

From the text of the motion....

g

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 June 2020 09:09  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Palestine micase

Not necessarily, but where did you get the lines on his intention with the language?

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 June 2020 09:08  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Palestine micase

Tell me about it. Do you think I should run past [redacted] before sending up as it relates to what an SNP MSP has been saying.....?

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 June 2020 09:03  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Palestine micase

Thanks [redacted] looks good to me. You need to capitalise UK Government but other than that looks good. Be nice to have our ME desk officer back to take this on...

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]>  
**Sent:** 23 June 2020 12:36  
**To:** [redacted]>  
**Subject:** Palestine micase

Hi [redacted]

Here's my draft for the Palestine ambassador micase. Let me know what you think – if you're happy I'll then send to [redacted] before finalising. It is getting quite tight – final reply deadline is Monday (please see parliamentary motion to which this refers below). I've not had lines re Nakba from the FCO – what they have said is that they are very careful to be too specific, and have only provided me with general Israel-

Palestine lines. I've got a similar one from [redacted] (deadline 3 July). Thoughts appreciated.

Original letter:

**The Honourable Michael Russell, MSP.  
Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs.**

**28 May 2020.**

Dear Michael Russell,

I am writing to register my concern with and seek clarification over reports of an amendment to a parliamentary motion on the Palestinian Nakba, or catastrophe.

The amendment, tabled by Richard Lyle, MSP for the Scottish National Party, describes the Nakba – under which more than half the indigenous population of Mandate Palestine was forcibly displaced and dispossessed in order to make way for the State of Israel – as “self-inflicted.”

This is a patently absurd revision of history. The Palestinian displacement of 1947-49 was a deliberate act that had been meticulously planned by a Zionist leadership intent on carving out a Jewish-only state in the territory. It marked the inevitable consequence of historic British colonial arrogance in promising to Jews a homeland in Palestine without consultation with or consideration for its native population.

This is well understood and documented by Palestinian and Israeli historians as well as plenty of others.

Moreover, to suggest that the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians is somehow their own fault is an outrageous insult, not only to Palestinians, but to refugees fleeing violence, persecution and war and victims of ethnic cleansing everywhere and at all times. It would be akin to blaming those so devastatingly impacted by the Highland Clearances for the tragedy they suffered through no fault of their own.

Finally, to blame the victims in this way will bring us no closer to any resolution of our conflict. Such resolution will ultimately depend on a full and comprehensive understanding of the roots of the conflict. Without such understanding, addressing all legitimate grievances and thus achieving a just and lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis will be impossible.

I ask you to please urgently clarify the Scottish government position on this crucial issue.

I await your reply.

With my deepest respect,

Ambassador Husam Zomlot.  
Head of Palestinian Mission to the U.K

My draft response:

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding Scottish Parliamentary Motion S5M-21739 lodged to mark the 72nd anniversary of the Nakba, or catastrophe. You note the amendment to that motion by Richard Lyle that included a reference to Nakba being ‘self-inflicted’. My understanding of the amendment is that this is not the intention that Mr Lyle wished to convey. He

acknowledged that Palestinians were forced to flee and leave their homeland. He additionally recognised the tragedy of the Nakba can only be finally resolved by peaceful means and discussions between the parties involved.

I would like to assure you that the Scottish Government supports the EU position of a two-state solution, based on the 1967 borders, and firmly encourages both Israel and Palestine to reach a sustainable, negotiated settlement under international law, which has as its foundation mutual recognition and the determination to coexist peacefully. We are extremely concerned that such a solution would be almost impossible to achieve should any parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories be annexed by Israel.

Long term peace can only be achieved by the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority working together with the international community. The Scottish Government has therefore called on the UK Government to do all it can, working with others in the international community, to ensure that no annexation takes place. You may wish to note that I wrote to the Foreign Secretary on 1 June to make this point and to ask for reassurance for all concerned people in Scotland and around the world that the response to any annexation will be meaningful and robust.

Motions to which letter refers:

Motion S5M-21739.1: Richard Lyle, Uddingston and Bellshill, Scottish National Party, Date Lodged: 20/05/2020 R

72nd Anniversary of the Nakba

As an amendment to motion S5M-21739 in the name of Sandra White (72nd Anniversary of the Nakba), insert at end "; further considers that constituents in Uddingston and Bellshill also recollect the words of Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestine Authority, in the article, *What We Have Learned and What We Should Do*, published in Falastin el Thawra, the official journal of the PLO, of Beirut, in March 1976, that 'The Arab armies entered Palestine to protect the Palestinians from what they called Zionist tyranny but, instead, abandoned Palestinians forced them to emigrate and leave their homeland imposed upon them a political and ideological blockade and threw them into prisons similar to the ghettos in which Jews used to live in Eastern Europe. The Arab States succeeded in scattering the Palestinian people and in destroying their unity. They did not recognise them as a unified people until the States of the world did so, and this is regrettable'; understands that 20% of Israel's citizens are Arabs who chose not to flee in 1948, and who enjoy their democratic rights in Israel and contribute meaningfully to Israel society at all levels, including membership of the Knesset, with several Arabs serving as high ranking members of the Israel police and army, and believes that the tragedy of the Naqba can only be finally resolved by peaceful means and discussions between the parties involved."

**Supported by:** [redacted]

**Motion S5M-21739: Sandra White, Glasgow Kelvin, Scottish National Party, Date Lodged: 13/05/2020**

**72nd Anniversary of the Nakba**

That the Parliament acknowledges that 15 May 2020 is the 72nd anniversary of the Nakba, known by Palestinian people as the "day of catastrophe", in which the state of Israel was

formed after what it understands was the mass eviction of over 750,000 people from historic Palestine land, which included the destruction of over 500 towns and villages; believes that this led to generations of pain for the Palestinian people, who continue to live under a state of occupation; understands that it led to a major crisis in which over four million displaced people were registered by the UN as refugees and unable to return home; condemns what it sees as the deepening of the crisis in the form of illegal settlements, which are not recognised by the international community; understands that these continue to be built in the occupied territories at a rate of five times that prior to the implementation of the Oslo Accords; further understands that the Israeli government has declared its plan to annexe areas of territories it occupied in June 1967 as part of its agreed Israeli coalition platform from 1 July 2020; believes that, on 15 May 2020, millions of people across Palestine and around the world will mark the anniversary of the Nakba, albeit not as in previous years, which saw people attend marches, rallies and vigils, due to the outbreak of COVID-19; supports Palestinian people across the world, including those living in the Glasgow Kelvin constituency, in the commemoration of the Nakba; notes the calls for a resolution to be sought to what it considers the Palestinian humanitarian crisis and occupation; condemns any action by the Israeli government to annexe areas of occupied Palestinian land, which it considers violates several UN Security Council Resolutions, including UNSCR 242 and 2334, and considers that the international community is duty bound to protect Palestinians under occupation.

**Supported by:** [redacted]

[redacted]