

# Report: UK Israel-Palestine textbooks 'dangerously misleading'

Author:

Fri, 2021-04-02 22:03

LONDON: Distribution of two school textbooks in the UK on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been paused after a report called their content "dangerously misleading."

The books, "Conflict in the Middle East" and "The Middle East: Conflict, Crisis and Change," were subject to significant revisions last year after complaints from the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

But an investigation by two British academics, Prof. John Chalcraft and Prof. James Dickins – members of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine – found that the revisions "overwhelmingly ... favor an Israeli narrative, and remove or replace (information) that supports Palestinian narratives."

Their report found an average of three changes per page, with incidents of Arab or Palestinian violence "systematically added or intensified," while incidents of Israeli violence had been toned down or removed from the text completely.

The original work had contained 10 examples of Jewish Israeli terrorist acts, compared to 32 references to Palestinian terrorism.

The revised versions mentioned just four incidents of terrorism by Jewish Israelis, compared to 61 caused by Palestinians.

Chalcraft said: "The overall effect (of the changes) is to make these books dangerously misleading."

The textbooks' publisher Pearson said in a statement: "Our core editorial principle is to support the teaching of this important period in Middle East history in a fair, neutral and balanced way. We welcome feedback but we have robust processes in place to review any feedback – this is particularly important for such a sensitive period of time in history."

It added: "We commissioned an independent review of these books last year and the changes made were based on the outcome of that review. We stand by our texts but had already taken the decision to pause further distribution while we discuss further with stakeholders."

Eugene Rogan, professor of modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Oxford, told The Independent: "Given Britain's historical responsibility, it is particularly important that the (Israeli-Palestinian conflict) be taught in a way that is impartial and objective."

He added: "It is a betrayal of such objectivity to allow Israel advocates the

opportunity to edit teaching materials without giving Palestine advocates an equal opportunity to provide input. The result can only undermine confidence in the impartiality of the teaching of an intensely complex and sensitive issue.”



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Gazans left stranded abroad by Israeli-Palestinian standoff

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## [Turkish police detain pro-Kurdish Lawmaker who lost his seat](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Fri, 2021-04-02 21:36

ANKARA – Turkish police on Friday detained a former lawmaker from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the party said, after his parliamentary status was revoked last month over a finalized sentence on terrorism charges.

Omer Faruk Gergerlioglu, a human rights activist, was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison for terrorism propaganda, in a ruling later upheld by the top appeals court.

The charges were related to a link he shared on Twitter to a news story that included comments by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Gergerlioglu denies any wrongdoing.

"This is a shame for Turkey. This is a shame for the ruling party. I am being punished for opposing injustice," Gergerlioglu told broadcaster Arti TV, adding that police were waiting outside his door to take him away.

HDP said it expected Gergerlioglu to be sent to jail.

Thousands of members of the HDP, Turkey's third-largest party, have been tried as part of a years-long crackdown on the party over alleged links to the PKK.

Many prominent members of the party have been jailed, including its former co-leader Selahattin Demirtas, one of Turkey's most well-known politicians. Last month, a top prosecutor moved to shut down the party, after months of calls from President Tayyip Erdogan's nationalist MHP allies.

Critics say Turkish courts are influenced by politics, while Erdogan and his AK Party say they are independent.

Turkey's top court sent the indictment calling for the HDP to be closed back to the prosecutor on procedural grounds this week. But it can be re-submitted after the necessary changes.

HDP denies links to terrorism and has described the move to ban it as a "political coup."

The PKK is designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and European Union. It has fought an insurgency against the state in mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey since 1984.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict.





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Gergerlioglu stripped of MP status in Turkey  
Turkish court upholds jail sentence for pro-Kurdish lawmaker

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## [US calls on Iran to release all American citizens wrongfully detained](#)

Fri, 2021-04-02 21:22

LONDON: The US on Friday reiterated previous calls for Iran to release all American citizens detained in the country.

The safe return of those detained in Iran or elsewhere was a “top priority” for Washington, Jalina Porter, State Department spokeswoman, said.

“This weekend marks 2,000 days since Iran arrested Siamak Namazi for being a US citizen, she said, adding he “was a businessman living in Tehran when he was arrested in October of 2015.”

His father Baquer Namazi, 84, was also arrested when he traveled to Iran to

help free his son. They have both been sentenced to 10 years in prison on “baseless charges.”

She said “as a result, the Namazi family has suffered for five and a half years while the Iranian government continues to treat their husband, father, son, and brother as political pawns. This terrible milestone should offend all who believe in the rule of law.”

