



The Andy Burnham Cabinet's Ties to Israel

August 2026



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“I can’t judge things of that enormity.”

Prime Minister Andy Burnham

when asked if Israel was committing genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip.¹



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Cosmetic Changes and Institutional Continuity



01

Cosmetic Changes and Institutional Continuity

Despite new Prime Minister Andy Burnham’s faux apology over Labour’s abysmal response to Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, he is cut from the same cloth as Starmer, and represents an institutional repackaging rather than a shift in policy.²

Like Starmer, Burnham has failed to commit to any tangible actions against Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, such as impose sanctions, ban arms sales, and repeal the ban on Palestine Action – and has even refused to use the term genocide to describe Israel’s annihilation.³

In recent weeks, the rest of Burnham’s cabinet has also adopted a similar narrative pivot over Israel that attempts to sanitise their complicity in genocide while stopping short of any concrete actions to end British complicity in Israel’s genocide.⁴ This PR exercise is a cynical attempt to curry favour amongst pro-Palestine voters who have abandoned the Labour Party due to their continued support for Israel’s genocide.⁵

The makeup of Burnham’s new cabinet reveals the continuity of Israeli influence over the new Labour cabinet.⁶ Of his 28-person cabinet, at least 12 were members of Labour Friends of Israel (LFI) before the group made its membership private in 2024, and two have served as vice-chair of the organisation:⁷

LFI members in Andy Burnham’s Cabinet⁸⁷



Andy Burnham



Wes Streeting



Yvette Cooper



Pat McFadden

Vice-Chair of LFI



Jonathan Reynolds

Vice-Chair of LFI



Lucy Powell



Bridget Phillipson



Angela Rayner



Lisa Nandy



Alex Norris



Ellie Reeves



Angela Eagle



Chris Bryant

“The first foreign visit I would do as leader of the Labour Party would be to Israel.”

Prime Minister Andy Burnham
in 2015.⁸



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Andy Burnham's Ties to Israel



02

Andy Burnham’s Ties to Israel

For all his PR spin, Andy Burnham is cut from the same cloth as Keir Starmer as far as Israel is concerned. Burnham’s superficial apologies and pretend shift in narrative are merely superficial attempts to rectify Labour’s appalling result in the recent local elections, absent of any meaningful actions against the apartheid state of Israel.⁹

In 2004, Andy Burnham received £2,732 from Labour Friends of Israel (LFI) to visit Israel as part of a party of Parliamentary delegates.¹⁰

Andy Burnham has been a member of LFI since 2015 – something he has said “will never change”.⁷⁵

In 2015, he described the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement as “unjustified spitefulness towards Israel” and pledged that Israel would be the first country he would visit as leader of Labour.¹¹

Burnham also described Israel as a “democracy that has a long history of protecting minorities and promoting civil rights”, erasing Israel’s apartheid and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, and said that the colonial Balfour Declaration was an example of “British values in action” and “played a role in the establishment of democracy in the region”.¹²

When asked if Israel was committing genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, Burnham refused to use the term ‘genocide’, despite a near universal consensus amongst human rights organisations, lawyers, and the international community.⁷⁶

His choice of staff and cabinet further reveals his pro-Israel stance, which includes James Purnell, among several other members of LFI.¹³

Beyond Palestine, Burnham has supported previous foreign occupations in the Middle East, being a former special advisor to Tony Blair and voting for the Iraq War.¹⁴

“I’ve always
been a friend
of Israel [...] –
that will never
change.”

