

# BOARD OF DEPUTIES' ISRAEL-RELATED WORK

## SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S ACTIVITIES

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2014

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## **Summary of Key Successes and Activities:**

### **Israel:**

The Board and We Believe in Israel jointly hosted over 50 delegates from 26 pro-Israel organisations from across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The Board's, JLC's and London Jewish Forum's first ever Jewish Community Seminar for local councillors drew over forty new councillors to the Board of Deputies for a five hour introduction to our community's most pressing issues, including Israel.

The Board of Deputies, alongside the JLC and CST, took part in a meeting with the BBC where the concerns of the Jewish community over reporting of Operation Protective Edge and the recent increase in antisemitism were raised. Issues discussed included the pressuring and intimidation of journalists by Hamas and, the use of casualty figures and information provided by Hamas, as well as the choice of spokespeople and how certain figures were introduced as representatives of the Jewish community in Britain.

### **Antisemitism:**

Through its close contacts with MP Mike Freer, Vice-chair of the APPG on British Jews, the Board communicated its concerns over the sharp rise in antisemitism to the Home Secretary Theresa May, who has remarked: "It is truly shocking the extent to which we've seen antisemitism – verbal, physical, online – in recent weeks. This is not something that should be tolerated."

The Board, along with the CST and JLC will hold a meeting with Theresa May in due course to discuss the measures to be taken.

### **Anti-BDS Activity:**

The Board has been leading the fight against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. After hearing that Sainsbury's had removed Kosher products from display due to anti-Israel protests, President Vivian Wineman and Vice President Alex Brummer made direct representations to the Chairman of Sainsbury's Board of Directors.

Extensive media coverage, including an opinion piece by Vice-President Jonathan Arkush in industry magazine, *The Grocer*, along with a boycott organised by the Board led to Sainsbury's issuing a statement that similar actions would not be taken again.

The Board publically criticised the Tricycle's decision to refuse to host the UK Jewish Film Festival over its ties to the Israeli Embassy, with Vice President Jonathan Arkush appearing on media outlets to condemn the theatre's decision. 7 3

## **Government:**

The Board has also written in support of the Prime Minister and the (former and new) Foreign Secretaries on a number of occasions. The letters have thanked them for their strong public support of Israel's right to self-defence as well as the UK's role in the positive EU Council's Middle East Conclusions which called for the disarmament of Hamas and reiterated the EU's role in supporting a two-state solution. Some of the letters can be seen [here](#).

Throughout Operation Protective Edge, the Board worked closely with *We Believe in Israel* and other pro-Israel groups to maximise the letters being sent to Members of Parliament.

## **Israel Related Activities:**

### **Parliament:**

#### 1. Meeting with the Home Secretary:

Following the Board's letter to the British Home Secretary Theresa May and our regular contact with local MP Mike Freer over the increasing threat of Antisemitism in the UK, Mr Freer and colleagues met with Ms May on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, communicating the Jewish community's concerns with the recent spike in antisemitic incidences in the UK. Mr Freer's blog about the meeting can be found [here](#).

Following this meeting, Theresa May said "It is truly shocking the extent to which we've seen antisemitism – verbal, physical, online – in recent weeks. This is not something that should be tolerated."

The Board, alongside other communal organisations, will subsequently be meeting with Theresa May in the near future.

#### 2. MP Letter writing:

Throughout Operation Protective Edge, the Board has been working closely with *We Believe in Israel* and other pro-Israel groups from across the country to maximise grassroots activities in support of Israel at this time. This has included coordination with other faiths.

MPs tell us that their perception of their constituents' opinions on the situation in Israel is heavily influenced by the number of e-mails and letters they receive, therefore the Board and other pro-Israel organisations have made letter writing an essential element of the grassroots campaign.

The campaign continues and we urge you to tell your local MP that you are standing with Israel against the Hamas rocket attacks by [signing this petition](#).

E-mails in particular have even more impact if you write one in your own words to your local MP. You can find your MP and their contact details [here](#).

