

# Jerusalem: From Past Divisions to a Shared Future?



The Case for Equal Rights  
Souvenir Booklet from our Online Conference  
Held on 27th October 2020

*Balfour  
Project*

# Statement: Israel/Palestine: Equal Rights for lasting Peace

***The Balfour Project issued this statement at the end of the conference, signed by British Parliamentarians and Faith leaders, to be conveyed to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.***

We acknowledge Britain's historic responsibilities for inequality and discrimination in Jerusalem and across the Holy Land. They stem from the last century, through the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine, with consequences which are still felt today. Past British responsibility for present injustice demands British commitment to work urgently for a better future, respecting equal rights.

With British assistance, the Jewish people exercised their right to self-determination in the Holy Land more than 70 years ago. To this day, the Palestinian people are denied this right. This injustice must end.

The future of Jerusalem is crucial to peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Israel and the Arab and Muslim worlds. The recent normalisation of relations between Israel and some Arab Gulf states is no substitute for a lasting peace founded on broad popular consent from Israelis and Palestinians. Sharing Jerusalem is essential to gain that consent.

Palestinians and Israelis will share the Holy Land forever, and must shape its future together. Only equality will bring safety and well-being, and essential dialogue. The two peoples, alone, have not attained peaceful coexistence. So, for the good of both, and if we truly mean what we say, we in Britain must help reverse current negative developments which only entrench separation and inequality. Civil society, including faith leaders, in the U.K., the rest of Europe and the USA, has a vital role in making that change happen.

We call upon the British Government now to take the following five measures:

- Reaffirm publicly East Jerusalem's status under international law as occupied Palestinian territory and oppose current systematic efforts to undermine this status;
- Press for true freedom of access for all believers – Jewish, Muslim and Christian – to their respective holy sites in Jerusalem: especially Jews to the Western Wall, Christians to the Holy Sepulchre, Muslims to al Aqsa Mosque, from wherever they live;
- Work effectively to uphold the rule of law reflected in UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly Resolution 2334, which condemns illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- Insist that Israel end forthwith its discriminatory practices in Jerusalem, enabling all Jerusalemites to enjoy the same rights and services, regardless of creed or nationality; and
- Recognise the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states.

We seek a future of equal rights and peaceful coexistence between the peoples of Israel and Palestine in two states along the pre-1967 Green Line. Crucially, the wellbeing and security of both peoples in those states will grow with equality. We seek the Peace of Jerusalem.

**27 October 2020**



# Signatories

Tahir Ali MP  
Rt Hon Lord Anderson of Ipswich  
Claudia Beamish, Member of the Scottish Parliament  
Clive Betts MP  
Rt Hon Baroness Tessa Blackstone  
Crispin Blunt MP  
Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP  
Alan Brown MP  
Richard Burden  
Wendy Chamberlain MP  
Joanna Cherry QC MP  
Rt Reverend Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, Church of England Lead Bishop for International Affairs  
Daisy Cooper MP  
Rt Hon Lord Cope of Berkeley  
Neil Coyle MP  
Rt Hon Ed Davey MP, Leader, Liberal Democrats  
Wayne David MP, Shadow Minister for the Middle East  
Most Reverend John Davies, Archbishop of Wales  
Martyn Day MP  
Allan Dorans MP  
Julie Elliott MP (Co chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Palestine)  
Rt Reverend Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland  
John Finnie, Member of the Scottish Parliament  
Patrick Grady MP  
Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC  
Rt Hon Lord Bruce Grocott  
Rt Hon Lord Peter Hain  
Lord Hannay of Chiswick  
Neale Hanvey MP  
Wera Hobhouse MP  
Baroness Sheila Hollins  
Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece  
Lord Raymond Hylton  
Lord Michael Jay  
Rt Hon David Jones MP

Lord Frank Judd  
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC  
Rt Reverend Declan Lang, Catholic Bishop of Clifton, Chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference Department of International Affairs  
Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, Methodist Church in Britain  
Rt Hon Tony Lloyd MP  
Most Hon the Marquess of Lothian  
Caroline Lucas MP  
Kenny MacAskill MP  
Seema Malhotra MP  
Imam Ajmal Masroor  
Very Reverend Dr Andrew McLellan, former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland  
Pauline McNeill, Member of the Scottish Parliament  
Carol Monaghan MP  
James Graham, Duke of Montrose  
Layla Moran MP  
John Nicolson MP  
Lord Jonny Oates  
Rt Reverend Dr Joanna Penberthy, Bishop of St Davids  
Rt Reverend John Pritchard, former Bishop of Oxford  
Yasmin Qureshi MP  
Andrew Selous MP  
Tommy Sheppard MP  
Andy Slaughter MP  
Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames  
Rev Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference, Methodist Church in Britain  
Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Saltaire  
Rt Hon Lord Norman Warner  
Rt Hon Baroness Sayeeda Warsi (Co chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Palestine)  
Dr Philippa Whitford MP  
Munira Wilson MP  
Lord Wood of Anfield

**This statement reflects the views of the Balfour Project and the signatories listed above. It does not reflect the diverse views of all the contributors to the conference, to whom we are deeply grateful.**





# About the Balfour Project

## MISSION STATEMENT

Acknowledging Britain's historical and continuing responsibilities, through popular education and advocacy to uphold equal rights for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. To persuade the British Government to recognise the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel.

## PATRONS

Rt Hon Tom Brake  
Richard Burden  
Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop  
of Southwark  
Rt Revd Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton  
Rt Revd John Pritchard, former Bishop  
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Very Revd Dr Andrew McLellan CBE  
Baroness Morris of Bolton  
Rabbi Danny Rich  
Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames  
Dr Philippa Whitford MP



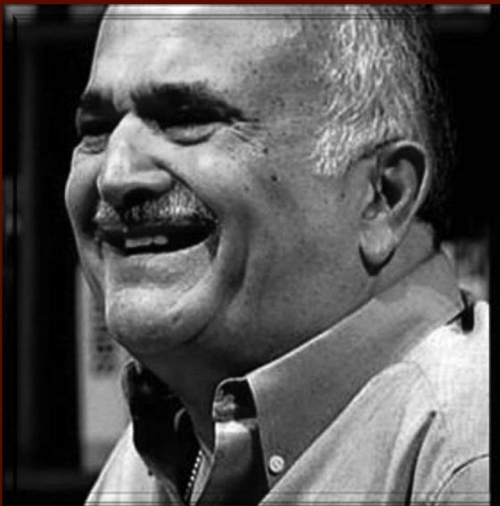
For hundreds of millions of followers of the three Abrahamic faiths around the world Jerusalem is a sacred city. Being able to access freely its holy places is for them of paramount importance. And, for Palestinians, East Jerusalem must be the capital of their future state. Putting the city back on the table was the purpose of this major conference.

### **Sir Vincent Fean (Chair of Balfour Project Board of Trustees):**

The questions we ask today are: can we establish the facts of the situation and highlight them: historical, legal, religious, actual. Second, can we explore the prospects for positive change inclusively, or more of the same when more of the same means entrenching inequality? Third, what should Britain and others say and do to advance equal rights and peaceful coexistence—government parliament, civil society, all of us, not acting alone, but acting and doing so in concert with like-minded people elsewhere in Europe, in the United States, in Israel, and in Palestine. Our speakers will seek to put Jerusalem back on the table - for there will be no solution to this conflict without an inclusive solution on Jerusalem, sharing the future. We seek the peace of Jerusalem.



# HRH Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan



His Royal Highness was officially invested as Crown Prince to the Hashemite Throne of Jordan, in 1965. Until 1999, he served as the King's closest political advisor, confidant and deputy, as well as acting as Regent in the King's absence from the country.

**HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan:** It was Benjamin Disraeli, a Sephardic Jew, converted to Anglicanism and reputedly died a Roman Catholic, who gave us one of the most evocative descriptions of old Jerusalem when he visited in the early 19th century. .."The view of Jerusalem is the history of the world; it is more, it is the history of earth and of heaven."

It is a history that is also deeply entwined with that of my own family. As Sharif of Mecca and King of Hejaz, my great-grandfather Sharif Hussein presided over the principal routes of pilgrimage... respect for each other's Holy Places was ingrained in a tradition of hospitality and watering and sanctuary. This hereditary duty directly links Mecca with the Glorious Esplanade and the Holy sites.