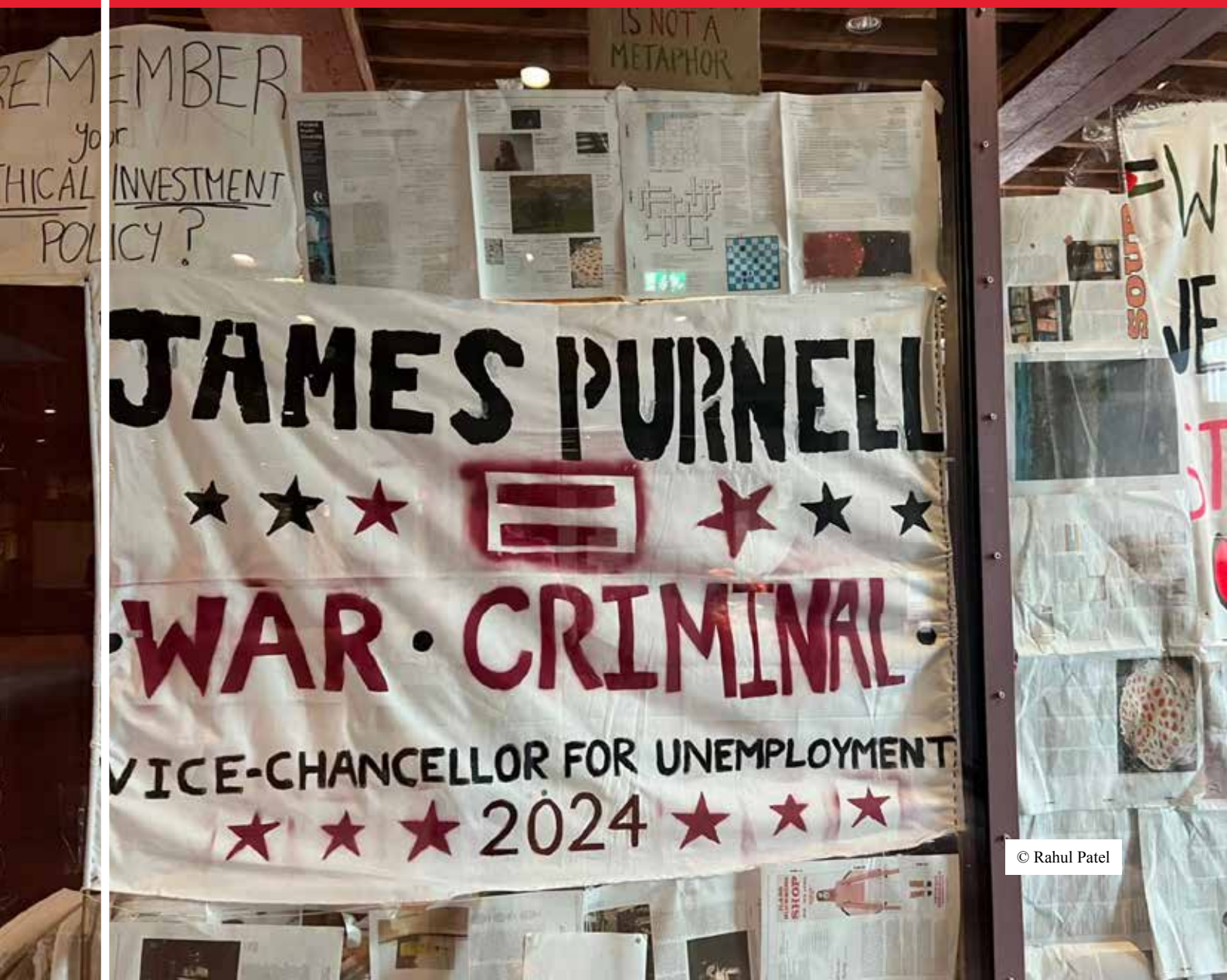
Prime Minister Andy Burnham ¹⁵



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Chief of Staff James Purnell’s Ties to Israel



03

Chief of Staff James Purnell’s Ties to Israel

Burnham’s chief of staff is James Purnell – a former chair of Labour Friends of Israel from 2002 to 2004, during which he accused left-wing critics of Israel of antisemitism.¹⁶

In 2002, during his stint as LFI chair, he visited Israel and visited a kibbutz built on the stolen land of a Palestinian village.¹⁷ He received £2,626 from LFI to do so.¹⁸

In 2003, Purnell received £2,678 from LFI to visit Israel as part of a party of parliamentary delegates.¹⁹

In 2004, Purnell received £2,732 from LFI to visit Israel as part of a party of parliamentary delegates.²⁰

As an MP, Purnell voted for the invasion of Iraq and against investigations into the war.²¹

Purnell was formerly the Vice Chancellor of University of the Arts London (UAL), whose student Palestine solidarity group succeeded in forcing him to resign in June 2024 over his complicity in Israel’s genocide and the military-industrial complex, after months of protests and a student encampment.²²

During his time as Vice Chancellor, UAL maintained partnerships with Israeli institutions such as Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in occupied Jerusalem, which worked with the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) - including in the designing, sewing, and repairing of military uniforms and gear.⁸⁸ Following his resignation, UAL’s partnership with Bezalel Academy was terminated.⁸⁹

Until days before his appointment as chief of staff, Purnell was also the chief executive of Flint Global, a lobbying firm whose clients include arms manufacturers, tech giants and big oil companies.²³ Flint Global does not publish a full list of its clients, raising significant concerns over Purnell’s ulterior motives.²⁴

“I’ve always supported Israel’s right to defend itself [...] and was the first shadow cabinet minister to visit Israel [after Starmer was elected leader].”