If you require any assistance with this, please contact Steven Jaffe on [steven.jaffe@bod.org.uk](mailto:steven.jaffe@bod.org.uk) or Joseph Moses on [joseph.moses@bod.org.uk](mailto:joseph.moses@bod.org.uk)

#### 3. Zionist Federation and Christian Friends of Israel Emergency Parliamentary Lobby

The Board of Deputies President and Chief Executive, alongside several members of the Public Affairs team supported the Zionist Federation and Christian Friends of Israel's Emergency Lobby of Parliament on the 10<sup>th</sup> September.

The meeting was highly successful, with attendees speaking to a number of MPs about a variety of issues in support of, and relating to, Israel.

#### 4. Letter to Vince Cable MP:

The Board has written to Vince Cable regarding the proposed revocation of 12 British export Licences to Israel, voicing concern at the double standards surrounding this action whilst explaining the impact this could have on incentivising Hamas to commit further attacks on Israel. The letter can be found [here](#).

#### 5. Scottish Councils/establishments flying the Palestinian flag:

The Board has issued a strong statement condemning the hypocrisy of Glasgow City Council's decision to fly a Palestinian flag. The publicity generated resulted in a Fortune 500 company pulling out its 600 strong US delegation of businessmen and women from the event.

This story was reported on in the Jewish Chronicle and can be seen [here](#).

The Board also wrote to Glasgow City Council, strongly condemning Hamas.

Moreover, the Board protested against the flying of the Palestinian flag in Edinburgh and in Silverburn and St.Enochs shopping centres.

#### 6. George Galloway MP:

The Board was pleased to note that the representations it made together with others to the police were and that George Galloway was questioned for his odious remarks in which he declared Bradford an "Israeli free zone".heard.

Vice President Jonathan Arkush's comment on Galloway's behaviour was quoted by BBC news [here](#).

#### 7. David Ward MP:

David Ward, Bradford East's Liberal Democrat MP tweeted "If I lived in Gaza would I fire a rocket? – Probably yes"

The Board immediately raised concerns with the Liberal Democrat Chief Whip through Don Foster and various media outlets including twitter.

President Vivian Wineman also appeared on BBC London 94.9 condemning Ward on his words and his continuous actions.

Ward later issued an inadequate apology, which can be found [here](#), and the Liberal Democrats decided against formal proceedings.

The Board has released a press statement condemning inaction of the Liberal Democrats which can be found [here](#).

#### 8. John Prescott MP:

The Board alongside the JLC wrote to Lord Bassam the Chief Labour Lord Whip regarding Lord Prescott's Daily Mirror article in which he compared Gaza to a ghetto and implied that Israel should know better because of the Jewish experience in the Holocaust. Lord Prescott's article can be viewed [here](#).

The letter reminded Lord Bassam that, "as a high profile Labour Peer, he has a duty to respect community cohesion, not to contribute to its decline. Through his remarks, Lord Prescott has trivialised the Holocaust, the most painful memory in Jewish history, and will undoubtedly encourage others to use such language."

The Board asked deputies to vote in the Daily Mirror online poll stating whether they agreed with Lord Prescott's article. By the end of the poll, a significant majority of respondents rejected Prescott's views. This importantly demonstrates the significance of efforts by all members of the community to support Israel and reject repugnant anti-Israel hostility.

The Board's letter to the Labour Whip in the Lords, which received [national media coverage](#), can be viewed [here](#).

#### 9. British Consul General:

The Board has made representations to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in regards to the British Consul General of Jerusalem wearing a scarf donning the words "Free Palestine" next to a map showing all of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, in blatant disregard of the UK government policy of supporting a 2 state solution.

The statement can be found [here](#).

#### 10. Senior Government:

The Board has written in support of the Prime Minister and both the former Foreign Secretary William Hague and current Foreign Secretary Phillip Hammond on a number of occasions during Operation Protective Edge. The letters have thanked them for their strong public support of Israel's right to self-defence as well as the UK's role in the EU Council's Middle East Conclusions which called for the disarmament of Hamas and reiteration of support for a two-state solution. Some of the letters can be seen [here](#).