She called on the Iranian government to also “immediately and safely release” Emad Sharghi, and Morad Tahbaz, who is a British citizen

“Iran must also account for the fate of Robert Levinson and other US citizens who are missing or abducted in Iran,” said Porter, adding: “The abhorrent act of unjust detentions for political gain must cease immediately, whether in Iran or anywhere around the world.”

On Wednesday, Ned Price, State Department spokesman, said that the Biden administration had made clear early on that it has “no higher priority than the safe return of Americans who are unjustly detained around the world, and that includes the Americans who are unjustly detained or who are missing in Iran.”

Price added that the US will continue to stress to the Iranian regime that these practices are “unacceptable.”

Porter’s latest comments come as the US and Iran said on Friday they would hold indirect talks in Vienna from Tuesday as part of broader negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and global powers.

Former US President Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear pact in 2018 and reimposed sanctions on Iran, prompting it to violate some of the accord’s nuclear restrictions. His successor Joe Biden wants to revive the agreement but Washington and Tehran have been at odds over who should take the first step.

(With Reuters)



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## [Turkey records 42,308 new coronavirus cases, highest level yet](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Fri, 2021-04-02 16:59

ANKARA: Turkey recorded 42,308 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, health ministry data showed on Friday, the highest level since the beginning

of the pandemic.

Cases have surged since the government eased measures to curb the pandemic in early March.

On Monday, President Tayyip Erdogan announced a tightening of measures, including the return of full nationwide weekend lockdowns for the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, which starts on April 13.

The total number of cases stands just above 3.4 million, the data showed. The latest daily death toll was 179, bringing the cumulative toll to 31,892.



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Erdogan ally calls for closure of Turkey's constitutional court

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## [Biden's gestures to Palestinians only 'symbolic,' says PLO's Hanan Ashrawi](#)

Thu, 2021-04-01 23:53

CHICAGO: Former Palestinian spokesperson Dr. Hanan Ashrawi said newly elected US President Joe Biden is merely pursuing “symbolic changes” in reversing only some of the policies imposed by his predecessor, Donald Trump.

During an interview with the Ray Hanania Radio show – sponsored by Arab News and broadcast in the US – on Wednesday, Ashrawi said that Biden will most likely keep the most contentious changes, such as the US recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to the city, in place.

Ashrawi said she resigned from her role as the official spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace process, which began with the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991, in order to make room for a younger generation to take over, and has no plans to run for any office in the May 22 Palestinian elections.

“No thank you. I have been running for office since I was in the General Union of Palestine Students as an undergraduate,” she said. “I ran for every office, whether it was for legislative council and until the executive committee of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) which is the highest political body.

“I just resigned at the end of 2020 because I felt we needed to make room for the younger generation for young men and women, and because I was calling for reform. We do need to change ... within our own body politic and within our system, we do need to intervene, and reform.”

Ashrawi said that the policies of the Biden administration are clearly different from what she termed “the destructive policies” of the Trump administration. She said not to expect Biden to undo many of the things that Trump did while in office, though, other than a few issues such as returning badly needed US funding and expanded discussions with the administration on economic needs and pursuing the two-state solution.

“When they are saying ‘we will undo some of the things’ it means they are keeping the major issues in place, like moving the embassy to Jerusalem, which is unacceptable,” Ashrawi said.

“Unfortunately, the Biden administration seems to think they can just do a few symbolic gestures, give us a few handouts ... \$15 million for coronavirus relief. Of course, we spend much, much more than that. Actually, the occupation costs us \$10 billion a year in terms of what (Israel) steals from us.”



Making history as the first woman to hold a seat in the highest executive body in Palestine, Ashrawi was elected as member of the Executive Committee of the PLO in 2009 and most recently in 2018.

Ashrawi said that despite the increasing challenges facing Palestinians, the only real goal is to end the occupation.

“Remove the occupation. What we need is to get rid of this illegal, cruel, unacceptable, unconscionable condition where one country has absolute rights over a whole nation – our lands, our resources, our air space, our waters, our borders, our lives,” she said. “Israel devalues, dehumanizes Palestinians and Palestinian lives and gets away with it.

“The moment you address the issue of Israeli impunity and preferential treatment, and address the issue of Palestinian vulnerability and the need for real protection, we are not asking for anything else. That is what is needed: To understand there has to be parity. There has to be equality, and ... the law has to prevail. This strategic alliance with Israel is not only unholy but it is extremely destructive.”



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## [Palestinian Liberation Organization \(PLO\)](#)

How will the Israel election outcome affect its Arab neighbors and Palestinians? 'Where do they go?': State Dept. spokesman cornered on US position toward Palestine