terrorist groups retained any freedom with which to attack them. In addition, the Houthis in Yemen, Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, groups operating in Syria and the Government of Iran itself fired rockets, drones and other projectiles at Israel, including the largest barrage of ballistic missiles in history. All of these attacks have either been fired indiscriminately or deliberately aimed at civilian areas and infrastructure. All of these groups and the Iranian regime are motivated by the antisemitic objective of murdering as many Jews as possible and annihilating the world's only Jewish state. While this call for submissions is titled the "Israeli-Palestinian conflict", the most immediate conflict is in fact between Hamas and Israel and more broadly the conflict is between Iran and Israel. No progress on this particular issue can be achieved if the significance of Hamas is downplayed or if the centrality of Iran is ignored.

The traumatic impact on Jewish people, including in Britain, of 7th October and the ensuing war, cannot be understated. This was a modern-day pogrom unlike any since the Nazis, and the victim was the very Jewish state that Jews around the world, regardless of where they live, see as the guarantor of their safety, not to mention the home of many of their family and friends. With British Jews and Jews worldwide facing surging antisemitism — beginning with celebrations of the attacks on 7th and 8th October 2023 in London and cities around the world — not only were Jews mourning for their brethren and concerned for the future of the Jewish homeland, but they also felt a blow to their personal safety. In view of the levels of antisemitism over the past year and a half in Britain and elsewhere, they were, unfortunately, right to feel insecure.

The sentiments of British Jews are best captured by our representative polling,<sup>3</sup> which shows that:

- Only one-third (34%) of British Jews believe that Jews have a long-term future in the UK.
- As much as half of the Jewish community has considered leaving Britain in the past two years due to antisemitism. Among 18-24-year-olds, it is two-thirds (67%). The main reason is the surge in antisemitism since 7th October 2023, cited by 76% of respondents.
- Less than half of British Jews (43%) feel welcome in the UK.

---

<sup>3</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-britains-failure-to-protect-its-jews/>

## SUPPORT FOR HAMAS IN THE UK

Hamas is an antisemitic, genocidal terrorist organisation. Hamas' ideology and activities are Islamist, nationalist, antisemitic, misogynistic and homophobic. Many also consider its militant teachings to be a corruption of Islam. The Hamas Covenant, issued in 1988, remains the group's governing document. Article 7 of the document states: "The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: 'O Muslim, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.'"<sup>4</sup> The document also calls for the "obliteration" of Israel, which "by virtue of its being Jewish and of having a Jewish population, defies Islam and the Muslims."

Hamas was proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000 in full by the British Government in November 2021,<sup>5</sup> following a campaign by CAA and others.<sup>6</sup> As such, the Government should treat Hamas as an illegitimate entity and ensure that any policy that it pursues ultimately aims towards a world in which Hamas does not exist. It would be unconscionable for the British Government to risk appearing to endorse a group that is proscribed in the UK as a respectable partner abroad.

Notwithstanding its proscription, sympathy for Hamas and its antisemitic extremist ideology has reached alarming levels in the UK, according to YouGov polling commissioned by CAA:<sup>7</sup>

Support for Hamas is particularly rife among young Britons, more than one-eighth (13%) of whom believe that the British Government is wrong to classify Hamas as a terrorist group, compared to 7% of the British public and an astonishing 31% among those who describe themselves as "very left-wing".

- 16% of young British adults believe that the attacks carried out by Hamas on 7th October 2023 were justified, compared to 7% of the wider British public.
- Almost one in ten – 9% – of 18-24-year-olds have a favourable view of Hamas, compared to 3% of the general British public.

---

<sup>4</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Time-to-Proscribe-Hamas-in-Full.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2/proscribed-terrorist-groups-or-organisations-accessible-version>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/the-government-has-listened-home-secretary-to-proscribe-hamas-in-full-following-campaign-by-cao-and-our-allies/>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-extent-of-sympathy-for-hamas-and-frightening-trends-of-radicalism-among-young-britons/>



- More than one-eighth of British 18-24-year-olds (13%) do not believe that reports that Hamas killed around 1,200 Israelis in the attacks on 7th October 2023 are broadly true, compared to 7% of the wider British public. Just over half (55%) of the British public think that those reports are broadly true, compared to 39% of 18-24-year-olds.

Any suggestion that Hamas is a legitimate partner for the UK risks exacerbating these extremely worrying trends.