Following co-ordinated action on publicising the recent increase in antisemitic incidents, it is also noteworthy that over the past week several Cabinet Ministers have publicly condemned antisemitism.

The Board as well as other communal groups are continuously monitoring and acting on the situation with the various Friends of Israel groups.

### **BDS and Delegitimation:**

During times of crises in Israel, there is an increased threat of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). The Board is one of the Co-ordinators of the Fair Play Campaign Group (FPCG) with the JLC and together we lead on responding to Boycott Issues. The wider FPCG is made up of Israel facing organisations.

In the past few weeks in response to Operation Protective Edge, boycott campaigns targeting Israeli goods and culture have intensified. We are fighting cultural boycotts which also discriminate more widely against Jews - a success was won with the Tricycle Theatre overturning their original decision not to stage the Jewish Film Festival due to Israeli Embassy funding. We will resolutely oppose the politicisation of British Jewish cultural life, as this will only lead to a sense that Jewish life is being curtailed by a misguided attempt to hold us to account over our relationship with Israel. The arts should be about freedom of artistic expression, not its curtailment based on perceptions of foreign policies. The Board takes attacks such as that on the Israeli dance ensemble due to perform in Edinburgh very seriously, and has made the appropriate representations.

The Chief executives of the JLC and the Board have met with the National Retail Association, and have scheduled meetings with senior staff at Tesco and Sainsbury's to confirm the respective organisations' formal stances towards the BDS movement.

The Board and FPCG have continued to make press statements on the issue.

We have spoken with many retailers being targeted by anti-Israel protesters to ensure kosher products remain on sale and neither customers nor shop workers face intimidation.

Moreover, primarily through Board staff (Steven Jaffe and Joseph Moses), the Board has been speaking to concerned members of the public regarding a number of related issues.

#### 1. Southampton Israeli lecture Boycott

Following successful protests by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to stop a lecture being given by Israeli Professor Mark Auslander on the subject of optical sensors and their use in healthcare, Board Vice President, Jonathan Arkush wrote to the Vice Chancellor of the university, Professor Nutbeam, voicing the Jewish community's strong concerns.

#### 2. Local Councils:

Several local councils have flown the Palestinian flag citing their solidarity with Gaza.

In response to this the Board has issued statements criticising these councils, urging them to promote community cohesion and not single-sided narratives. This has been covered in the [Daily Mail](#) and the [Independent](#).

Vice President Jonathan Arkush has written to Tower Hamlets in response to their decision to raise the Palestinian flag, and has also discussed the issue on Vanessa Feltz's BBC London 94.9 show and on BBC London 94.9 on 31st July.

#### 3. Tricycle Theatre:

The Board, together with the JLC, welcomed the U-turn by the Tricycle Theatre to re-invite the UK Jewish Film Festival back to their cinema on the same terms as in previous years.

The Board publicly criticised the Tricycle's decision and participated in the protests outside the theatre. During these protests, Vice President Jonathan Arkush spoke on LBC radio, highlighting the discriminatory nature of the Tricycle's decision, and how it had the effect of asking UK Jews to disavow Israel. The Board was also quoted on a number of occasions in the national press, including the [Huffington Post](#), and the [Jewish Chronicle](#).

The Board and the JLC jointly wrote to the Minister for Culture, Media and Sport raising deep concern at what had initially occurred.

The joint statement from the UKJFF and Tricycle Theatre can be viewed [here](#).

## **Events:**

### 1. Israel activist meeting:

The Board and We believe in Israel jointly hosted over 50 delegates from 26 pro-Israel organisations from across the British Isles.

Regional groups represented at the meeting ranged from the Scottish Israel forum and the Northern Ireland Friends of Israel to the Leeds Lobby network and Bournemouth Action for Israel group. Delegates also came from Manchester and Newcastle, Liverpool and Glasgow.

Presentations were made by a variety of groups on subjects ranging from street campaigning, parliamentary lobbying and pro-Israel stalls at fairs to on-line activism.

