



Israel spent £50,000 lobbying Reform

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Reform UK's deputy leader said last week that a parliamentary [debate into Israeli influence](#) on British politics was "antisemitic in its very motivation and at its core".

"As such, we should utterly reject it," argued [Richard Tice](#) to a room full of MPs.

What he did not tell them, however, was that he had been on a trip to "the Gaza front line" last September funded by the newly-created [Reform Friends of Israel](#), where he concluded that the Gaza famine was a "blatant lie".

And that trip is not the only example of pro-Israel pressure groups working with Reform. Just a few short weeks after Tice's visit, his chief of staff and a motley crew of Reform figures visited Israel in a trip which has received scant [media attention](#).

Their six-day jaunt in November 2025 included a visit to the [illegally occupied](#) Golan Heights, which the UK recognises as part of Syria.

They also visited Israel's police headquarters, which is overseen by far-right national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who is [sanctioned](#) by the UK for "repeated incitement of violence against Palestinian civilians".

This trip was funded by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to newly released [Israeli government data](#) seen by *Declassified* and found by Berlin-based journalist Yossi Bartel.

The records show that the ministry paid Conexi³n Israel - a company based in Jerusalem that organises high-level country visits - more than £50,000 to facilitate the delegation.

The delegates returned singing Israel's praises and denouncing British protesters marching against the war in Gaza as antisemitic and [naively propping up a terrorist ideology](#).

Dr David Bull, then Reform UK party chairman, [said](#) the trip had been "life changing".

"I now understand the situation that Israel finds itself in and Reform UK will always stand with the Israeli people," he said.

Andy Kalil, the member of the public who organised the petition that sparked last week's debate in parliament, said the trip "goes to the heart of why we petitioned for an independent inquiry into pro-Israel influence in UK politics."

"A trip funded by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs that exposed participants to the Israeli government's perspective is clearly a matter of public interest," he told *Declassified*.

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â??Their fight, our fightâ??

In addition to Bull, delegates included Lancashire county council leader [Stephen Atkinson](#), London assembly member [Alex Wilson](#) and Reform UK board member [Gawain Towler](#).

Both Atkinson and Wilson declared that their place on the trip cost Israelâ??s foreign ministry Â£4,861 each.

Ryan Powell, Ticeâ??s parliamentary [chief of staff](#) who recently [ran unsuccessfully](#) as a Reform UK candidate in south London, was [also on the trip](#).

As was [Rafaella Stefani](#), another member of Ticeâ??s parliamentary staff. She helped host an event at [Reformâ??s party conference](#) where Israelâ??s deputy ambassador spoke.

The reason for the visit, according to the parliamentary staff register, was to study Israelâ??s policing, border security, health service and immigration control.

The group visited several locations during the Hamas-led attacks on 7 October 2023, including the Nir Oz kibbutz in southern Israel and the site of the Nova music festival massacre.

â??It sickens me that something like this could ever happen in my country,â?? Wilson, who [posted a video](#) from where the mass killing took place.

â??It also sickens me that back in the UK, week after week, weâ??ve seen thousands of people marching to give succour to the monsters who did this.â??

Bull [wrote](#) that the group also met with Tel Avivâ??s deputy mayor to discuss â??visa overstayers and asylum seekersâ?? and the Israeli National Police operation headquarters â??where the very advanced use of technology enables them to act on ALL CRIMEâ??.

Towler [questioned](#) how the UK â??once a steadfast ally, let relations with Israel collapse into this sorry messâ??.

â??After all, their fight is, in many ways, our fight. A fight for enlightenment ideals, international norms, democracy and the rest,â?? he wrote.



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Reform UK figures outside Israel's Knesset in November 2025. (Photo: X)

Rising power

The cost of the trip represents only a small fraction of an enormous influx of money flowing into Reform UK, particularly from a small group of overseas expats.

The party [raised](#) more than Â£9 million in donations in the first three months of 2026, far more than any other political party and nearly half of total donations raised by all the parties put together.

Most of the funding came from two crypto billionaires: Christopher Harborne, a British-Thai dual national, and Ben Delo, who is [relocating to the UK](#) from Hong Kong so he can keep donating to the party after new legislation capped overseas donations from British citizens to Â£100,000.

The party has also held international fundraisers in wealthy British expatriate communities including in the [United Arab Emirates](#) and [has said](#) it will hold ones in Monaco and the US.

Chris Doyle, director of the [Cuba-British Understanding](#) (Caabu), said the trip was "very typical" of the Israeli government's approach over decades.

With Reform leading in opinion polls, Israel has clearly assessed that the party "will have a high chance of either forming the next government, being part of that government in a coalition perhaps or being the lead opposition," Doyle said.

It's also very much in keeping with the Israeli strategy of reaching out to far-right groups across Europe, in the US and India which "have adopted highly anti-Muslim, Islamophobic positions," he said.

"This is perfectly standard operating practice to reach out to such groups, build long-term links to try to get them to see the world as one between Israel as a representative of Western civilisation against barbaric Muslim extremists," he said.

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Greater scrutiny is needed

Kalil said he found the strongly pro-Israel public statements from the delegation very concerning.

Delegates were shown sites highlighting Israel's security concerns, but not the devastation in Gaza. That's not a balanced fact-finding visit, he said.

On Monday, Kalil submitted a formal complaint about last week's debate.

Among his primary concerns, he said in his complaint, was the repeated characterisation of the petition, its signatories and several MPs who spoke in support of it as antisemitic.

The debate did little to address fundamental questions relating to lobbying, political donations, parliamentary visits, transparency or influence, his complaint said.

Instead, it demonstrated why many people believe greater scrutiny is necessary.

He has asked that the government review whether it met the standards expected of such debates and for it to be rerun.

In addition to trips paid for directly by the Israeli government, politicians including Tice have been taken to Israel by Reform Friends of Israel.

The group is led by [Jason Pearlman](#) who until December was a media adviser to Israel's president, Isaac Herzog.

Herzog has been found by a UN commission to have [incited genocide in Gaza](#)

Speaking from Israel, he told *Declassified* that he started a conversation with Reform about turning the party's Friends of Israel group into a full-time organisation while he was still working for Herzog.

We did have a dinner with Nigel [Farage] and some key backers, he said. We were able to put seed funding together. Pearlman refused to say who Reform Friends of Israel's (RFOI) donors were.

The Israeli embassy in London and Richard Tice have been approached.

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11. Syria

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