**Defence Secretary
Wes Streeting ²⁵**



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Defence Secretary Wes Streeting's Ties to Israel



Defence Secretary Wes Streeting's Ties to Israel

Wes Streeting, Andy Burnham's Defence Minister, is a member of LFI, and in his own words, has supported the lobby group "for over 20 years".²⁶

During his time as President of the National Union of Students, the *Jewish Chronicle* described Streeting as "our friends at the NUS", and stated that he had read the Zionist book *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz.²⁷

In response to protests at UK universities against Israel's 2008 to 2009 attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip, called 'Operation Cast Lead' by the IOF, Streeting told the *Jewish Chronicle* he was "quite disgusted by the tactics on some campuses".²⁸ He spread deliberate misinformation about the protests, stating: "There were a number of occupations which were so-called 'student occupations', but there was very little evidence whatsoever that they were being generated by students."²⁹

In 2015, when Streeting first ran as an MP, the *Jewish Chronicle* stated that his "track-record on Israel is clear", improving relations with Israel-funded student groups "at a time when anti-Israel activism on campuses was growing."³⁰

In total, Streeting has received almost £30,000 from Israel lobbyists.³¹

From 2021 to 2025, he received over £20,000 in donations from Trevor Chinn, an Israel lobbyist who received the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honour for "service to the state of Israel".³² Chinn's father was president of the UK arm of the Jewish National Fund, which has supported the theft of Palestinian land and construction of Israeli settlements, and funds Zionist militias slaughtering Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.³³

In 2022, Wes Streeting received £4,700 from LFI to attend a meeting with Israeli "health experts", politicians, academics, and diplomats, and to attend the 2022 BioMed Israel Conference.³⁴

In an appearance on Newsnight in October 2023, Streeting spread the Israeli myth that the Palestinian resistance were using protected buildings such as schools and hospitals to launch resistance operations against the IOF.³⁵

In the same interview, Streeting refused to call for a ceasefire in the besieged Gaza Strip, saying that it was not "realistic".³⁶

In January 2024, Streeting called the ICJ case brought by South Africa against Israel for committing genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip "a distraction from what needs to happen, which is the diplomatic heavy lifting to bring about an end to this conflict".³⁷

In 2024, Streeting also refused to sign letters urging the government to suspend arms sales to Israel and uphold the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants against Israeli war criminals.⁷⁷

In 2025, he refused to sign a letter by over 80 MPs and Lords urging the government to enforce sanctions against Israel.⁷⁸

Throughout his previous role as Health Secretary under Kier Starmer, Streeting repeatedly defended Palantir's £330 million contract with the NHS and continued to role out Palantir technology across NHS services – despite Palantir's complicity in the IOF's genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip.³⁸

“**Hamas uses buildings like schools and hospitals as bunkers.**”

**Defence Secretary
Wes Streeting**

repeating Israeli myths to
manufacture consent for genocide.³⁹



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Chancellor John Healey's Ties to Israel



© Jewish News

Chancellor John Healey’s Ties to Israel

Burnham has appointed John Healey as Chancellor, who has a track record of supporting Israel and the military-industrial complex.⁴⁰

In October 2023, when asked on Sky News if there was a humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip, Healey refused to acknowledge its existence, only stating that there is a “risk” of one materialising.⁴¹

As Defence Secretary in Keir Starmer’s cabinet, John Healey continued to allow members of the IOF to attend military training courses in the UK.⁴²

He also flew to Tel Aviv in occupied Palestine in August 2024 – almost a year into the genocide – to meet wanted war criminal and then Israeli ‘Defence’ Minister, Yoav Gallant. They discussed their “commitment to maintaining and further strengthening cooperation in a number of strategic and military areas”.⁴³

In September 2024, he stated that, “we have a duty to follow the law, but this does not alter our unshakable commitment to support Israel’s right to self-defence and to the defence of Israel [...], just as UK jets back in April helped intercept Iranian drones and missiles that were targeted directly at Israel.”⁴⁴

In October 2024, he also expressed “the UK’s continuing, steadfast commitment to Israel’s security” to Gallant.⁴⁵

In 2024, Healey refused to sign letters urging the government to suspend arms sales to Israel and uphold the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrants against Israeli war criminals.⁷⁹

In 2025, he also refused to sign a letter by over 80 MPs and Lords urging the government to enforce sanctions against Israel.⁸⁰

“I consider myself a strong friend of Israel. [...] We should have no tolerance with those who question the legitimacy of the state of Israel, [...] we should have no tolerance of proposals for boycott [of Israel].”