Representatives from the main pro-Israel organisations in the UK, including the ZF, Stand With Us, Christian Friends of Israel, ICEJ and the Union of Jewish Students, offered practical support to the local groups.

The full article covering the event can be found [here](#).

### 2. Community Town Hall Meeting:

The Board organised a Community Town Hall Meeting, giving the Jewish public an opportunity to hear key information and ask questions regarding the British Jewish response to the ongoing conflict and the associated threat of antisemitism.

The event was attended by over 900 people, listening to the expert panel which included speakers from the Board, CST, JLC, UJIA, We Believe in Israel, and BICOM.

### 3. Jewish Community Seminar for local councillors

The first ever Jewish Community Seminar for local councillors drew over forty new councillors to the Board of Deputies for a five hour introduction to our community's most pressing issues.

The Board, the London Jewish Forum, and the Jewish Leadership Council co-convened the event, which drew in around 20 expert panellists from across the Jewish community, with sessions ranging from antisemitism to Israel and community issues. The press release of the event can be found [here](#).



#### 4. Sainsbury's Buycott:

After hearing news of the Holborn branch of Sainsbury's decision to remove kosher produce in the wake of anti-Israel protests outside the shop, the Board contacted the store manager.

The manager gave his assurances that this was not company policy, and merely a decision taken by the duty manager at the time to prevent BDS protestors from targeting staff and throwing around food as they had done at a Manchester branch of Tesco previously.

The reports that a staff member responded to a customer asking why the kosher produce had been removed by saying "because we support a free Gaza" were not denied, and the manager promised that this was due to naivety, rather than policy.

President Vivian Wineman and Vice President Alex Brummer made direct representations to the Chair of Sainsbury's, voicing the concerns of the British Jewish community.

Vice-President, Jonathan Arkush wrote an editorial in the leading publication for food retailers, 'The Grocer', entitled "Sainsbury's Holborn should not feel Gaza conflict pressure" which can be found [here](#).

On a grassroots level, The Board organised a buycott, pictured below, which was reported on by the Jewish Chronicle, and can be found [here](#).



#### 5. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) Conference

Vice-Chair of the International Division, Edwin Shuker, represented the Board at the 14th ICT Conference, with the theme of 'Terrorism's Global Impact' at IDC Herzliya from September 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 2014.

In addition to hearing from experts in the field, Edwin participated in highly relevant workshops interacting with government, defence and police officials who deal with terrorism on a daily basis.

Edwin escorted a Yazidi leader, Dr. Mirza Dinnay to the conference who gave a deeply moving presentation on the suffering his people are facing. He informed the conference of the great risk he chose to come to Israel, because in his opinion the Jewish nation would understand best the current genocide taking place on his community.

#### 6. Kedem Buycott:

The Board's President Vivian Wineman went to Manchester Kedem in defiance of the BDS protests outside, purchasing a gift in solidarity with the store and pro-Israel activists. On his return Vivian launched a buycott, urging Deputies and their constituents to buy from Kedem in their hour of need.



#### 7. Marks & Spencers counter-protest:

The Board has given full support to the counter-protests outside M&S, which faces intimidation from PSC supporters.

### 8. Brighton Rally:

Board President, Vivian Wineman travelled to Brighton on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of August in support of the Sussex Friends of Israel march.

The protest was highly successful, attracting hundreds of marchers.



### 9. The Abraham Fund Breakfast Event:

Amnon Beeri-Sulitzeanu and Dr Thabet Abu Rass, co-executive directors of the Abraham Fund, spoke at the Board and also at an event with Alex Brummer, regarding the challenges facing Israeli Arabs in light of the recent conflict. The charity works to promote cross-communal dialogue and activity between Israel's Jewish and Arab residents, enhancing development and educational opportunities.

The breakfast briefing, pictured below, was highly informative and provided an insight into the advances in Arab-Jewish relations in Israel, as well as highlighting the areas where improvements must be made.



#### 10. London Rally:

The Board worked closely with the Zionist Federation, participating in their rally in support of Israel on 21<sup>st</sup> July. The event, which was attended by an estimated 5000 people, was addressed by the Board's President Vivian Wineman, who stated that the Jewish community must promote "peace and security".