## THE HOSTAGES

On the day of the attack, terrorists took over 250 people hostage. There has been significant evidence — including footage and personal accounts — of abuse carried out by Hamas and other terrorists and Gazan civilians during and after the attack, including during the hostages' journey from the sites of the attack into Gaza.

According to a report published by the Ministry of Health in Israel about the hostages, “Women, men, and children who returned from captivity reported that they endured severe physical and sexual abuse, such as beatings, isolation, deprivation of food and water, branding, hair-pulling, and sexual assault.”<sup>8</sup> Former hostages reported that hostage teenagers were forced to perform sexual acts on each other. It was also reported that they were forced to strip, were touched in intimate areas of their bodies and that their genitals were whipped. One hostage reported being sexually assaulted at gunpoint by Hamas terrorists. Hostages also said that women of all ages were forced to undress whilst being watched by Hamas terrorists. Female hostages said that they were sexually assaulted and tied to beds whilst being stared at.

Hostages were also found to have been murdered by terrorists during their captivity, including Shiri Bibas and her children Ariel (then aged four) and Kfir (then aged nine months).

Hamas has held multiple horrifying ‘ceremonies’ in Gaza during its hostage releases. During these ceremonies, hostages were subject to further psychological abuse, including being given ‘goodie-bags’ with photos of them during their captivity; being surrounded by crowds of screaming Gazan civilians; and being forced to stand on podiums and photographed. Worse abuses have also been reported. Ariel and Kfir Bibas were returned in coffins with inscribed text that read: “Date of arrest: 07/10/2023”.<sup>9</sup> Their mother, Shiri Bibas, was due to be returned with them, but it was discovered by Israeli authorities that Hamas had put a different cadaver in the coffin marked as hers.<sup>10</sup> The correct body was subsequently handed over.

59 hostages to this date remain in captivity, around half of whom are believed by Israel to be deceased.

---

<sup>8</sup> See [https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/news/28122024-01/en/subjects\\_oct-7th\\_hostages-health-122024-en.pdf](https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/news/28122024-01/en/subjects_oct-7th_hostages-health-122024-en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> See <https://nypost.com/2025/02/20/world-news/hamas-leaves-sick-message-on-shiri-bibas-coffin/>

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-hamas-sends-wrong-body-bibas-family-says-they-want-shiri-back-not-revenge/>

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) must make greater efforts to ensure the safe and swift return of all of the remaining hostages. The previous and current governments in the UK have repeatedly pledged to work to release the hostages, but neither has taken any visible steps to do so — and to do so in a way that does not legitimise or empower Hamas. Pressure on Iran, Qatar and Egypt, all of which have relations with and leverage over Hamas has not been applied; reliance on direct dealings with an organisation like Hamas, an antisemitic terror group that is proscribed in the UK, can only send mixed signals to the British public, British Jews and the international community. This is to say nothing of the danger of rewarding terrorists who kidnap Jews, a method of extortion to which the Jewish people have been subject for centuries, with Israeli Jews tragically being no exception.

# PROSCRIPTIONS OF TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

While proscriptions under the Terrorism Act 2000 are formally a matter for the Home Office, the FCDO is understood to retain considerable influence in this area, and therefore, we consider it appropriate to raise the issue of proscriptions with the Committee.

## GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE 7TH OCTOBER ATTACK

As noted above, Hamas led the 7th October 2023 massacre, but it was not the only terrorist organisation involved. The following organisations are not currently proscribed in the UK as terrorist organisations under the Terrorism Act 2000 and yet have either claimed involvement in the terrorist attack on 7th October 2023 (including the abduction of Israeli hostages) or are reported as having been involved:<sup>11</sup>

- Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation by the United States, among others);<sup>12</sup>
- Mujahideen Brigades (which publicly claimed to have taken hostages);
- Popular Resistance Committees (which publicly claimed to have taken hostages);
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (whose publicly-affirmed involvement is still online);<sup>13</sup> and
- Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (whose publicly-affirmed involvement is still online).<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-67480680>

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

<sup>13</sup> See <https://pflp.ps/post/23726/%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-> Archived version available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20231008000112/https://pflp.ps/post/23726/%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9->

<sup>14</sup> See <https://alhourriah.org/article/125237>

Clearly, these five organisations must be proscribed in full under the Terrorism Act 2000. Their involvement in the worst antisemitic attack in recent history, in which eighteen British citizens were slaughtered and one was taken hostage for over a year, is unquestionably sufficient reason for proscription. Some of these groups also have long histories of attacks on Jews. It is time for Britain to outlaw them and send a message that antisemitic terrorism has consequences.