Even now the holiness of the city does not ensure an agreed solution for its future. Only the legal arguments offer a dispassionate, neutral route out of the labyrinth, a counterbalance to the partisan nature of the political polemic and the dogmatic quality of so much of the religious debate.

I have been a lifelong friend of the United Kingdom.

I deeply admire its fundamental values and principles, including the upholding of the rule of law. Speaking as a friend, I should add that though British interest in Jerusalem has not always translated into attention to the well-being and equal treatment of all Jerusalem's residents today ... the city concerns us all with its rich social fabric, a city that means so much to the peoples of the Abrahamic faiths and to the whole world. ..I would like to speak above all to... those concerned British people who worry about current negative trends and can make their voices heard in calls to those responsible for a change of direction before it is too late.

## Session I: History



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PROFESSOR

#### AVI SHLAIM FBA

Avi Shlaim is an Emeritus Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of the British Academy. His books include *War and Peace in the Middle East: A Concise History* (1995); *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (2014); *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* (2007); and *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations* (2009).

**Avi Shlaim:** The Israeli-Palestinian conflict was made in Britain... In 1917, the Arabs constituted 90 per cent of the population of Palestine, the Jews constituted 10 per cent and they owned only two per cent of the land. And yet Britain chose to award national rights to the Jewish minority and to deny them to the Arab majority. So, this was a classic colonial document. The Balfour Declaration enabled the Zionists to embark on the systematic takeover of Palestine, a process which is still ongoing today. I can summarise the history of the British Mandate in Palestine by saying that Britain stole Palestine from the Palestinians and gave it to the Zionists... The cornerstone of the British Mandate for Palestine was that there would be no representative institutions, no democracy until the Jews became the majority....

Jerusalem is the heart and the core of this conflict. The reason for this is obvious. It is of the utmost importance to all three monotheistic religions, but is of particularly deep spiritual, religious, symbolic, and political importance to Jews and Arabs. One solution to this problem is to make Jerusalem an international city. In 1947, the United Nations ...voted for ... Jerusalem to be a separate international enclave, a Corpus Separatum, but it was not to be.

A war broke out and... the winners were the Israelis, who extended their territory well beyond the UN official lines, and Jordan which captured and later annexed the West Bank, including the Old City of Jerusalem.... Immediately after the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel annexed Jerusalem. The first thing to say [about this] is that the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem was illegal - and it remains illegal today. Yet the Israeli mantra all along has been that Jerusalem is the unified eternal capital of the Jewish people.

In 1993, Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Accords...and [Jerusalem] was put on the table at the Camp David Summit in July 2000. But... no agreement was reached on what to do with Jerusalem because of Israeli intransigence. One more attempt was made to resolve the conflict by President Clinton in December 2000...[The] principle applied to Jerusalem was: that which is Jewish...like the Jewish

Quarter ...would be under Israeli sovereignty, and that which is Muslim will be under Palestinian sovereignty. But the Clinton Parameters were not accepted and they left office with him. [By contrast] President Trump, of course, recognised the whole of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The Arab states, back in 2002 at the Beirut Summit of the Arab League... offered Israel peace and normalisation with all 22 members of the Arab League in return for an end of occupation and the emergence of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza with a capital city in East Jerusalem, but Israel never responded... Today, it is fashionable to say that the two-state solution is dead. I would say that the two-state solution was never born. I'd say this because at no time since 1967 was Israel serious about allowing an independent Palestinian state.

[P]eaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem was possible in the past...and if it was possible in the past, it should be possible in the present and in the future. I have now reached the conclusion, though, that the only just solution to this conflict is one democratic state... not just as a practical solution to the Jerusalem problem, but as a noble vision.

**Menachem Klein:** Jerusalemites created a modern city before World War I and afterwards. In the late 19th, early 20th century, a local identity emerged among the Jerusalemites...a local patriotism of belonging to the city and seeing the citizens, Jews and Arabs, as neighbours: not as Jews versus Arabs versus Christians, but as Jerusalemites; people that shared the same land. They spoke the same language, in most cases, Arabic. Even Ashkenazi Jews spoke Arabic and had shared interests and a shared identity within the Ottoman empire.

Both of them developed Jerusalem and made it a very modern city in the early 20th century... not only a holy place. [The] people connected to the West...Zionists... identified Jerusalem as a holy place. But the Zionists as a national secular movement did not consider Jerusalem to be a centre... it was identified with the ultra-Orthodox whom they had revolted against... So, in the early 20th century, we see the establishment of two national movements, each [Jewish and Palestinian] wanted to rule exclusively.... [W]e... can say that the Balfour Declaration was in favour of one state: a Jewish state, a one-state solution. This was the Balfour Declaration's solution, that there'd be cooperation between the Zionist movement and British colonialism: Jewish hegemony, no Palestinians, and the local people classified as Muslims or



**Menachem Klein** is Professor in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv.

Christians only, no local identity...

Under the British Mandate, life in Jerusalem was managed on two levels. At the popular level, the two nations co-habited and everyday life went normally... It shows that Jerusalemites are more sophisticated, or wise, than their leaders. In my view, it's impossible to build a Berlin wall...between Jewish and Palestinian neighbourhoods. [T]here must be what I call confederal arrangements between the Israeli entity and the Palestinian entity sharing the same urban space...

**Mick Dumper:** ...There are over 300 holy sites in the Old City alone. That's probably roughly every four metres, a holy site...and they're right next to each other, on top of each other, sometimes intertwined with each other. And you can imagine how difficult it is to keep a harmonious interaction between them... These sites are controlled by clergy who are quite powerful and who have international connections. So whatever goes on immediately resonates around the world.

The key focus of much of the tension has been in the area of the Temple Mount, or the Haram al-Sharif, which is where you have Al Aqsa mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and a Jewish site underneath this... and you have the Wailing Wall, or the Western Wall.

What I wanted to look at are two initiatives. [One recent group] felt that what was important was, if you could sort out the Old City, other things would fall into place much more easily: an international regime that would be backed by a UN Security Council resolution. The whole question of sovereignty was put to one side...[T]he regime they suggested should last for about 10 years...[T]hen there should be a review and perhaps an election after 10 years.

The proposals in this initiative focused a lot on security and safety in access to the holy sites... there was a sense in which the Old City would be detached from its hinterland. It would create another mini-municipality within the bigger city and there would be checkpoints as you go in and out of the Old City, which would fragment the city even more.

In the other initiative, the Geneva Initiative, launched in 2003, there were [to be] two capitals of two municipalities and there'd be a coordination committee between them. There would be Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif. In exchange,



**Michael Dumper** is Professor in Middle East Politics, University of Exeter.



Palestinians would cede sovereignty to the Jewish Quarter and many of the Israeli settlements

There's more or less an agreement that there would be some dual municipal structure, and that there would be special arrangements for the Old City and the holy places. People see that as the direction of travel... What isn't sorted is the sovereignty of the Old City, over the Western Wall and Haram-al Sharif and how the different areas of the city would link.

Cities are a multi-ethnic heterogeneous mix. And to try and to allow, or to create, a system where one community dominates the other will lead to ghettoisation and marginalisation of different elements. And it kills the city. It deprives the city of its vitality and its cosmopolitanism. Much of the discussion seems to neglect that and seems to see the city as a map, through which they can draw lines which may correspond to some security or some demographic issue but doesn't see the city as a whole where the different parts of it all contribute to making it a vital and lively place.

**Salim Tamari:** Following the Egyptian campaign in Syria (early 1830s), the separation of Syria from the Ottoman empire elicited a number of reactions, one of which was the opening up of Jerusalem to a substantial presence by the European powers, especially the Germans, the Russians, the British and the French... During this period, Jerusalem became a separate autonomous province...and the various European missions began to establish their presence in a way that challenged Ottoman rule... The net results of these competing interests... redefined what Jerusalem was. A Jerusalem entity evolved; first, the establishment of an autonomous Jerusalem province in the 1870s; [S]econd, the creation in 1872 of... what became one single unit which the Ottomans called the Province of Jerusalem District and European powers called the Autonomous Region of Palestine.