#### 11. Breakfast with former Mayor of Sderot, David Bouskila:

The event, co-hosted by the Board and the JNF, was particularly pertinent during the immensely difficult time for the residents of Southern Israel. The room was filled to capacity, with several journalists present. Mr Bouskila spoke about the development of Sderot, and Israeli Government's investment in bomb shelters and missile defence-systems. Mr Bouskila ended the event by stating that one day he hopes that there will be a political solution that will better the lives of all.



#### 12. WJC Solidarity Mission:

Vice-Chair of the International Division Edwin Shuker represented the Board as part of a solidarity mission that travelled to the south of Israel to meet with Israelis hit by Hamas rocket attacks. President Shimon Peres, WJC President Ronald Lauder and the other members the 78-strong WJC delegation paid a visit to Kibbutz Zikim near the Gaza Strip. Further details can be read [here](#).

#### 13. Leeds Jewish Community 'Pro-Israel, Pro-Peace' Rally:

Over 500 people attended the rally in Leeds. The Leeds Jewish Community together with non-Jewish supporters of Israel came out to say "Yes to Peace, No to Terror" and to show their support in Israel at the first ever Pro-Israel, Pro-Peace rally in the city.

Steven Jaffe spoke at the event and The Board played a role in promoting the rally.

#### 14. Qatar Embassy

The Board of Deputies has supported the Israeli Task Force and Sussex Friends of Israel in a rally outside the Qatari embassy to protest their funding of terror – notably Hamas. The Board is also working with other organisations to highlight Qatar's activities over the coming months.

Additionally Vice-President Alex Brummer has written extensively about Qatar. A recent article can be found [here](#).

#### 15. Hove Reform Synagogue Panel Discussion:

On 20<sup>th</sup> July, at an event at Hove Reform Synagogue, Alex Brummer spoke to over 150 people, offering assessments and analysis on the conflict in Israel, the wider Middle-East and antisemitism.

#### 16. Wimbledon and District Synagogue Panel Discussion:

On 5<sup>th</sup> August, Alex Brummer chaired a panel discussion organised with UJIA for South London communities. The Panelists included professor Lawrence Freedman, Dean of UCL, Professor Alan Johnson, and Dr. Ahron Bregman. Over 270 people attended.

#### 17. Radlett US, Shenley US and Radlett Reform Public Meeting

On September 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Jonathan Arkush addressed a well-attended public meeting where he responded to questions. The audience of over 60 voiced strong support for the Board's activities and positions over a difficult summer.

#### Further Rallies:

There have been further demonstrations of support in Brighton, Dublin, and Manchester and in Birmingham, in which the Board has played a key role. They have seen friends of Israel gathering and declaring 'Yes to Peace, no to Terror.'

### **UK Antisemitism:**

The Board has been speaking to the Community Security Trust (CST) on a daily basis regarding antisemitic incidences. The CST has been leading the community's response in close co-operation with the police, government and the media. The Board have offered support where needed, and have released strong statements condemning the rise in antisemitism at this time.

There has predictably been a spike in antisemitic incidences since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge, and as a result, the month of July has been the most antisemitic since records began, with a total of 302 incidents recorded.

In the first six-months of 2014 (before Operation Protective Edge) there had already been a 36% increase in antisemitism. To see the CST's full report please click [here](#).

To fight antisemitism effectively, we need allies outside the community. Here, the Board's longstanding commitment to interfaith relations is bearing fruit, with strong condemnation of the recent rise in antisemitism from the Archbishop of Canterbury and our recent statement with the Muslim Council of Britain.

#### 18. Meeting with the Home Secretary:

Following the Board's letter to the British Home Secretary Theresa May, and our regular contact with local MP Mike Freer over the increasing threat of Antisemitism in the UK, Mr Freer and colleagues met with Ms May on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, communicating the Jewish community's concerns over the spike in antisemitic incidences in the UK. Mr Freer's blog about the meeting can be found [here](#).

We wish to thank Mr Freer and colleagues for presenting our concerns to the Home Secretary.