Nearly all British Jews — a resounding 98% — back our calls to proscribe all groups that were involved in the 7th October 2023 attack in Israel under terrorism legislation, according to our representative polling.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD**

Hamas is an offshoot of the Society of the Muslim Brothers, popularly known as the Muslim Brotherhood. This organisation is proscribed in a number of countries, and the UK should follow suit. Our representative polling shows that more than four-fifths (85%) of British Jews think that the British Government should proscribe the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group.<sup>16</sup>

### **ANSAR ALLAH (THE HOUTHIS)**

We have previously written to the Home Office, including in January 2024, calling for a proscription of Ansar Allah (the Houthis). The Houthis are a terror group backed by Iran with a long history of violent attacks in a number of different countries,<sup>17</sup> and whose slogan is “Death to America, Death to Israel, Damn the Jews.” Our representative polling shows that 94% of British Jews back our calls to the British Government to proscribe the Houthis.<sup>18</sup>

For many months now, the Houthis have been attacking commercial vessels in the Red Sea, requiring a military response from both the US and the UK, and have stated that they are doing so in solidarity with Hamas and in order to pressure the Jewish state to make concessions to proscribed terrorist organisations. These actions being committed by the Houthis clearly fall within the definition of acts of terrorism under section 1 of the 2000 Act, and therefore, the statutory test is met.

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-britains-failure-to-protect-its-jews/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-britains-failure-to-protect-its-jews/>

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/who-are-yemens-houthis>

<sup>18</sup> <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-britains-failure-to-protect-its-jews/>

## THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has a long and appalling record of promoting antisemitic propaganda, including Holocaust-denial, and funding and orchestrating violence against Jews. This is in addition to being the world's biggest state-sponsor of terrorism, more generally, the effects of which are not only profound in the Middle East but felt on every continent in the world. According to our nation's security chiefs, Iran directly threatens the UK.

Founded in 1979 by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is a paramilitary force that answers directly to the radical regime. Its purpose is to serve as a praetorian guard for the theocracy at home and to advance its interests abroad. That includes training, arming and supporting terrorist groups and encouraging strategic acts of terror against targets deemed hostile to the Islamic Republic.

The IRGC has a paramount role in cultivating antisemitic sentiment, giving succour to antisemites and backing terrorism against Jews. The IRGC is a vital organ pumping out antisemitic propaganda in Iran and through the Middle East, it emboldens those who wish harm to Jewish people in the name of extremist religion, and it is the indispensable patron of such antisemitic genocidal terrorist groups as Hamas and Hizballah, both of which are proscribed by the UK, and the Houthis.

The IRGC also operates in the UK. For example, eight IRGC leaders have been discovered to have spoken to students nationally since 2020, reportedly using the Islamic Students Association of Britain to arrange the lectures.<sup>19</sup> One former general in the organisation allegedly told British students that the Holocaust was “fake”. He also is reported to have encouraged his audience of students to join “the beautiful list of soldiers” who would fight and kill Jews in a coming apocalyptic war. Another person believed to be a high-ranking IRGC member is said to have accused Jews of having “created homosexuality”. He allegedly told students that they should view themselves as “holy warriors”, promising them that the “era of the Jews” would soon be at an end. Foreign Secretary David Lammy, who was then Shadow Foreign Secretary, said at the time: “The invitation of IRGC commanders and other speakers who glorify its actions to speak to British students is incredibly concerning. Robust action is needed now.” We agree. However, limited sanctions on IRGC figures are an insufficient response to the threat that the IRGC poses.

The IRGC is already proscribed as a terrorist organisation in the US, Canada, Israel, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Britain must finally follow suit. We have called for the

---

<sup>19</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/senior-commanders-from-antisemitic-islamist-terrorist-group-irgc-found-to-have-spoken-on-university-campuses/>

proscription of the IRGC for some time.<sup>20</sup> The proscription of the IRGC is supported by 93% of British Jews, according to our representative polling.<sup>21</sup> In early 2023, then Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy said in Parliament: “We would proscribe the IRGC, either by using existing terrorism legislation or by creating a new process of proscription for hostile state actors.”<sup>22</sup> In July 2023, as Shadow Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper reiterated that a Labour Government would apply a full ban on the IRGC.<sup>23</sup> Labour figures rightly set out this policy as a contrast to the Conservative Government, which hesitated to introduce a ban. But since the establishment of the Labour Government, no action has yet been taken on the proscription of the IRGC.

