



ENGAGE FOR CHANGE WEEK

MEETING GUIDE



As part of The Muslim Vote's 'Engage for Change Week' initiative. We are encouraging our community to get in contact with their MPs to see how they can address the issues important to them. Political engagement is crucial to keeping our elected officials accountable, and creating change. Here are some talking points you can address during your meeting.

PALESTINE

As we approach a year since the genocidal war on the people of Gaza and the escalation of brutality to the people of Lebanon, According to the renowned medical journal The Lancet the death toll now stands at almost 200,000, with many more injured, and no sign of the horrific violence coming to an end. In that time Palestinians have been subjected to indiscriminate targeting of civilians, starvation, forced displacement, complete destruction of all infrastructure, amongst many other horrific human rights abuses and war crimes. Despite The International Court of Justice ruling there is a 'plausible risk of a genocide' in Gaza, and that war crimes and crimes against humanity are also being committed; The UK government has continued to provide arms export licences to Israel, intelligence, and access to its military bases, from which F-35 fighter jets are being sent to drop bombs on Gaza.

Under international law such assistance can be deemed as complicity in such war crimes, therefore the British government is obligated to ensure any assistance to Israel, whether through arms export licences or otherwise, is not being used to violate international law. The decision by Foreign Secretary David Lammy to suspend 30 out of 350 arms export licences to Israel, is confirmation of the fact that our government is in possession of legal advice suggesting that they could be held accountable for complicity in Israel's genocide. We are calling for the UK government to uphold international law, and end all arms sales and military assistance to Israel.

SUGGESTED ACTION

- **Suspend all arms export licences to Israel and impose sanctions against the Israeli government**
- **Request the government to publish legal advice to the UK regarding Israeli international law violations**
- **Commit to upholding International law, and follow the ICJ advisory opinion on the Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories**

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia has reached an all time high, according to Home Office figures 44% of religious hate crimes recorded by police in 2022/23 were Islamophobic. Despite Muslims now being the largest target of faith-based hate crimes in the UK, Keir Starmer failed to call out the violence directed at Muslims during the riots this summer as Islamophobic. This government has also failed to adopt a working definition of 'Islamophobia'. Discrimination against Muslims runs deeper than just hate crimes—it infiltrates the job market, housing, and healthcare, and in order to tackle it we first must acknowledge its prevalence in our country.

It is essential that the government takes immediate steps to build a strong, collaborative relationship with Muslim communities, fostering unity and ensuring that all groups feel represented and heard. We are calling for this government to make rooting out Islamophobia and discrimination across our healthcare, education, political, media, employment and justice systems a top priority. The violence and discrimination British Muslims experience will not go away unless addressed.

SUGGESTED ACTION

- **The adoption of the APPG on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia.**
- **Engage with the MCB to address Islamophobia**
- **Re-launch the APPG on British Muslims to tackle islamophobia**
- **Launch an Independent Review into far-right activities in this country, focusing on the role of social media platforms, mainstream media, and political narratives in perpetuating hate and Islamophobia.**

INEQUALITY

During the 2024 election the Labour party promised to deliver change, however, since their victory it appears the “changes” we should expect for the foreseeable future are more public spending cuts and austerity measures. Instead of investing in people, the government has chosen to continue the cycle of cuts, inequality, decline, and more cuts. Their refusal to scrap the two-child benefit cap, cuts to winter fuel payments and £5.5 billion of other spending cuts, are a decision that the government does not have to make, and will plunge even more people in this country into poverty. Despite economists highlighting the need for investment into a society to grow its economy, this government has offered no alternative to the austerity model created by the previous government, and millions will now have to suffer in poverty.

The cost of living crisis in the UK has had a profound impact on households across the country, pushing many into financial hardship. According to data from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, around 14.4 million people were already living in poverty in 2022, and this number has since grown due to rising inflation and stagnant wages. Energy prices have surged by 54% in early 2022, and over 2.5 million households were reported to be in fuel poverty by January 2023. Food inflation reached nearly 19.1% by mid-2023, forcing 1 in 7 adults to skip meals or rely on food banks, according to the Food Foundation. 14 years of austerity have also pushed the UK's public services well past their limits with many sectors no longer fit for purpose. All over the country many are at their breaking point.

SUGGESTED ACTION

- **End two child benefit cap**
- **Reinstate winter fuel payments**

Meeting with your MP is an opportunity to discuss the issues that matter to you both nationally and locally. Therefore, to make the most of your meeting, we recommend preparing a list of any other topics you would like to address in advance.