#### 19. Liaising with politicians:

- The Board's Chief Executive, Gillian Merron, has liaised with officials in the Department of Communities and Local Government over the actions needed for the further promotion of community cohesion, following the Minister's meeting with CST.
- The Board has liaised with the London Jewish Forum to ensure that the Mayor's office handles antisemitic instances appropriately.

#### 20. Sunday Morning Live:

Board Vice President, Jonathan Arkush, recently appeared on BBC Sunday Morning Live discussing the issue of antisemitism alongside journalist Mehdi Hassan, Friends of Al-Aqsa chairman, Ismail Patel and Yachad founder, Hannah Weisfeld. The interview can be seen [here](#).

#### 21. Protest against Antisemitism:

The Board supported the Campaign Against Antisemitism's London rally outside the Royal Courts of Justice on the 31<sup>st</sup> August. Board President Vivian Wineman, and Senior Vice President, Laura Marks both spoke at the event which attracted upwards of 4500 people.



## 22. Nazi Analogy:

The Board have publicly criticised those making an analogy between the Israel-Hamas conflict and the Holocaust and will continue to do so.

## 23. Anti-Israel Protests:

There have been anti-Israel demonstrations across the UK, in which antisemitic placards have been held. The CST has made representations regarding this to government and the police. The Board is calling for more robust laws surrounding hate crime and incitement.

Vice President, Jonathan Arkush wrote an article for the Nottingham Post, stressing the need to prevent the importation of the recent conflict to the UK which can be found [here](#).

Recommended further articles on this topic are:

- Dave Rich, Deputy Director of Communications for the CST, [‘An open letter to Pro-Palestinian Protestors’](#)
- Mark Gardner, Director of Communications for the CST, [‘As Antisemitism in Europe runs rampant, will Britain remain the exception?’](#)

## 24. Belfast:

The Board has assisted the Belfast Jewish community in responding to attacks on the synagogue building. We have also assisted the Belfast community’s response to other extreme anti-Israel activity.

The Board’s Steven Jaffe, is leading a campaign for the restoration of the Herzog plaque. There have currently been 500 letters sent in protest of the removal.

The BBC NI report, featuring Mr Jaffe, can be found [here](#).

## **Antisemitism in Europe:**

During the conflict anti-Israel protests in Europe, in France and Germany in particular, had shocking antisemitic components.

Moreover, the Board through EJC and WJC, has been receiving constant updates and reports and we are working with international partners on the respective issues.

The Board has been in contact with our communal partners in France and Germany and have offered assistance, as well as raising the issue with government.

### 1. France:

The Board has been working closely with Crif, our counterpart in France, to address the worrying rise in antisemitic incidents in their country.

## 2. WJC conference:

There has been a 383% increase in global antisemitism in July 2014 year on year.

Board President Vivian Wineman is speaking at the World Jewish Congress annual conference on the subject of European Jewry. Mr Wineman's talk covers the rise in antisemitism during Operation Protective Edge, in addition to the demographics of Europe's Jews. There will also be discussions on instances of online antisemitism.

## 3. Berlin:

President Vivian Wineman attended an international rally against antisemitism in Berlin offering our European counterparts our support. The rally was addressed by Chancellor Angela Merkel and attracted worldwide press attention.

## **Interfaith:**

The Board has been working extensively with other faiths to ensure that tensions are not inflamed. We have welcomed statements by other faith bodies about the need to ensure that disagreements between communities on the current conflict should not deteriorate into racism or violence between communities in this country. Both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Muslim Council of Britain have made it plain that antisemitism is not an acceptable component to differing views on the conflict.

### 1. Joint statement with Muslim Council of Britain:

The Board issued a joint statement with the MCB, calling for peace and unity amongst our communities and in Israel and Palestine, the statement can be found [here](#).

Board Chief Executive Gillian Merron stated that "At a time of heightened anxiety, to work with the Muslim community to make a joint statement against antisemitism was unprecedented. The reception, including from government, has been positive. [Communities Secretary] Eric Pickles wrote this week welcoming that kind of stance".