Sir Richard Dearlove, a former head of MI6, recently described Iran as “the primary destabilising force in the Middle East” and, with regard to proscribing the IRGC, said: “I just don’t get why we haven’t done so. It is the agency through which Iran has conducted what I would call ‘arm’s length warfare’. The Quds Force is part of the IRGC, and they’ve made an absolute fundamental aspect of Iranian policy using this agency to destabilise and interfere in the affairs of other countries. I know the Foreign Office arguments for not banning the IRGC, but it should have been identified as a terrorist organisation a long time ago.”<sup>24</sup>

## **THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY (UNRWA)**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) — the mandate of which is, uniquely among all UN agencies, focused exclusively on one displaced population — has long been a magnet for controversy.

UNRWA’s curricula have promoted antisemitism and violence for decades, and its teachers have glorified terrorism, radicalising a new generation against Jews.<sup>25</sup> This is why the EU Parliament has repeatedly warned about UNRWA textbooks.<sup>26</sup> A group of 3,000

---

<sup>20</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Time-to-Proscribe-IRGC.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/new-polling-shows-britains-failure-to-protect-its-jews/>

<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.lfi.org.uk/lammy-assails-government-inaction-on-irgc-proscription/>

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/labour-will-amend-terror-legislation-to-ban-irans-hostile-irgc-says-cooper>

<sup>24</sup> See <https://www.thejc.com/news/politics/iran-is-a-threat-to-british-jews-cautions-former-mi6-chief-q2lome5c>

<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/04/11/european-parliament-denounces-unrwa-role-in-inciting-violence-and-antisemitism/>

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, <https://x.com/osint613/status/1886170772273516929?s=48&t=Vg3MuFV6h79t-ZTPE79rfQ>

teachers working for UNRWA in Gaza praised the 7th October Hamas attack<sup>27</sup>. If one wants to know how Gazan society became radicalised over so many years, start with its schools. They are run by UNRWA.

Israel has been aware for several years that Hamas uses UNRWA facilities in Gaza — including its schools — to store weapons, and as bases to run terrorist operations against Israel, including as launching pads for rockets.<sup>28</sup> In the Gazan city of Rafah, for example, Hamas terrorists were found in UNRWA's central logistics compound alongside UN vehicles.<sup>29</sup>

Some UNRWA personnel have been found to be members of Hamas, such as the leader of Hamas in Lebanon, who was discovered to be employed by UNRWA.<sup>30</sup>

Some UNRWA personnel were even involved in the 7th October massacre,<sup>31</sup> which is why the agency was forced, under international pressure, to investigate and fire a number of employees.

The dual British-Israeli national, Emily Damari, said that during some of her time as a hostage in Hamas captivity, she was held at UNRWA facilities.<sup>32</sup> UNRWA did not deny this.<sup>33</sup>

The agency has always preferred to downplay its failures rather than address them, lacks proper oversight and has constantly faced allegations of corruption.

---

<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/01/11/un-agency-staff-praised-hamas-oct-7-massacre-telegram-channel-watchdog-reveals/>

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-810518>

<sup>29</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/un-says-unrwa-has-fired-nine-employees-over-involvement-in-hamas-attack-on-7th-october/>

<sup>30</sup> See <https://news.sky.com/story/hamas-leader-in-lebanon-killed-by-israel-was-un-employee-unwra-confirms-13225258>

<sup>31</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/05/nine-unrwa-staff-members-may-have-been-involved-in-7-october-attack>

<sup>32</sup> See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4ge7ljz75mo>. See also <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2025/01/22/den-of-antisemitism-hamas-held-israeli-hostages-in-unrwa-camps/>

<sup>33</sup> See <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/claims-hostages-have-been-held-unrwa-premises-are-deeply-disturbing-and>



The Biden Administration in the United States ceased funding to UNRWA,<sup>34</sup> and the Dutch Parliament recently voted to defund UNRWA,<sup>35</sup> as did the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Swiss Council of States,<sup>36</sup> while the Italian Foreign Minister has called for an end to Italian cooperation with UNRWA,<sup>37</sup> among others.

Clearly, any British funding to UNRWA must be carefully vetted to ensure that it does not directly or indirectly benefit terrorist organisations or promote antisemitism, in addition to rigorous safeguards against corruption. In view of UNRWA's record, it is extremely difficult to see how these outcomes can be satisfactorily guaranteed.