In Ottoman cartography and Ottoman administrative usages, Palestine was Jerusalem, Jerusalem was Palestine, meaning that the head of the province, which contained both the city of Jaffa and the city of Jerusalem. It was one single province that was marked as Philistia in Ottoman cartography. That remained the condition until the coming of the First World War... The Balfour Declaration in Britain came from attempts by European powers to establish themselves in the Jerusalem district for the whole of Palestine...and responded to Ottoman assertion of Jerusalem as the Holy City.



**Salim Tamari** is Editor of The Jerusalem Quarterly, and former Director, Institute of Jerusalem Studies.



**Chair: Andrew Whitley, Trustee,** is founder and executive director of Geo-Political Advisory Services.

## Session II: International Law & Human Rights



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
BARONESS HELENA  
KENNEDY QC**

A British barrister, broadcaster, member of the House of Lords and founding force behind the creation of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at Oxford University, Baroness Kennedy QC has previously held the following prominent positions: Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford (2011–2018); Chair of Justice, the British arm of the International Commission of Jurists; bencher of Gray's Inn; President of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Chair of Charter 88 (1992–1997) a British pressure group that advocated constitutional and electoral reform.

**Baroness Helena Kennedy:** At the end of the First World War, we in Britain thought of indigenous people as lesser peoples in many of the places the British Empire occupied. I have no doubt such views were held about Arab peoples, too. It's shocking for us now and particularly for our young looking back to imagine such a situation, but it was certainly true.

There was a movement to create a homeland for the Jewish people, and we all know the history of the Balfour Declaration. It referred to the creation of a Jewish home not a Jewish state, and left the meaning open for interpretation. But it was also about protecting British interests in the region. There were mixed intentions. The Declaration included the words, "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". As a lawyer, I note the words 'political rights' are missing. It matters. The political rights of the Palestinian people were not protected.

The idea that the Palestinian people might have their own state is now being reduced to rubble. Not reduced to rubble in fact, but built upon, because the very place where they could build their state, their place of sanctuary, is not made possible for them. The United Nations have failed to hold Israel to account for its failures to abide by law. This is seriously egregious, as the idea of occupying land during a conflict, and then not stepping back and returning it to its people afterwards, is one of the absolute tenets of international law: you're not to use conflict as an opportunity to land grab. Yet that's what we've seen happening.

Is International Law dead? Here in Britain we've got a government trashing international law by introducing an Internal Markets Bill which is in breach of a treaty obligation created less than a year ago in the Withdrawal Agreement. That agreement was supposed to protect the special protocols in Northern Ireland created by The Good Friday - Belfast Agreement. We're seeing a government prepared to trash International Law. We've had this happening increasingly around the world.

International law is only as good as the multilateral consensus that holds it in place. Once it starts being undermined by major nations, what is it worth? Where is the maintenance of these standards created in the post-World War II consensus, the rules-based order? We're dealing with the COVID-19 contagion, but there's another contagion - populism, the contagion of attacking any set of

rules. It's the celebration of deregulation, the immature notion that you can live without rules.

Most of the places where there is trashing of law, are led by men marooned in their adolescence, who have a problem about maturity and understanding why law matters. I'm in the Slough of Despond at this moment, but I remain an optimist. People yearn for freedom, and for self-determination - all those things that we tried to put together when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created.

We must keep saying why this stuff matters, why living by the rules matters, and why respecting the humanity of each other, matters. The idea that Palestinians are treated as lesser and as less worthy of a place to call their own is wrong. It isn't being said loudly enough.

There's a silencing, and that's what populism does. This might not be the moment when great change takes place, but we have to keep battling for a different kind of discourse, a different kind of world where multilateralism and the rule of law are respected.

You can't get away from history, but that doesn't mean that you can't also talk about a peaceful solution. We have to press everyone to recognise the Palestinian state, and to start making the arguments as to how that state can become a reality. Retain our optimism. Believe that peace and self-determination are possible - but we have to do it by asserting that human rights matter, and that the rule of law matters. Then we might get somewhere. We can do it.

**Iain Scobbie:** As we all know Palestine envisages that East Jerusalem should be its capital, while Israel claims Jerusalem as a whole.

In an exchange of letters associated with the 1993 Declaration of Principles, the PLO accepted Resolution 242. This could be interpreted as an indication that in principle, Palestine accepts that West Jerusalem falls within Israeli territory subject to any modifications in the final status talks. This idea that Israel has jurisdiction over West Jerusalem has also arisen from some interpretations of *The Wall Advisory Opinion*, which was delivered in 2004 by the International Court of Justice.

In 2017 President Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It's not clear what this entails. President Trump always talks about fake news. This might be an instance of fake diplomacy. Anyway, Trump's statement was taken at face value and was generally repudiated by other members of the international community, including overwhelmingly by the UN General Assembly. .



**Iain Scobbie** is Professor of Public International Law and Co-Director of the Manchester International Law Centre, University of Manchester.

In the Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. Shortly afterwards, the Knesset promulgated the Law and Administration Ordinance Amendment Number 11 Law, which provided that the law, jurisdiction and administration of the state shall extend to any area of Eretz Israel designated by the government by order. This is the basis for the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem because the next day, the Israeli government proclaimed new boundaries for the city of Jerusalem. These were extended. In July 1980, the Knesset then adopted the Basic Law: Jerusalem Capital of Israel, which states that "Jerusalem, complete and united" is the capital of Israel.

In 1967, Israel claimed that it had not annexed East Jerusalem, but this has to be doubted. The Israeli Supreme court has repeatedly ruled that East Jerusalem has been annexed and made part of Israeli territory. The 1980 basic law was amended in 2000 to provide that no area of Jerusalem within this extended municipal boundary could be transferred to a foreign body of any kind. Legislative proposals have been put before the Knesset in the past few years aimed at enlarging the municipality to include adjacent settlement blocks and thus effect their annexation and tighten Israeli control. This idea of further annexation is also envisaged by the Trump "peace plan".

When the ICJ delivered *The Wall Advisory Opinion*, it reiterated that all actions taken by Israel aimed at the incorporation of the occupied section of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change its status. This has been the standard and consistent view of essentially all the different organs of the UN.

The court also stressed that all territories between the 1949 armistice line and the eastern boundary of mandate Palestine taken by Israel as a result of the Six-Day War, namely the West Bank and East Jerusalem, are territories over which Israel has the status of an occupying power, and over which it is not sovereign. This was a unanimous ruling of the ICJ, which is very rare. As a belligerent occupant, it only has a temporary power of administration and cannot annex these areas. As it doesn't possess sovereignty over them, they cannot form part of its capital. So Israeli domestic legislation on the extent of Jerusalem, its complete and united capital, violates international law and has no validity or legal effect. The court laid down a very clear duty of non-recognition for unlawful Israeli acts.





**Daniel Seidemann:** When Israel annexed East Jerusalem, we annexed the land, not the population. There is a legend that the Palestinians are entitled to receive citizenship. That is incorrect. They can ask; we can say, "no". Everything Israel has done since 1967 has been driven by the calculus of national struggle. To maintain a robust Israeli majority. The euphemism is "maintaining the demographic balance".

Someone quipped that the birth of a Jewish child in Jerusalem is a *simcha*, a joy in Yiddish and the birth of a Palestinian child is a demographic problem. To consolidate Israel's status as the capital of Israel, 53 years on, Israel has radically changed the face of East Jerusalem, but our policies have failed. Today, the Palestinian sector of the population is approaching 40 per cent.

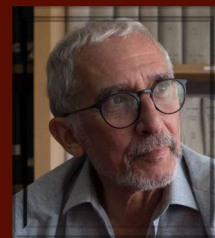
There are two national collectives in Jerusalem, one of which is politically empowered, and the other is permanently politically disempowered; a situation in which you have two collectives, one with the power and the other with none of the power. It is called occupation. Unless you understand that East Jerusalem is occupied, you won't understand this conflict. But the Palestinians in general, and in East Jerusalem in particular, are imbued with a diminished humanity. Israelis have the right to self-determination: Palestinians do not. Jews have rights, Palestinians have needs. Rights are inalienable; needs are malleable, and to be distributed as a reward by beneficent benefactors.