**Foreign Secretary
Ed Miliband** ⁴⁶



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Foreign Minister Ed Miliband's Ties to Israel



© The Telegraph

Foreign Minister Ed Miliband’s Ties to Israel

Ed Miliband was a vocal supporter of Israel throughout his time as leader of the Labour Party from 2010 to 2015.⁴⁷

In 2013, at an event organised by the Board of Deputies, Ed Miliband stated he was indebted to Israel and expressed his opposition to BDS, stating: “I think the boycotts of Israel are totally wrong. We should have no tolerance for boycotts. I would say that to any trade union leaders.”⁴⁸

At the same event, he also stated that he was “intolerant of those who question Israel’s right to exist.”⁴⁹

In April 2014, he visited Israel and met with wanted war criminal and Polish-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.⁵⁰ He also visited Israeli settlements less than a mile from the besieged Gaza strip concentration camp.⁵¹

Also in 2014, Miliband spoke at the LFI annual launch, and described himself as a “friend of Israel”.⁵² In his speech he also opposed BDS, stating that Labour would “resolutely oppose the isolation of Israel”, and stated that no one within the party should question Israel’s right to exist.⁵³

In a 2015 interview with *The Jewish Chronicle*, Miliband described himself as “a strong friend of Israel”, and reiterated his opposition to BDS and that he had “no tolerance” with anyone who questions “the legitimacy of the state of Israel”.⁵⁴

In 2024, Miliband refused to sign letters urging the government to suspend arms sales to Israel and uphold the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrants against Israeli war criminals.⁸¹

In 2025, he also refused to sign a letter by over 80 MPs and Lords urging the government to enforce sanctions against Israel.⁸²

Since taking over as Foreign Secretary in July 2026, Miliband has described Russia’s war in Ukraine as “illegal”, yet in the same statement only referred to “conflict in the Middle East”, without condemning Israel as the perpetrator of an illegal genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip.⁵⁵

“Israel is a democracy. It has rules to abide by. I don’t know if Hamas will abide by the rules for a [humanitarian] pause.”