British funding to UNRWA was paused by the Conservative Government following allegations – subsequently proven – that UNRWA staff were involved in the attack on 7th October, use of UNRWA premises in Hamas operations and in recognition of the agency's highly problematic history. However, as one of its first acts in office following the 2024 General Election, the Labour Government announced the resumption of funding to UNRWA.<sup>38</sup> In December 2024, further funding in the amount of £13 million was also pledged by the Government to UNRWA.<sup>39</sup>

David Lammy, the Foreign Secretary, has previously and rightly extolled the virtue of transparency when decisions such as these are made. For example, last summer he published a summary of the legal advice obtained by the FCDO regarding the suspension of some 30 licences for arms exports to Israel. The suspension was due to an apparent “clear risk” that such arms may be used in ways that breach international law. It was disappointing that the Foreign Secretary did not publish a similar summary in relation to the decision to restore funding to UNRWA, whose record undoubtedly gives rise to a clear risk that such funding may be used in ways that breach UK law or international law.

We therefore wrote to the FCDO in September 2024 to confirm whether legal advice was sought and obtained regarding the decision to resume funding to UNRWA and to request that the Foreign Secretary follows his own recent precedent and publishes a summary of

---

<sup>34</sup> See <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/us-unrwa-funding-already-halted-2024-not-by-trump-2025-order-2025-01-28/>

<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-833660>

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.rts.ch/info/suisse/2025/article/suisse-une-commission-veut-geler-l-aide-a-l-unrwa-debat-au-parlement-28794924.html>

<sup>37</sup> See [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/lena-lempert-a32bb9\\_breaking-italy-fm-we-dont-want-to-work-ugcPost-7293584403505508353-9ZzY/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/lena-lempert-a32bb9_breaking-italy-fm-we-dont-want-to-work-ugcPost-7293584403505508353-9ZzY/)

<sup>38</sup> See <https://antisemitism.org/david-lammy-must-now-come-clean-on-unrwa-legal-advice/>

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/prime-minister-keir-starmer-unrwa-gaza-tories-b2662973.html>

the legal advice. Regrettably, the FCDO has refused to provide any information as to whether legal advice was sought or obtained, or its content. We would be grateful if the Committee would similarly urge the FCDO, in the spirit of transparency and consistency, to disclose whether legal advice was sought or obtained and to publish a summary of its content.

British taxpayers naturally have a right to reassurance regarding the risks of funding UNRWA, given all that we now know. British Jews in particular have a clear and significant interest in understanding how the British Government is guaranteeing that funds to UNRWA are not being used to directly or indirectly benefit terrorist organisations or promote antisemitism. It cannot be right that our Government fails to satisfy British Jews that their taxes are not in any way benefiting a proscribed terrorist organisation that seeks their annihilation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government should treat Hamas as an illegitimate entity and ensure that any policy that it pursues ultimately aims towards a world in which Hamas does not exist. It would be unconscionable for the British Government to risk appearing to endorse a group that is proscribed in the UK as a respectable partner abroad.

The FCDO must make greater efforts to ensure the safe and swift return of all of the remaining hostages. This must be undertaken in a way that does not legitimise or empower Hamas, especially through pressure on Iran, Qatar and Egypt, all of which have relations with and leverage over Hamas.

All of the organisations that were involved in the 7th October 2023 attack must be proscribed in full under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Hamas is an offshoot of the Society of the Muslim Brothers, popularly known as the Muslim Brotherhood. This organisation is proscribed in a number of countries, and the UK should follow suit.

Ansar Allah (the Houthis) is a terror group backed by Iran with a long history of violent attacks in a number of different countries, and whose slogan is “Death to America, Death to Israel, Damn the Jews.” The Houthis must be proscribed in full under the Terrorism Act 2000.

The IRGC is proscribed as a terrorist organisation in the US, Canada, Israel, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Britain must finally follow suit, in fulfilment of Labour’s pre-election pledge.

Any British funding to UNRWA must be carefully vetted to ensure that it does not directly or indirectly benefit terrorist organisations or promote antisemitism, in addition to rigorous safeguards against corruption. The FCDO must disclose whether legal advice was sought or obtained in relation to the decision to resume funding to UNRWA, and must publish a summary of the legal advice. British Jews in particular have a clear and significant interest in understanding how the British Government is guaranteeing that funds to UNRWA are not being used to directly or indirectly benefit terrorist organisations or promote antisemitism.

Campaign Against Antisemitism