



Critics of Israeli influence are like Nazis, politicians claim

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Attacks come as new analysis by Declassified shows pro-Israel lobby groups have taken British MPs to Israel 67 times since the genocide started

British MPs compared their colleagues to Nazis during a debate about Israel's influence on UK politics on Monday.

The event in Parliament was triggered by a petition signed by more than 118,000 people, calling for a public inquiry into pro-Israel influence on politics & democracy.

But the [debate](#) was steamrolled by MPs who claimed the title of the [petition](#) was anti-Semitic.

Labour MP [Peter Prinsley](#) said the petition was "familiar", comparing it to conspiracy theories spread by Nazis.

DUP politician Sammy Wilson also likened it to Jews being accused of causing the Black Death.

However, pro-Israel lobby groups have flown British MPs out to the country at least 67 times since the Gaza genocide started in October 2023 at a cost of almost £170,000.

Of this, three quarters came from "Friends of Israel" groups, which are funded by anonymous donors. The former director of Labour Friends of Israel (LFI) has described it as a "lobbying organisation".

The remaining funding either came directly from the Israeli Embassy, or from an organisation called ELNET which [describes itself](#) as "the most influential pro-Israel advocacy organisation in Europe". Around 4% of the money came from a mix of different groups.

Watch the debate

Undeclared interests

At least six of the MPs who criticised the petition on Israeli influence have been personally taken on all-expenses-paid trips to Israel.

They include Sammy Wilson, who went on a week-long visit to Israel worth Â£3,810, which was [funded](#) entirely by the Israeli Embassy.

However, Wilson failed to declare this during yesterday's debate.

Meanwhile, Tory MP [Andrew Mitchell](#) failed to declare that Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) had paid for a Â£5,878 trip, to be advised by a media adviser.

The group has [previously](#) stated that it is "looking to encourage Conservative MPs to foster greater sympathy for Israel".

During yesterday's debate, he claimed that focussing on Israel's influence on UK politics "smacks of an antisemitic conspiracy theory".

As a foreign minister in Rishi Sunak's government, Mitchell repeatedly [defended arms exports](#) to Israel.

Meanwhile, the deputy leader of Reform UK, Richard Tice, told MPs that the petition was "is antisemitic in its very motivation and at its core".

He said he wanted more of Israel's "success and brilliance" in the UK, not less.

Tice failed to declare his trip to Israel last year, funded by the newly-formed Reform Friends of Israel (RFOI). The group is [headed](#) by a media adviser to Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, who a UN commission found to have incited genocide.

Accountability

Only a few MPs spoke in favour of holding a public inquiry into pro-Israel influence on politics and democracy - most of whom were independent.

They included the MP for Dewsbury and Batley, Iqbal Mohamed, who said: "We rightly sanction Russia for undermining democratic institutions, and warn about the threats from China and Iran to our political system, yet when substantial evidence of foreign influence concerns Israel, our principles of transparency, scrutiny and accountability appear to vanish."

He pointed out that the recent landmark review into countering foreign financial influence and interference in UK politics, which was commissioned by the government, had focussed on Russia and China, without a single mention of Israel.

Shockat Adam, the independent MP for Leicester South, said: "Conflating a people's religion with a Government's actions is totally unacceptable.

"Criticising the state of Israel and its actions, especially with its present Government, is not antisemitic, otherwise the bombing of Iraq or Afghanistan would be Islamophobic."

James Frith, a minister who represented the UK government at the debate, denied that Israel had conducted genocide in Gaza, when challenged by independent MP Adnan Hussain.

However a [UN commission of inquiry](#) said on Tuesday that "Israeli authorities and security forces have deliberately targeted Palestinian children resulting in genocide".

It added: "Israel's targeting of neonatal and maternity care centers in Gaza have directly harmed the survival of newborns and Palestinians' reproductive future, including rises in miscarriages, birth defects and lasting vulnerabilities to newborns, resulting in the destruction of Palestinian newborn life and the population's continuity."

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