

A Legal War on Palestinians: Seven Questions That Reveal the Role of “UK Lawyers for Israel”



The name “Palestine” has quietly disappeared from some maps and exhibition panels depicting the civilizations of the ancient Near East at the British Museum, following pressure from an organization known as UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI).

The move, first reported by The Telegraph on February 14, 2026, ignited widespread outrage. The pressure, critics say, came from a lobby group accused of fabricating claims in order to reshape historical narratives in favor of Zionist colonialism and to bolster Israel’s occupation.

The following report addresses the key questions surrounding the organization: its nature, sources of funding, methods of manufacturing and deploying accusations of “antisemitism” against pro-Palestinian advocates, and its ties to the Israeli government.

What prompted the removal of the word “Palestine” from the British Museum?

According to The Telegraph’s report, UK Lawyers for Israel launched a lobbying campaign against the museum after objecting to panels and materials on ancient Egypt and the Phoenicians that used the term “Palestine” to describe parts of the eastern Mediterranean and referred to certain peoples as being of “Palestinian

origin.”

In a letter to the museum’s director, the group argued that the use of the term “Palestine” “erases historical changes” and “creates a misleading impression of a continuous Palestinian region stretching back thousands of years.” It demanded the removal of the term.

The museum subsequently amended several maps and explanatory panels an episode that underscored the group’s influence within British cultural institutions. Though small in size, UKLFI has proven highly effective in leveraging legal intimidation.

What is “UK Lawyers for Israel”?

UKLFI describes itself as “a voluntary association of lawyers supporting Israel” that uses the law to combat what it views as “attacks” or attempts to “delegitimize” Israel. Human rights organizations, however, argue that it forms part of a broader network engaged in what is commonly known as “lawfare” against pro-Palestinian voices.

A close examination of the group’s activities suggests that its definition of “delegitimization” is sweeping encompassing criticism of Israel’s occupation policies, documentation of alleged war crimes, and even artistic expressions of Palestinian identity.

Critics say the organization applies the law selectively in an effort to whitewash the occupation’s abuses and has supported extremist groups such as Regavim, which advocates the displacement of Palestinians and the expansion of settlements.

The group operates a registered charitable arm in Britain, the UKLFI Charitable Trust, which raises funds under the banner of “legal education about antisemitism.” Meanwhile, UKLFI Limited functions as a private company not subject to charitable oversight, allowing it to initiate legal actions and issue threatening correspondence without the same regulatory constraints.

Data from the UK’s Charity Commission show that the charitable arm reported income of £586,000 in 2024, largely from donations and grants. Rights groups, however, contend that the true sources of funding and the identities of donors remain opaque, raising questions about potential links to Zionist institutions and Israel’s Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

What are the most prominent cases it has pursued against pro-Palestinian advocates?

UKLFI has deployed strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) targeting individuals and institutions. A joint report by Declassified UK and the

Public Interest Law Centre revealed that the organization sent legal threat letters to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, demanding the removal of artwork created by children in Gaza.

Despite the absence of public complaints, the hospital complied and removed the artwork.

Other targets have included schools, hospitals, film festivals, and even a children’s kite-making workshop organized in solidarity with Gaza. UKLFI reportedly threatened organizers with invoking “anti-terrorism laws,” citing alleged links to incendiary kites used in the context of the blockade on Gaza.

Petitions submitted to legal regulators assert that the organization relies on legal intimidation to shut down cultural events and to deter institutions from hosting pro-Palestinian activities.

How does it deploy accusations of “antisemitism” to silence critics?

UKLFI has been accused of stretching the definition of antisemitism to criminalize virtually any criticism of Israeli occupation policies. A study by CAGE International described the group as conflating antisemitism with anti-Zionism and filing baseless legal complaints to obstruct pro-Palestinian activism.

The report argued that UKLFI, alongside the Campaign Against Antisemitism, exploits the term to create a climate of fear within British institutions by repeatedly reporting individuals to professional bodies including medical boards, bar associations, and universities triggering investigations simply for sharing material related to Gaza.

One prominent example involved an attempt to suspend the medical license of British-Palestinian doctor Ghassan Abu Sittah after he returned from providing medical assistance in Gaza. The British medical regulator ultimately rejected the complaint, citing a lack of evidence of bias.

How closely is the organization linked to Israel?

An investigation by Middle East Monitor, citing a leaked Israeli government document, reported that UKLFI’s chief executive, Jonathan Turner, and his wife Caroline who serves as the organization’s director met officials at Israel’s Ministry of Justice in September 2019 to seek assistance in gathering evidence against pro-Palestinian British charities.

According to the leaked document, Turner acknowledged that losing a case to such organizations could expose UKLFI to financial liabilities exceeding its insurance coverage, prompting the group to request both financial backing and evidentiary support from Israeli officials.

A separate report by Electronic Intifada stated that UKLFI had admitted to supporting Israel’s Ministry of Strategic Affairs by organizing campaigns worldwide aimed at disrupting Palestinian human rights advocacy.

Who funds the organization?

While the charitable arm’s financial summaries are publicly available via the Charity Commission, UKLFI does not disclose the names of its donors or the size of individual contributions. CAGE International has accused the group of financial opacity and deliberate obfuscation.

Electronic Intifada, for its part, has described UKLFI as part of a funding network connected to Israel’s Ministry of Strategic Affairs, which has backed overseas organizations targeting Palestinian human rights defenders.

The outlet further suggested that some donations may originate from far-right elements within segments of Britain’s Jewish community and from the global Zionist lobby. Notably, UKLFI’s available assets reportedly rose from £182,000 in 2023 to more than £463,000 in 2024 an increase that observers say points to a substantial influx of funding.

Is the organization facing accountability?

In July 2025, the UK Charity Commission confirmed that it was investigating the relationship between UKLFI and its charitable arm. The regulator acknowledged receiving complaints alleging that the charity had exceeded its legal remit by engaging in political activity in support of Israel’s occupation.

Meanwhile, the Public Interest Law Centre and the European Legal Support Center submitted a 114-page complaint to the Solicitors Regulation Authority, accusing UKLFI of practicing law without proper authorization and of deploying SLAPP tactics to suppress free expression.

The complaint calls for the suspension of Caroline Turner’s legal license and for the organization to be brought under the regulatory framework governing legal companies to ensure oversight and accountability.