I knew the late, great leader of the Palestinian people, Faisal Hussein. Faisal would say, "Danny, you Israelis are creating facts on the ground. We, the Palestinians are the facts and we're not going anywhere."

I believe that a united, shared Jerusalem remains an historical inevitability.

On October 15th, the first group of Muslim pilgrims from the Gulf came to Haram al-Sharif/the Temple Mount, Al Aqsa, under the Abraham Accords. Pope Francis visited in 2014. He was escorted by the Waqf guards and greeted by Prince Ghazi of the Royal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In 2018, Prince William underwent something very similar: hosted by the Waqf, greeted by a senior Jordanian diplomat.

The visitors from the Gulf were accompanied by Israeli police, showing that the Pope and Prince William had a deeper commitment to international law than they do.



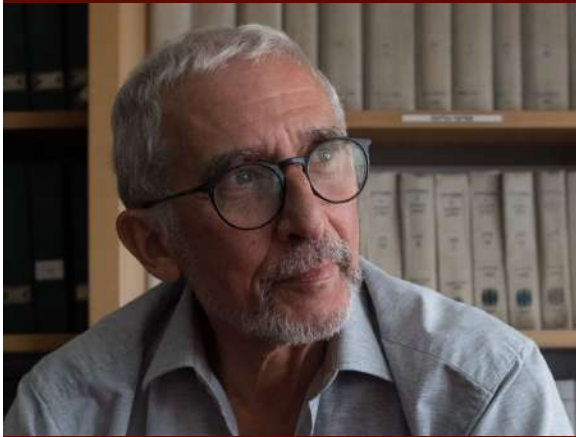
**Daniel Seidemann** has been a member of the Israeli Bar Association since 1987, co-founded Terrestrial Jerusalem.



**Chair: John McHugo, Trustee,** is the author of *A Concise History of the Arabs*, *Syria: A Recent History*, and *A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'is*.



## Session III: Religion & The Holy Sites



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DANIEL SEIDEMANN

Daniel (Danny) Seidemann has lived in Jerusalem since 1973. He has been a member of the Israeli Bar Association since 1987. Since 1991, he has specialised in the geopolitics of contemporary Jerusalem, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the city.

Mr. Seidemann co-founded Terrestrial Jerusalem, and is frequently consulted by senior decision-makers and governmental bodies on matters pertaining to both unfolding developments in Jerusalem and the broader issues relating to a permanent status agreement. He has also been conducting ongoing discussions on Jerusalem issues within the Arab world, and with Christian faith communities and diaspora Jewish communities. He has participated in numerous Jerusalem-related projects, colloquia and track-two deliberations.

**Daniel Seidemann:** The Old City of Jerusalem is one kilometre in size and in this limited space, you have the three neutrally incompatible narratives of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Jerusalem is not primarily real estate. Jerusalem is Jerusalem because of God, whether He exists or not.

There are groups whose claims to the city are absolute, exclusionary, exclusive, and at times, incendiary. Among Jews, it is the temple mountain movement aspiring to radically change the status quo or the biblically motivated settlers. Among Christians, there are evangelicals for whom Jerusalem is an Armageddon playground. There are various iterations of the Muslim Brotherhood who deny the legitimacy of Jewish and Christian attachments to the city. Public policy today in Jerusalem and Washington are driven by such theologies.

Terrestrial Jerusalem has put together a map which includes all the holy sites. Nobody can look at this map and say, we possess Jerusalem, only we. No attachment, however powerful it is, justifies changing the status quo. As a secular Jew I don't have to believe that Muhammad ascended to heaven or in the Resurrection of Jesus, but I do have to believe that people of faith believe that and to be respectful of it at all times.

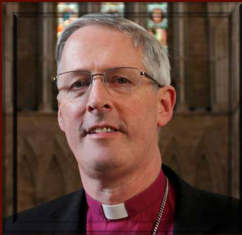
Jerusalem is also being threatened by kitsch. We now have an Abrahamic covenant and Muslims can visit Al-Aqsa mosque. This could be used as a cover: you have freedom of religion. No. In God's Jerusalem, no person and or community should need to struggle to maintain their identity or the integrity of their sacred sites. We are trying to marginalise the religious pyromaniacs, who are controlling the discourse by offering a faith-based alternative. We are about the cohabitation of contradictory narratives, not making conflicting or different theologies more compatible.

There is real potential for religion to have a positive impact on the nature of relations in Jerusalem. This is not an alternative to a political process. Nor will it end occupation, but it will offer the





**Rabbi Jeremy Gordon** is Rabbi of New London Synagogue.



**The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun** is the Anglican Bishop of Southwark.

prospect of a modest improvement of mutual respect. It may also show the positive contribution that faith can make to other issues of major geopolitical importance.

**Rabbi Jeremy Gordon:** I hold to a profoundly Jewish, profoundly religious, but non-monopolising sense of Jerusalem. The name goes back to Abraham, combining Yireh (“The Lord will provide”, from the sacrifice of Isaac) and Shalem (Peace, from his meeting with Melchizedek). Joshua captured the city from another king, so it’s not right to say that Jerusalem always was, therefore always must be held within the covenant of the people of Abraham.

By the time we get to the book of Deuteronomy, this has become a very important place for the Hebrews. We're called to go there three times a year on the Feast of Passover, on the Feast of Pentecostal Shavuot, and on the Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot. At weddings we still sing “if I forget thee Jerusalem, let my right hand wither. Let my tongue stick to my palate if I cease to think of you”.

After the destruction of the first temple, let alone the second, even after the destruction of the temple in -356, you get people hungering for it and yearning to return. The 12th century poet and philosopher Yehudah Halevi writes of a city, pulled this way and that over the centuries, but always pulling the Jewish pilgrim home.

**Bishop Christopher Chessun:** In the medieval Mappa Mundi Jerusalem is located at the centre of the world. When the Emperor Constantine's mother Helena arrived in 326 seeking to identify the Holy sites she found that the indigenous Christians had preserved a tradition of where the gospel events happened. Their descendants are the leaders and members of the churches in Jerusalem today, welcoming pilgrims to the place where the central redemptive events of the Christian story took place. The ancient walls have always contained communities of the Muslim, Jewish, Armenian and other Christian quarters.

I believe that it is the destiny of the Holy City to be the point of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Sadly, the present reality is one of conflict. Among Israeli citizens, there are claims of discrimination by those who are non-Jews. For the residents of East Jerusalem, it is a tale of encroaching settlements, restrictions on movement, restrictions on bringing in spouses and families if not an Israeli citizen. For Palestinian Christians, on the other side of the separation barrier, the restrictions on movement and access to the Holy sites in Jerusalem are acutely felt at the major festivals.



**Imam Monawar Hussain** is the Muslim Chaplain to the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

For Christians, the city is a potent symbol of hope for the future pointing toward the heavenly Jerusalem. In seeking justice for all we must embrace that vision of a city whose destiny is to be the point of reconciliation, not a source of contention.

**Imam Monawar Hussain:** The primary sources of Islam are the Qur'an, which for Muslims is literally the word of God, and the Hadith, which contains the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

Jerusalem is one of the three holiest sites within Islam, the other two being in Mecca and Medina. It is also home to one of the only two mosques named in the Quran, Masjid Al-Aqsa, to which the Prophet made his corporeal, night journey from Mecca. Muslims share with Jews and Christians its sense of blessedness.

The Dome of the Rock is a sacred place from which the Prophet ascended to the heavens. For many pilgrims Jerusalem has been the beginning or the end of the blessed Hajj journey to Mecca.

Another Prophetic tradition states, whoever dies in Jerusalem, it is as though he's died in the heavens. There are numerous individuals, some towering figures within Islamic history, others ordinary folk of whom history is silent, all of whom love Jerusalem for its blessedness, spending their lives in prayer, meditation, and in the hope that they might be buried in that Holy Land.

It is time to channel the love we embody as Muslims, Christians, and Jews for the Holy Land into a transformative love. A love that honours the other, a love that heals and reconciles, and a love that recognises the sacredness of our common humanity. That is what will lead to peace in this land.

### Discussion

**Rabbi Jeremy Gordon:** How do we link our kind of shared religious perspectives and the very, very difficult political job that needs to happen in reality?