### 2. Yazidi statement:

The Board issued a statement expressing alarm at the situation faced by the Yazidi people in Iraq, calling on the international community to do more to assist them. The statement can be found [here](#). The Board has been publicly expressing concerns at the growth of international terrorism.

### 3. Archbishop of Canterbury:

The Archbishop made a number of statements including the condemnation of antisemitism.

Vice President Jonathan Arkush stated:

"We thank the Archbishop for reiterating that faith communities must not allow reactions to the current conflict to disrupt the good relations we cherish.

"We also wholly endorse his call on faith groups to look at ways at working together to show our concern and support for those of goodwill on all sides working for peace."

Mr Arkush also spoke about Archbishop Welby's comments on BBC Radio 4, which was reported in the Daily Telegraph and other national papers.

4. Muslim Council of Britain:

In response to the MCB's statement, which noted UK communal relations, the Board stated "We welcome Dr Shafi's call for the good relations between Muslims and Jews in the United Kingdom not to be affected by the conflict in Gaza". The full statement can be seen [here](#).

5. Ramadan:

Rabbi Natan Levy, the Board's interfaith and social action consultant, fasted during the month of Ramadan to improve cross-communal ties between the Muslim and Jewish communities. Rabbi Natan's initiative highlighted the Board's dedication to preventing the conflict being imported into the UK. To see more about his fast please watch the BBC's coverage [here](#).

6. TEAM visit to Israel:

The Board has instigated and advised a visit to Israel by Christian pastors from TEAM, a group of around 20 predominantly African churches in Leeds, with the aim of improving their understanding of the conflict.

7. Cross-Communal Message:

President Vivian Wineman endorsed religious leaders' cross-communal message on the conflict.

The Board wholeheartedly endorses the following message by the Cross Communal Group: "In these painful times we regret the loss of all innocent life. Our thoughts are with all those who grieve and we fervently pray that we soon see a just and lasting peace for all in the region."

A link to the message and those that supported the message can be seen [here](#).

**Media:**

As noted above in every section, the Board has had a very substantial media presence.

The Board is working with the media to make it very clear how serious the issue of antisemitism is, and this has borne fruit with an understanding on the part of the UK media that this is an issue of the utmost importance. A large number of articles have been published and interviews broadcast. In addition we are meeting the BBC to discuss coverage of the recent Operation and the rise in antisemitism. It is, sadly, a big news story, and we want to make sure that its importance, and the sensitivity around reporting, is fully understood.

We are a constant presence at gatherings in Israel from the Herzliya Conference to the Jewish Media Summit and in receipt of regular high level briefings

1. Eric Pickles MP article:

Secretary of State for Communities, Eric Pickles, commended the Board and the Muslim Council of Britain for their joint statement in the penultimate paragraph of his Telegraph article, which can be found [here](#).

## 2. Condemnation of Shabana Mahmood

The Board's condemnation of Labour Front bencher Shabana Mahmood's action and rhetoric over anti-Israel demonstrations can be viewed in the Daily Mail [here](#) and in the Jewish Chronicle [here](#).

## 3. Steven Sotloff statement:

In response to the brutal murder of the journalist Steven Sotloff, the Board issued a statement condemning the barbaric attack on freedom and liberty. This can be found [here](#).

## 4. BBC

The Board of Deputies, alongside the JLC and CST took part in a meeting with the BBC where the concerns of the Jewish community over reporting on Operation Protective Edge and the recent increase in antisemitism.

Issues raised include the pressure and intimidation of journalists by Hamas and how this was not reported on, the use of casualty figures and other information from Hamas and how this was treated with equivalent weight to statements from the Israeli government and IDF, the choice of spokespeople and how figures such as Mira Bar Hillel were introduced as representatives of the Jewish community in Britain. Furthermore, The Board raised the issue of how reporting on Operation Protective Edge may have shaped perceptions of the UK's own Jewish community.