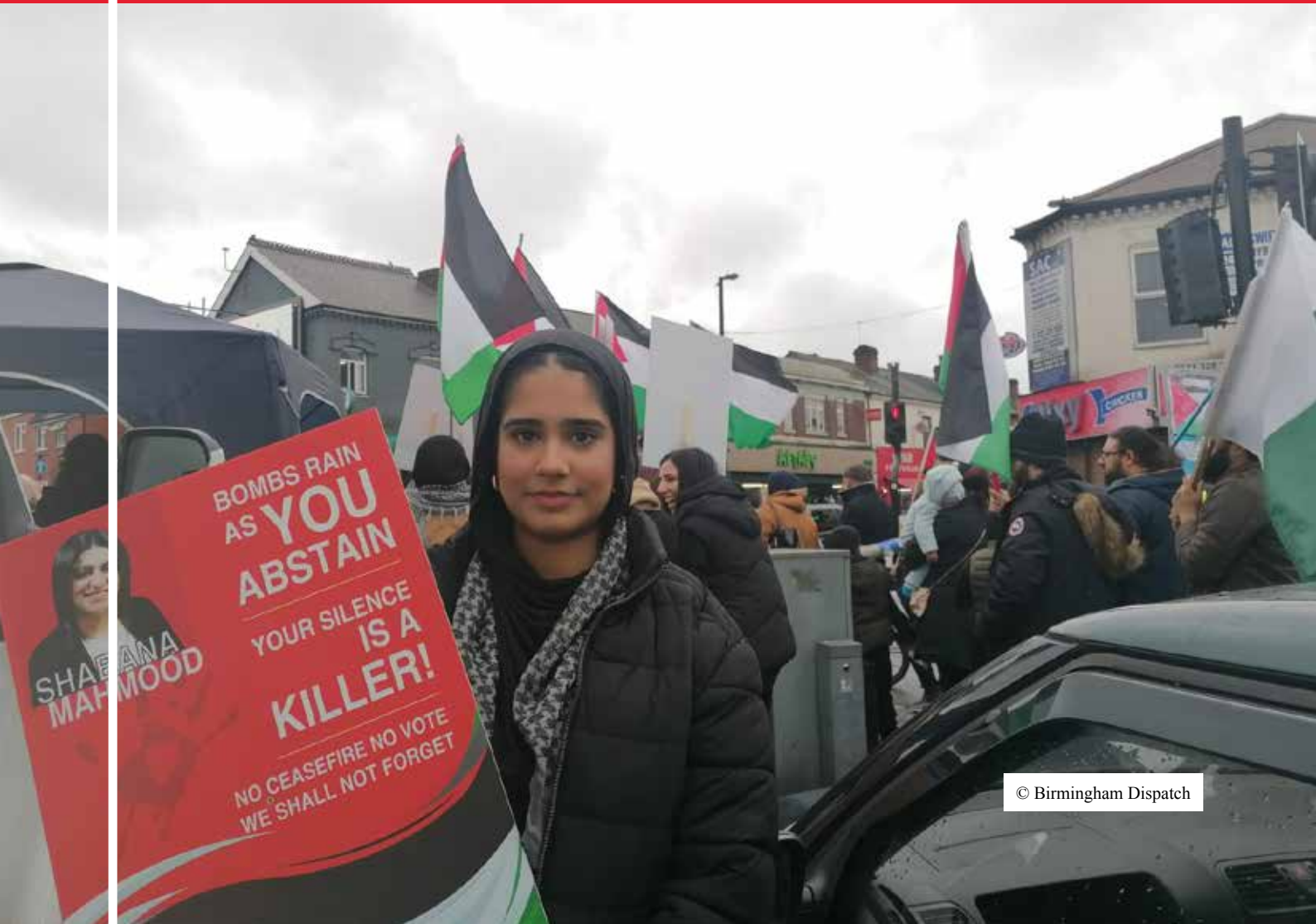
**Defence Secretary
Wes Streeting ⁵⁶**



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Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood’s Ties to Israel



© Birmingham Dispatch

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood’s Ties to Israel

Burnham has retained Shabana Mahmood as Home Secretary, despite her terrible record of pandering to the Israel lobby.⁵⁷

Despite attending Palestine protests during her early career, she is clearly prepared to trade her morality for a chance to climb the career ladder, by continuing to support her party’s complicity in Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip.⁵⁸

In November 2023, she abstained from voting for a motion brought by the Scottish National Party calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.⁵⁹

During her time as Justice Secretary, she upheld the ridiculous criminalisation of Palestine Action as a terrorist group by her predecessor Yvette Cooper, and according to the Home Office, “backed officers for arresting those who support the proscribed terrorist organisation Palestine Action”.⁶⁰

She has appealed the high court’s ruling that the government’s decision to ban Palestine Action was unlawful, expressing her disappointment and disagreement with the court’s decision that banning Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation was “disproportionate”.⁶¹

In 2024, Mahmood refused to sign letters urging the government to suspend arms sales to Israel and uphold the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrants against Israeli war criminals.⁸³

In 2025, she also refused to sign a letter by over 80 MPs and Lords urging the government to enforce sanctions against Israel.⁸⁴

Since becoming Home Secretary, she has failed to respond to a letter by over 85 MPs expressing concern over the British government’s prevention of the evacuation of dozens of Palestinians from the besieged Gaza Strip, due to the suspension of refugee family reunification applications.⁶² The letter also emphasises that the British government’s commitment to bring 300 Palestinian children from the besieged Gaza Strip to the UK for medical treatment has not been fulfilled.⁶³

“The clear advice and intelligence given to me earlier this year from the UK’s world-leading counter-terrorism system, based on a robust assessment process, was that Palestine Action satisfies the relevant tests in the Terrorism Act 2000 and should be proscribed.

Some may think it is just a regular protest group known for occasional stunts. But that is not the extent of its past activities. Nor does it reflect disturbing information given to me that covered ideas and planning for future attacks. [...]

Palestine Action has claimed responsibility for – and promoted on its website – attacks that have seen those allegedly involved subsequently charged with violent disorder, grievous bodily harm with intent, actual bodily harm, criminal damage and aggravated burglary. Charges that include, in the assessment of the independent Crown Prosecution Service, a terrorism connection.”