**Imam Monawar Hussain:** There has to be space where people meet each other, speak with each other, and recognise that we all have the same aspirations, for ourselves, for our families, for our children. and to build a future together. I think when people are not talking to each other, there is great room for ignorance of the other, there's great room for all kinds of stereotyping someone.





**Chair: Michael Doe, Executive Committee,** was formerly the Bishop of Swindon.

**Bishop Christopher Chessun:** As well as the talk, and the dreaming and the visions which we have that inspire us all from our different faiths, traditions and perspectives, we must learn from our history if we are to find peaceful solutions and coexistence. I may not be competent to make statements about what will work politically, but I remain committed to the two state solution because that does preserve some of the balances, some of the differences and would protect the legal identities of the two constituent peoples.

**JG:** I understand why security forces make decisions to erect walls and barriers, but it is heartbreaking. When I was living in Jerusalem, I had to physically go out and make an effort to go into East Jerusalem, to encounter Muslim people. Peace in Jerusalem isn't going to be everybody bouncing around happily on some beautiful island free of any concerns but coming to terms with polarities and ambiguities and accepting no monopolistic control. We need to work out how to tolerate one another in love.

**CC:** I agree. I think that peace can become a very idealised linguistic term, which is why I tend wherever I can to combine it with peace, not and justice but peace with justice, because then there's a commitment to think about the justice for all.

**Daniel Seidemann:** If I stood on the top of the Mount of Olives overlooking the city in 1948, there would have been 31,000 Christians in Jerusalem, that would be roughly 20 per cent of the population. Today, there are about 12,000, less than 2 per cent of the population. The Christian communities are not being targeted by bad Zionists or by Islamists, they are being crushed by this conflict. Christianity is not going to disappear but there is this threat that it will turn into a museum piece rather than a community living and testifying, drawing its roots back to the time of Jesus as testimony to the life and death of Jesus. I'm saying this because I think that there is a direct correlation between our discussion on Occupation and our discussion on the possibility of coexistence in Jerusalem among the religions. The two are intimately related. Occupation among other things is violating the sanctity of the Holy land and violating the sanctity of its communities.

**CC:** In response to a question about American politics including the presidential election, and the role that Christian conservatives are playing.... Such alliances support funding the global tectonic movements. It's a real issue in the American election and Bishop Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, has I think summarised it brilliantly by saying that we should judge these and other actions by one simple question. Do they look like love of neighbour? If they do, then there is ground for a degree of dialogue, if they don't, we should vote and judge accordingly.

## Session IV: Contemporary Realities & Plans to Share the City

**Daniel Levy:** I would imagine that on Jerusalem, we still have three options...:

If there is an Israeli-Palestinian agreement predicated on hard partition, on separation, on a two-state hard border, that would also apply to Jerusalem. That is very difficult to do in a city, hugely disruptive of the fabric of city life and very complicated when it comes to the Old City...

The second option recognises that we're no longer in a partition paradigm. The one space reality that exists on the ground is, in fact, irreversible. It's a shared political space and that is the premise on which we come out of this conflict. That probably best serves Jerusalem as a living, breathing city space.

A Palestine-Israel dispensation based on partition, based on two states, based on a border, but there are different arrangements. Jerusalem is a *sui generis*; I'm tempted to say a *corpus separatum*.

What you see in Jerusalem is ...the squeezed physical space for Palestinians... the attempt to assert an Israel "victory project," which is a control of the space, but it's also control of the historical narrative, with the attempt to very conspicuously and quite egregiously write Palestinian experience out of that narrative.

I prefer to focus on protecting the rights of people on the ground. One thing is elections. Occasionally, this question emerges of Palestinian participation in municipal elections in Jerusalem, which is something the Palestinians could avail themselves of. They haven't. I don't think they will - or should - absent a fundamental shift in Palestinian national strategy. There's also the question of Palestinian participation in Palestinian elections. The uncertainty around if and when those take place in Jerusalem has been an obstacle. The Israelis control where the Palestinians can vote... of course,



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DANIEL LEVY

Daniel Levy is the President of the U.S./ Middle East Project. From 2012 to 2016, he was Director for the Middle East and North Africa at the European Council on Foreign Relations. Prior to that, he was a Senior Fellow and Director of the New America Foundation's Middle East Taskforce in Washington D.C. and a Senior Fellow at The Century Foundation. Mr. Levy was a Senior Advisor in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and to Justice Minister Yossi Beilin during the Government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak (1999-2001).



Palestinians should be able to vote in East Jerusalem. There are ways of making that happen, and the more we hear a Palestinian leadership precondition progress towards elections on whether there's a prior guarantee of physical voting booths in East Jerusalem, the more we should probably be suspicious that the election process is not actually moving forward.

Finally, we don't have a disruptive strategy on the part of the Palestinian leadership. That doesn't mean that there aren't Palestinians in civil society, on the ground, in political structures working to challenge the status quo, but that is not PA policy.

I think until we address those things, we will be stuck.

**Yudith Oppenheimer:** The question may well be, the future of *whose* Jerusalem? The accumulative effect of occupation and annexation ... may well lead to a state of affairs in which the majority of East Jerusalem residents will no longer be able to live within the city, while those who remain will reside there as an ever more suppressed and subjugated minority.

This will not only lead to a severe humanitarian and communal crisis, this will automatically mark the end of Jerusalem as the present home and future capital of two peoples. The survival of East Jerusalem lies not only in resisting settlement- building and annexation, but also in safeguarding the capacity of its residents to live in dignity within the city.

Therefore protecting residency status, freedom of movement, planning and building rights, the rights to unrestricted cultural and educational development, and freedom of association should all be placed at the centre rather than the periphery of international policy.

.... Jerusalem is the only place in the entire region in which Israelis and Palestinians - I don't mean citizens of Israel - share an urban space... manifestations of delicate coexistence and even solidarity, in living under profoundly unequal terms, are often overlooked.

**Ariel Caine:** the Zionists and Israeli projects use archaeology in some cases to construct an alibi for a Jewish return...saying that Jewish indigenous rights are more fundamental than others'.

One such site is the City of David archaeological excavation at the heart of the Palestinian village of Silwan and the Wadi Hilweh neighbourhood. Promoted by settler associations and organisations, excavation started without proper permits, searching for elements of



**Yudith Oppenheimer** is the executive director of Israeli human rights non-profit, Ir Amim.



**Ariel Caine** is a researcher at Forensic Architecture.

the King David-era Jerusalem by boring tunnels through the hillside, underneath Palestinian homes and without informing residents or securing their consent, then refusing to stop despite protests and several attempts to halt these works in the courts.

The digs and the destabilisation they produce move up through the geological layers towards the surface...cutting through streets, homes, schools, mosques - such as al Aqsa- digging for ruins of ancient Jewish archaeology and producing layers of ruin in contemporary Palestinian life.

**Rula Salameh:** If you get married to a Palestinian from the West Bank, or marry a Palestinian or Arab from any of the Arab countries or – in the worst case - from Gaza, you will not be able to register your kids. You won't be able to get an Israeli birth certificate for them. Even if you were born and raised in Jerusalem, you are not allowed to register your kids, allowing them to get an Israeli ID in the future.

Imagine, like in my case, that your son was born in the United Arab Emirates...the Israelis do not recognise us or deal with us in the same way that that they deal with the Jewish Israelis here in West Jerusalem, causing a serious problem for between 20,000 and 22,0000 Palestinian families. We can't get our sons and daughters into schools because we don't have a birth certificate.

Let's say a husband or wife has an Israeli ID and the other is from the West Bank... you need to have two homes; one in Jerusalem and one in the West Bank. If you are lucky, you will get a permit for your husband or your wife to enter Jerusalem maybe once or twice a year. Imagine your family having to be split up, one child living with his father, the other with the mother. In the best case scenario, the wife will be allowed to stay with her kids in Jerusalem because she has an Israeli ID. At the weekend, they have to move to the West Bank so they can spend some time with the husband.

Another constant fear for families here is attacks like that on 16-year old Mohammed Abu Khdeir who was kidnapped and burned. I remembered this case when my son Marwan was in school in the Old City. I had to find bodyguards and a taxi driver to take him to school every day and bring him back safe, because I had to go to work in Ramallah or Bethlehem. Who would take care of him? I was really afraid that something would happen to him...