## 5. BICOM:

The Board has also sought to promote the work of BICOM who have been leading in this field. This has included:

- I. Alan Johnson, Editor of Fathom, Telegraph Article [‘Channel 4’s Jon Snow is deluded by Hamas’](#)
- II. Isaac Herzog, Leader of the Israeli Opposition, Head of the Labour Party, [Newsnight Interview](#).
- III. Yair Lapid, Finance Minister of Israel, Yesh Atid, Telegraph Article [‘Gaza Conflict: Hamas chooses to let children die for its own crazy ends’](#)

6. Further relevant Articles written by the Chair of the International Division, Alex Brummer, can be found below:

- I. Potential Israeli Arms Embargo <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/121457/a-rubicon-has-been-crossed-embargo>
- II. UNWRA role in the conflict <http://www.thejc.com/comment-and-debate/analysis/121192/if-we-are-have-a-solution>
- III. UK-Israel Trade <http://www.thejc.com/comment-and-debate/comment/120468/ecostream-this-a-blip-trade-uk-thriving>

## **Community Coordination:**

### 1. Grassroots activities and assistance:

The Board, as well as its political and interfaith work, is galvanising the community through rallies and letter writing campaigns.

The Times of Israel has covered our central role in pulling together grassroots activists [here](#).

Further examples can be found below:

- I. The Jewish Chronicle - Thousands turn out to support Israel in London rally - <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/120726/thousands-turn-out-support-israel-london-rally> -
- II. *Friends of Israel rally across these islands*- [http://www.bod.org.uk/live/content.php?Item\\_ID=130&Blog\\_ID=1222](http://www.bod.org.uk/live/content.php?Item_ID=130&Blog_ID=1222)
- III. *Report on WJC Solidarity Mission* - [http://www.bod.org.uk/live/content.php?Item\\_ID=130&Blog\\_ID=1216](http://www.bod.org.uk/live/content.php?Item_ID=130&Blog_ID=1216)

Examples of recent grassroots activism across the UK assisted by the Board's consultant, Steven Jaffe, can be found below:

- I. In Liverpool, Steven Jaffe has been invited to speak to the community to help strategise a response to the anti-Israel extremism they face.
- II. In Glasgow, The Board has, at the request of the Glasgow representative Council, made representations regarding the harassment of Israeli stall holders in Glasgow shopping centres and has been in telephone contact with stallholders in Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- III. To respond to anti-Israel and antisemitic extremism and postings on social media in Belfast, the Board has led or assisted in making complaints to the police and other relevant bodies.
- IV. In Portsmouth the Board is advising community members and Christian friends regarding anti-Israel activity and the best ways to approach this issue.
- V. The Board is working in Newcastle, liaising with the representative council of North East Jewry and North East Friends of Israel regarding local anti-Israel extremism.
- VI. In Stoke and Colchester the Board has received invitations to speak to Christian activists regarding Israel
- VII. Following hostile content in the local media in Cheltenham, The Board has assisted the community with formulating an appropriate response.
- VIII. Steven Jaffe has provided assistance to the Chelmsford community regarding the Co-op in response to their boycott of Israel.
- IX. Steven Jaffe renewed contact with a revived Israel advocacy group in Southend whose leaders he met at the ZF Emergency lobby of Parliament.
- X. In Swansea Steven Jaffe provided publicity for a Christian event to honour Israel.

- XI. Steven Jaffe has been invited to Cornwall to speak at a night to honour Israel.
- XII. In Bristol, The Board has been liaising with the community leaders and local government regarding local issues, specifically a statement made by local MPs and the Mayor in which it fails to condemn Hamas.
- XIII. In Manchester Steven Jaffe has been invited to speak to an event hosted by Pentecostal Christians on issues relating to Israel and the Jewish community. Furthermore, alongside the ZCC, the Board will be attending a meeting with senior Co-op officers regarding Co-op boycott policies.

## 2. Israel Briefings:

During the recent conflict, the Board produced regular updates on the situation, informing the community of the key events throughout the 50 day war.

## 3. Communication with our communal partners:

During the recent conflict there were daily conversations between the CEOs of communal organisations which include the Board, JLC, BICOM, CST and UJIA.