**Health Secretary
Yvette Cooper** ⁶⁴



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Health Secretary Yvette Cooper's Ties to Israel



© The Times

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Health Secretary Yvette Cooper’s Ties to Israel

Health Secretary Yvette Cooper is a member of LFI and has received at least £5,000 from the Israel lobby.⁶⁵

Like Andy Burnham and James Purnell, she voted in favour of the Iraq War and consistently opposed investigations into the conduct of the war.⁶⁶

In 2024, Cooper refused to sign letters urging the government to suspend arms sales to Israel and uphold the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrants against Israeli war criminals.⁸⁵

In 2025, she also refused to sign a letter by over 80 MPs and Lords urging the government to enforce sanctions against Israel.⁸⁶

In July 2025, when she was Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper voted to proscribe the direct action group Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation.⁶⁷

Despite being warned this could prejudice the legal challenge to Palestine Action’s proscription, Cooper then wrote an article in *The Observer* spreading lies and misinformation about the organisation to justify her egregious decision.⁶⁸

Following the proscription, thousands of protestors have continued to defy the ban in support of ending British complicity in Israel’s genocide.⁶⁹ Commenting on these protests, Cooper incredulously told the BBC: “There may be people who are objecting to proscription who don’t know the full nature of this organisation, because of court restrictions on reporting while serious prosecutions are under way. But it’s really important that no-one is in any doubt that this is not a non-violent organisation.”⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly, she has not provided any evidence that this is the case.⁷¹

In November 2025, Cooper peddled the false Israeli myth that the Palestinian educational curriculum needs reform to remove so-called antisemitic content.⁷²

“We can expect continuity, not a break from current British policy toward Israel.

The government continues to undermine the domestic rule of law to cover up the fact that it is undermining the international rule of law, by encroaching upon the right to speech and protest of those who are reminding the government of its legal obligations to prevent genocide and dismantle apartheid.”

Nimer Sultany
lecturer in public law
at SOAS University.⁷³



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Western Media Bias



© The Times

Andy Burnham apologises for Labour's stance on Gaza

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Western Media Bias

Misinformation surrounding Andy Burnham’s stance on Israel’s genocide

British media outlets have seemingly deliberately spread misinformation surrounding Andy Burnham’s stance on Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, depicting his apology as if it was sincere – while ignoring his refusal to call Israel’s slaughter a genocide.

BBC NEWS

**Burnham apologises for Labour’s
initial response to Gaza war**

**The
Guardian**

**Andy Burnham apologises for Labour’s stance
on Gaza and says it ‘didn’t get it right’**

**FT FINANCIAL
TIMES**

**Andy Burnham apologises for
Labour’s Gaza war stance**

Western Media Bias



INDEPENDENT

**Burnham signals tougher
policy on Israel over Gaza**

THE  TIMES

**Andy Burnham apologises
for Labour's stance on Gaza**

The Telegraph

**Burnham apologises for
Starmer's actions on Israel**

“The headlines, the polling and the commentary all speak of renewal. Yet Britain remains what it has long been: a state intrinsically wedded to the war machine, deferential to the imperial hubris of US foreign policy, treating the perpetual oppression and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians as an impossibly complex conflict – a smokescreen it uses to sidestep its obligations under international law.

The captain might have changed, but the metaphorical voyage has not. Everyone insists a new hand is at the helm steering a new direction. The captain himself says as much. Yet the ship sails on the same course, without the slightest deviation.”

Hamza Yusuf

British-Palestinian journalist.⁷⁴



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- 19 ‘Labour Friends of Israel Donations – Page 11’ *The Electoral Commission*, available at <https://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/English/Search/Donations?currentPage=11&rows=10&query=labour%20friends%20of%20israel&sort=AcceptedDate&order=desc&tab=1&et=pp&et=ppm&et=tp&et=perpar&et=rd&isIrishSourceYes=true&isIrishSourceNo=true&prePoll=false&postPoll=true®ister=gb®ister=ni®ister=none&optCols=RegisterName&optCols=CampaigningName&optCols=AccountingUnitsAsCentralParty&optCols=IsSponsorship&optCols=IsIrishSource&optCols=RegulatedDoneeType&optCols=CompanyRegistrationNumber&optCols=Postcode&optCols=NatureOfDonation&optCols=PurposeOfVisit&optCols=DonationAction&optCols=ReportedDate&optCols=IsReportedPrePoll&optCols=ReportingPeriodName&optCols=IsBequest&optCols=IsAggregation>
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- 35-36 ‘Streiting Would Rather Resign Over A Local Election Than A GENOCIDE’ *Novara Media via YouTube*
- 37 ‘“Nonsense” for South Africa to accuse Israel of genocide, says foreign secretary’ *Sky News* (15 January 2024) available at <https://news.sky.com/story/nonsense-for-south-africa-to-accuse-israel-of-genocide-says-foreign-secretary-13048098>
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