Israel also prevents the Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem from using the Palestinian curriculum. We have to use the Israeli curriculum, where there is no mention of Palestinians or anything relative to the history of the Palestinians.



**Rula Salameh** is Just Vision's Outreach Director in Palestine.



**Chair: Dr Imad Karam, Trustee,** is the Executive Director of Initiatives of Change International.





## Session V: Britain's Role in the Coming Years



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**RT HON ALISTAIR BURT**

Rt Hon Alistair Burt was Conservative MP for Bury North 1983-97, and NE Bedfordshire between 2001-2019, and was a Minister in the Governments of John Major, David Cameron and Theresa May. He first visited Jerusalem in 1979 as a student, and has since made frequent visits to the region, most recently in January 2020. He was Minister for the Middle East and North Africa 2010-13, and 2017-19. He has engaged closely with the Middle East peace process as Minister and backbencher over many decades and remains involved through conflict resolution body Forward Thinking and the Helsinki Process.

**Rt Hon Alistair Burt:** The UK's position has to reflect a more balanced view of life between states and between different parties. That's not always comfortable... Young people in the region deserve something they haven't got. It's the responsibility of all of us to seek, to find that. We cannot go on as we are.

I stand by the decisions that the British Government has taken in recent years. Our support for UN Security Council Resolution 242, for the agreements that have been made, is right. It's not right simply to tear them up unilaterally. We were correct to oppose decisions made unilaterally by the US on Jerusalem, on UNRWA, and ultimately the one-sided plan put forward in Washington in January.

Talking with Jason Greenblatt when the US was considering what to propose, I asked three things of him on behalf of the U.K.:

Don't humiliate the Palestinian people.

Even if your proposed solution will lean towards Israel, leave everybody else something to negotiate about, so that your answer is not the final answer.

Don't believe a big cheque will cover everything - the situation is much too deep and complex for that.

The Trump proposal came. The Foreign Secretary was rightly cautious. The Prime Minister declared that annexation was wrong. That has not yet happened, but we know what's happening on the ground. The proposed annexation is only further annexation. The UK position on this has been correct for now.

The Abraham Accords are significant. They bring into the open existing relationships, making public a new reality. In my time in the Foreign Office, I always worked on the assumption that there would be no normalisation of relationships with Israel without a resolution to the issues involving the Palestinian people. That's plainly changed. It can't be waved away.

The U.K. has ...to look at the region as it is. It's changing. It's no longer possible for everything in the Middle East to stop until [the Palestinian] issue is determined.

Occupation has damaged the soul of Israel in a manner that I don't think all Israelis fully understand. It's immensely corrosive, and has to stop...[t]he U.K. cannot accept that the status quo continues ad infinitum. Those who believe that there's a way simply to manage the situation are profoundly wrong. There is no solution if the status

quo is simply managed. The U.K. does have a role to play. The US, currently, has forgone its position as an honest broker, if ever it had that...[a] new Administration will have a new opportunity...[and] the British government should be pressing to get something going.

Whatever our adherence has been to historical positions in relation to the Palestinian leadership, something new is needed. It could be a democratic process - an election process - which provides the reconciliation of Palestinian leadership points of view... unification of the Palestinian leadership as the most effective game changer...would be welcome progress.

The UK has a key role to play. It's got to be clear on the rights and responsibilities that were enunciated in the past, to be prepared to stand up for those, but also to recognise the realities we have now, and find a new way to get an answer. We cannot forget what's happened recently, nor pretend it hasn't happened, nor rely on everything that's been decided in the past as the only way forward. Things have changed. Recognising that is essential if there's to be any political breakthrough.

That means some strong movement from the Palestinian leadership. The UK should give that leadership every encouragement and support as they try and navigate a new way forward. We must not say, to those who would unilaterally decide the situation, that they can forego the final status issues that must be decided. Jerusalem clearly comes into that. I do not accept the US view of the future of Jerusalem, but that has got to be worked on as part of the negotiations.



**Chair: Sir Vincent Fean, Chair of Trustees**



**Tommy Sheppard MP (SNP)**

**Sir Vincent Fean:** I went to Nabi Saleh on your behalf to present condolences after a member of the Tamimi family was shot dead by an IDF sniper. There is no recourse for the victims. There is a process, but no recourse. The odds are stacked against any complaint.

**Tommy Sheppard:** The Scottish National Party has long supported Palestinian rights. In East Jerusalem, I saw "total occupation": every aspect of civil and public administration deployed to fulfil a political objective. This applies to the house demolitions and the settlements springing up throughout East Jerusalem: enclaves deep in the heart of established Palestinian communities. It reminded me of the worst excesses of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, where one community went out of its way to intimidate and provoke another. It brought home the gulf there is between communities, and how big a bridge that we need to build between them.

Those who advocated Brexit said that it would give the UK more agility to act in pursuit of an independent foreign policy. Why not take action on this front?

It has a heavy historic responsibility to do so. The UK government - either unilaterally, or with other European nation states - needs to break the current log-jam, to move beyond



**Rt Hon Baroness  
Lindsay Northover  
(Lib Dems)**

the status quo...[w]ithout strong, practical action, the current policy proceeds unchecked...[o]ur policy should be to support the distinctive voices emerging in East Jerusalem and to work through civil society to make sure that they are heard... we need to discuss using our economic powers through the trading agreements we have with Israel to give weight to diplomatic calls for action. Combined with a symbolic and defiant gesture-- recognising the state of Palestine-- so that it becomes an equal party to the debate - that would be noticed, in particular within Israeli civil society.

There are Israeli voices criticising the strategy of the government. There is a new generation of Israelis and Palestinians coming. [It must be] advertised beyond Israel's borders that what is happening now is unacceptable to the international community and to governments who are prepared to act to back up their concerns about Israeli government actions. Concrete action would have a big effect on Israeli public opinion, leading to change.

In Parliament there is an evolving mood which of course does not question Israel's to exist, but questions the actions of its government. That consensus is building across all parties, including in Conservative ranks.

**Baroness Lindsay Northover:** The first thing the UK Government should do is recognise Palestine as a state with its capital in East Jerusalem. There has been a vote in the Commons, but that didn't become Government policy. It's time it did. This would help to bring greater equality to the two sides.

There are many areas where I agree with our Government. We must ensure no slippage from their current declared position. The Government identifies East Jerusalem as occupied, and West Jerusalem as under Israeli *de facto* control. It does not recognise sovereignty over any part of the city. Its position, rightly, is that the final status of the city should be decided through negotiations between both sides. Jerusalem should ultimately be the shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian States.

The Government should also maintain its position that the annexation of East Jerusalem is illegal, and that the Kushner plan on annexation is utterly unacceptable...

British Ministers should meet Palestinian figures in Jerusalem and promote the Palestinian presence, opposing Israeli actions against Palestinian cultural institutions in Jerusalem. The status quo of the holy sites must be maintained.

The UK should condemn all settlement activity in East Jerusalem and back that up with concrete action, which has been lacking. Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem must not be forcibly removed from the city or lose their residency rights. The UK must oppose all Palestinian home demolitions in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. The UK should continue its support for UNRWA, and challenge the mistreatment of Palestinian child detainees in East Jerusalem, as elsewhere.

Parliament and civil society need to hold the U.K. Government to account. Many are working across Party lines to do so. In the Lords there is overwhelming support for change. We need to work more effectively in Europe for that change.



**Julie Elliott MP**  
(Labour)

**Julie Elliott:** Britain has a unique role, because of our history in the region, as the balanced “honest broker”. Today, the US cannot claim that role. It comes down to equal rights for Israelis and Palestinian: equality and fairness. Britain should assist the Palestinian people in exercising their right to self-determination and statehood. Britain must recognise the state of Palestine, levelling the playing-field on statehood: a prerequisite.

On the ground, annexation continues by the back door all the time, with more settlements, more land being taken. Life is constantly getting worse for the Palestinians. Britain needs to take the lead in upholding justice, standing up for people to have equal rights. International law is non-negotiable. Our Government should recognise Palestine, now.

**Tommy Sheppard:** Paris and London together ought to consider new initiatives in 2021. Those two countries have the historic responsibility for much of what we now see. When it comes to Israeli public opinion, do not underestimate the political/psychological effect of the UK and others recognising the State of Palestine.

**Alistair Burt:** the present situation is inherently unstable, with a question mark over the future for millions. People mustn't stop raising their voices. If we've run into the sand by trying to pursue the same solutions. We must constantly look for something new and bold, eg a revised Arab Peace Initiative.

**Tommy Sheppard:** it is vital to engage with your MPs. The most important effect is to get a range of MPs who haven't given this a second thought, to do so, and to find out more.



## Session VI: Questions & Answers



Ian Black is a visiting senior fellow at the Middle East Centre, LSE. He was Middle East editor, European editor, diplomatic editor and Middle East correspondent of the Guardian. He is the author of several books, including *Enemies and Neighbours: Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel, 1917-2017* (Allen Lane, Penguin, 2017).

**Ian Black:** A question for Vincent from Andrew Wilkinson, Oxford University. "Does the continued focus on the Balfour Declaration - which is, after all, ambiguously phrased - serve any real purpose in the contemporary political debate?"

**Sir Vincent Fean:** The Balfour Project stemmed from curiosity about how the UK would mark the 2017 centenary. The Balfour Declaration is ambiguous. Unlike the Sykes-Picot agreement, it is still alive because that ambiguity is still alive. The ambiguity between a « national home for the Jewish people » without prejudice to « the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine » in those 67 words. The Balfour Project has two strands of activity: first, education and awareness raising; trying to ensure that the truth reaches people in our own country, because Britain has a particular responsibility. Not only in the past, but now. Second, to explore ways forward to ensure equal rights for both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian.

The Balfour Declaration is ambiguous. We carry the name because that ambiguity is still with us, as are divisions that remain unhealed.

**Ian Black:** Is the recent rapprochement between Israel and some of the Arab Gulf States and Sudan a step in the right direction, or does it simply weaken the chances of progress towards a genuine solution to the problems of Jerusalem, the Occupied Territories and the restoration of Palestinian rights?

**Menachem Klein:** It is a major event in Middle Eastern history and also in the Arab world: the Arab world is totally broken. It marks the end of the Arab League peace initiative, which went along the following lines - first: Palestine / Israel, the peace agreement; second, normalisation. Today there is normalisation, but no peace agreement between Israel and Palestine. De facto annexation already exists in the West Bank. Between Jordan and the Mediterranean, there is only one regime, the Israeli regime, turning the Palestinian Authority into its subcontractor. The Arab world is sending a message to Israel: "Israelis, it's your problem. The Palestinian problem moved from a foreign policy problem to an Israeli domestic problem. It's your problem: deal with it." This very strong message is also from Europe. The Europeans do nothing alone to impose on Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories and solve the problem in line with international law. So it is first and foremost an Israeli problem, a domestic problem, and it is a real headache, much greater than a foreign policy problem.

**Sir Vincent Fean:** The Palestinian view is that these normalisations are a stab in the back. The normalisation process in the political

sphere downgrades the Palestinian Question, which is the wrong thing to happen. The Palestinian Question urgently needs to be addressed: the question of Palestinian rights. The normalisation process puts bilateral relations first. The fact that parts of the Arab world have gone forward unilaterally with normalisation of relations with Israel is something that any western country which has already recognised Israel must welcome. The U.K. recognised Israel in 1950.

Palestinian political leaders need to find a way - ideally through elections in the next six months - to unite on a platform of opposing the Occupation and working together to end it by non-violent means. The Palestinian voice is weakened by division.

**Ian Black:** There's been a strong response to Alistair Burt's call for bold moves by both sides, including the Palestinians. Haneen Abou Salem asks: "What bold moves are expected of the Palestinian leadership?" Vincent, you've called for elections; also for Palestinian reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. William Patey suggests that one outcome of the recent normalisation agreements should be a revised Arab peace initiative.

**Sir Vincent Fear:** There is thinking about reviving the Arab peace initiative - I heard what Menachem said about its demise - reviving the API, with Palestinian support, to achieve more Arab unity. The objection by Israel when they spurned the Arab peace initiative in 2002 was partly that it was a "take it or leave it" offer: recognise the Palestinian state, end the Occupation and we will normalise. There may be a way, through Arab diplomacy and pressure, to revive something of the Arab peace initiative. Speaking of boldness: the British government should talk to Hamas. We talk to people we don't like; we've done it for a long time. We should talk to Hamas. Our Government should respect the outcome of Palestinian elections, whoever wins.

**Daniel Seidemann:** The head of the Italian Communist Party under Mussolini, Antonio Gramsci, said: "The old world order is dead. The new world order is struggling to be born. Now is the time of monsters." This is that time. We don't know how the world works anymore. The two state paradigm is in smithereens, the international consensus around it has snapped, normalisation... I'm an Israeli patriot and normalisation sucks. Do you know how difficult it is for an Israeli to be able to say that publicly? Normalisation is geared to allow Arab states to circumvent the Palestinians and allow Israel to go even deeper into our clinical occupation denial. God willing, as of 3 November, we will begin to rebuild this world from scratch. The post-World War II order is over and what can be done in Israel / Palestine will be a function of how that new order is rebuilt. It won't be the highest priority, nor the lowest. We need to look at the possibilities. Normalisation is here to stay. I wish it were otherwise. I wish it could incentivise my compatriots to do what we have to do and end the Occupation. Sorry: life sucks, then you die. Is there a way that we can harness normalisation? Stand it on its head and engage the normalising countries so that we may rebuild a credible political process, the goal of which is ending occupation? Nobody knows how to do that, but we have to start thinking about that now - it's absolutely essential. I really wish normalisation didn't exist. I see no alternative but to see how we can make this less than the disaster that it is.

**Ian Black:** On the two-state solution, Nina Beaven asks: "Is Israel likely to accept a one state solution, which will change the demographics in the way it will?" And again "If the political

reality, as it is, is irreversible, what is the alternative?" Many questions about the death, or perceived death, of a two-state solution. Is there any way to achieve a one state solution, which is increasingly fashionable?

**Rula Salameh:** As a Palestinian, born and raised in East Jerusalem, and an activist in my community, here's an answer about one-state or two-state solutions. I was thinking, personally, that a two-state solution could be a solution. Maybe for the last 15 years, personally, with a one-state solution, I don't think that we can have equal rights with Israel. From what I see, the difference in dealing with Palestinians and Israelis in East Jerusalem, the way the Palestinian neighbourhoods are different from the Israeli and Jewish communities, the way the municipality is treating Palestinians in Israel... everything.

We have two separate communities in East and West Jerusalem. I don't think that a one-state solution can work or exist, especially when we are not involved. We have never felt as Palestinians that we can live an equal life here. I've never seen that the Israeli government or the municipality here in Jerusalem treats Palestinians and Israelis equally.

I used to think that a two-state solution could work, until I was touring with different groups in the West Bank. I wanted to document the situation on the ground: there was no way for a Palestinian State to exist once we had settlements all over the West Bank. Settlements are on each hill; sometimes a new settlement, sometimes expanding existing settlements, sometimes building a link between two separate settlements to make one large settlement.

If you go from Jerusalem to Ramallah or Nablus, you will find settlements all over the West Bank. How can the Palestinian State exist once there's no link between those cities in the West Bank? It's really hard. I can't see this. I was trying to understand the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis for the last 30 years. For ordinary Palestinians, what has happened? Has anything changed in our lives? Did we get to see the privilege of peace, the privilege of Oslo, anything that could at least give us hope?

The problem we are facing, especially for the new generation, is that they live without hope. How can we give them hope? Young people should meet and talk. At least have the chance to meet. We don't have that. Rarely do you see Palestinians and Israelis who know each other. If they practise sitting together and talking... we don't have this.

Normalisation is something really big, that really affects our life. But for me, living in Jerusalem for 45 years, I have never been able to see a normal life between Israelis and Palestinians; where we share supermarkets, go to the same hospital, or meet on the bus. We have never lived in a situation where I can see normal Israelis and connect with them. As for the new generation: my son, aged 20, has never met or talked to Israelis.

**Ian Black:** In terms of the international community and legal institutions, the Palestinian Authority referred alleged Israeli war crimes to the International Criminal Court. Will anything come of that?

**Baroness Helena Kennedy QC:** I will combine that with another question: "Why can't lawyers around the world come together and reassess international law and give it the force that it

should have?" International law is the product of multilateralism. At the moment, multilateralism is in retreat. I join Danny in praying that from 3 November we can start a process to recover that sense of something that unifies us, recognise the need for there being something shared.

There's a contagion of a particular kind of authoritarian leader pretending to be a democrat; wrapping himself in the language of democracy, but, in fact, removing the word liberal, which includes all those things that are vital: a civil society; media freedom; lawyers and judges who are respected and not being undermined; a genuine opposition and discourse conducted in a different way.

Young people want things to be more values driven. They want decency, to respect people's humanity, irrespective of who they are. There's that growing belief that we are stewards of the earth and have to protect it for future generations; there's something noble. Something new will be born. I'm not going to accept the idea of normalisation.

I don't believe that you can have a one-state solution just now. People are still too fearful – there's too much anxiety. People still need to feel able to run things for themselves before they can ever think of it all coming together. I don't believe that you can have a one-state solution and you're being sold that idea to distract you from the practicalities of getting things sorted now.

I agree with Vincent: you have to come together. If you're divided, if you have Hamas and Fatah at each other's throats, you will never be able to speak with one voice about the self-determination of the Palestinian people and the right that they should have a state of their own. Something has to be done around that, and you will be supported in doing it. Until you solve that, you're going to get nowhere. I know many people who are human rights lawyers and human rights activists who live in Israel. Please believe there are people like you and me and all of us who want something different and believe in the possibility of that. It has to start small and with the unification of the Palestinian movement to create change.

**Ian Black:** How can there be a full international debate when organisations and individuals are afraid to criticise the Israeli state and its actions because they're afraid to be called anti-Semitic?

**Daniel Seidemann:** First of all, rely on your Jewish colleagues. There is a lot of abuse of the term "anti-Semitism" to delegitimise what is legitimate criticism of Israel, but I want to give you a nasty example. A few years back, with a Minister in the UK, I was told: "There's never going to be peace because the Jews own Congress and the press." That is anti-Semitism, because it invokes imagery that goes back centuries about diabolical Jews. Had he only said: "We are confronting enormous challenges because of the disproportionate influence of the Israel lobby on Congress and its influence in the media in the United States," I couldn't fault that.

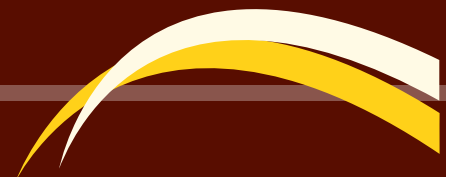
Now, it's difficult to make the distinction. I am appalled by the way that the term "anti-Semitism" is being abused to absolve Israel from accountability: it's bad for Israel, it's bad for the Jewish people, it's bad. It does not tar us with anti-Semitic charges, it whitewashes anti-

Semitism. But it is important to recognise those occasions, clinically, when imagery is invoked which derives from centuries-old anti-Semitic tropes. It's there: on the left, as on the right. I will be the first to help anyone to deflect unjustified accusations of anti-Semitism. Most of us here would combat genuine anti-Semitism, which regrettably still exists.

**Ian Black:** Last question, from Richard Burden: "We cannot simply accept the continuation of the status quo, which suits the Netanyahu government. Don't continued breaches of international law - demolitions, accelerated settlement building - need to be shown to have consequences if they are to be persuaded to change course? The UK government has been unwilling to endorse actions to demonstrate such consequences by outlawing business deals with settlements or at least assisting the UN's publication of a database of companies complicit in breaches of international law. How can the British government be persuaded to be more assertive in defence of international law and the survival of a two state solution?"

**Sir Vincent Fean:** In May, many MPs wrote to the Prime Minister about sanctions against Israel in the event of annexation. The Government didn't use those words, but did say to Israel: annexation is wrong. Annexation is suspended. The Netanyahu government needs to be accountable for its actions. If accountability leads to consequences, that's logical. Persistent breaches of international law need consequences, for governments to determine. Sanctions are one consequence; compare Russian annexation of the Crimea with Israel's actions.

There are two national movements in this conflict. The act of recognition now, by the U.K. and partners, of a Palestinian State on '67 borders, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, would have the psychological impact that Tommy Sheppard mentioned: a beneficial impact. It does no harm – only good, regardless of what comes in terms of any negotiated outcome. Parity of esteem between the two peoples requires the UK to recognise the Palestinian State now, validating the Palestinian right to self-determination.





**His Excellency Khaled Al-Duwaisan:** At the outset, allow me to reiterate my gratitude to be participating today in this important conference, and to commend the continuous unrelenting work of the Balfour Project in seeking a future of equal rights and peaceful coexistence between the peoples in the occupied territories and the peace of Jerusalem.

If we turn to history, there is no better place than Jerusalem as a witness that religious coexistence can be achieved. Bearing in mind that for 1,000 years, Jerusalem was exclusively Jewish; for about 400 years, Christian; for 1,300 years, Islamic; today, after all this history, no one religion can solely dominate Jerusalem. So protecting the rights of the three Abrahamic religions equally is the only way to achieve peaceful coexistence.

As this conference's statement declares rightfully, I strongly believe the future of Jerusalem is crucial to peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Israel and the Arab and Muslim worlds.

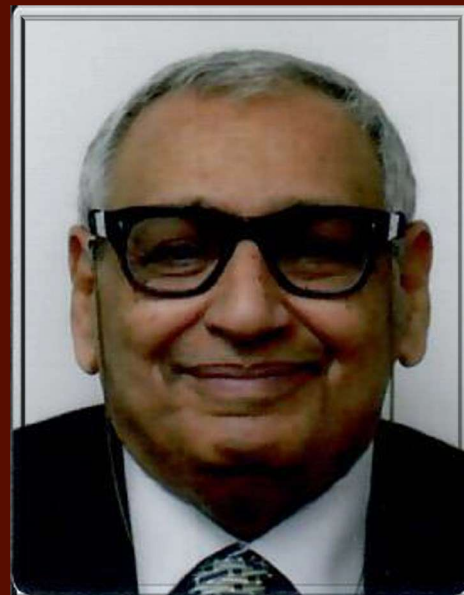
Ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should be a top priority: locally, regionally and internationally. Without a breakthrough, we face the prospect of continuing violence and suffering.

In this regard, I wish to renew the principled and firm stance that the Palestinians and the Arab and Muslim countries are ready for peace. And the Arab Peace Initiative, which remains on the table, is clear in offering an unprecedented opportunity for peace and full recognition of Israel.

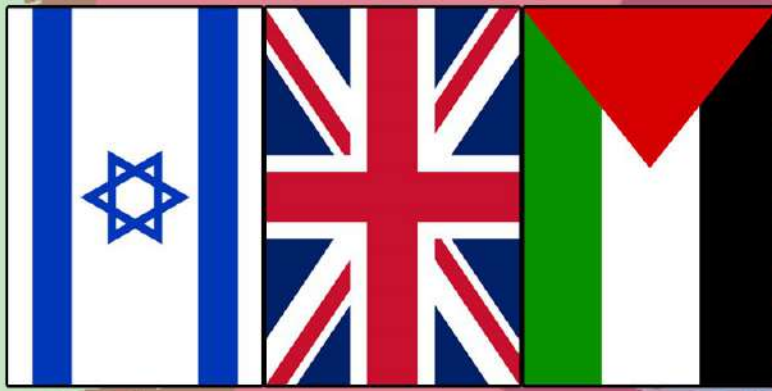
Moreover, this Arab initiative is a witness to our willingness to give concessions and support everything that would push towards a solution in accordance with the relevant international resolutions: starting with demanding justice through the immediate and complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories from the borders of 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 1967, and the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Living side by side with Israel as the two-state solution is the only way to peace and security.

**The conference was dedicated to the memory of Rosemary Hollis, dear friend of the Balfour Project.**

## Closing Remarks



HE Khaled Al-Duwaisan GCVO has been Ambassador to the UK since 1993. Al-Duwaisan joined Kuwait's Foreign Ministry in 1970, and has also served as Ambassador to the Netherlands and Romania. He is Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in London.



# *Balfour Project*



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