

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Library

"No-fault divorce"

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN01409/SN01409.pdf>

### Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

#### Questions to the First Minister

**Gareth Bennett (UKIP):** First Minister, I note that the Welsh Government has been developing its intention to turn Wales into a nation of sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers. Is this a major priority for your Government?

**Carwyn Jones:** ... I have absolutely no idea why he has such a problem with refugees. We have a proud record of giving sanctuary to people who've been persecuted around the world, children, particularly, who have seen things that he has never seen ... adults who have seen people killed in front of them, people who have seen war, people who have been the subject of persecution, sometimes of genocide. ...

**Gareth Bennett:** ... Another issue where you may, once again, be dangerously out of touch is on the issue of the burka. ...

**Carwyn Jones:** ... what on earth does what people wear have to do with politics? We are a free country. It is a very un-British thing to say that people do not have the right to wear a particular item of clothing. ...

**Gareth Bennet:** ... you are completely out of touch with your own people. ... Sky News conducted a recent poll that indicated that 60 per cent of the British people support a ban on the burka. ... you've said publicly that my comments on this were racist, yet 60 per cent of the public appear to agree with me. By implication, you appear to believe that 60 per cent of the British people are racists. ...

**Carwyn Jones:** ... You start with the Muslims and then you move on to Jewish people. 'The orthodox Jews dress in a strange way; we can't have that.' Then you move on to people who wear skull caps. You know, 'Why should they dress in a different way?' Then you move on to other sections of the population—people perhaps who are Christians who are members of particular churches who dress in a particular way. This stops now. This stops now. Nobody has the right to tell

anybody else in Britain, in Wales, a free country, how they dress. If that's the way that UKIP is going then it's going down some very, very dark alleyways indeed. It's going down the alleyway of racism, and that's what all of us in this Chamber, apart from the famous four over there, will certainly object to and fight.

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5258#C114774>

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## Holocaust

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Lord Fraser of Corriegarth (Conservative)** [HL10143] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with relevant parties concerning the proposed construction of a Holocaust memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens in London.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, together with the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation and our expert advisers, have discussed the proposed Memorial and Learning Centre with the full range of relevant parties including local residents, Westminster Council and The Royal Parks. Discussions will continue as we prepare to submit a planning application.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-06/HL10143/>

#### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Lord Fraser of Corriegarth (Conservative)** [HL10144] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the suitability of Victoria Tower Gardens in London as a location for a new Holocaust memorial.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation conducted an extensive search of central London locations before recommending Victoria Tower Gardens as the site for the proposed Memorial and Learning Centre. The Government agreed with the Foundation's recommendation and in January 2016 the then Prime Minister announced that the Memorial would be built in Victoria Tower Gardens, standing beside Parliament as a permanent statement of our values as a nation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-06/HL10144/>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### International Criminal Court

**Rosie Duffield (Labour)**[173618] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to recent criticism of the International Criminal Court by the US and Israel, if he will reaffirm the UK's commitment to it.

**Harriett Baldwin:** Support for international criminal justice and accountability – at the national or international level - is a fundamental element of our foreign policy.

We have always been clear that the International Criminal Court can play an important role in ending impunity for the most serious international crimes. It has our full support in pursuing the mandate it was given under the Rome Statute.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-11/173618/>

### **Middle East: Peace Negotiations**

**Rosie Duffield (Labour)** [173621] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision of the US Administration to close the Palestine Liberation Organization's mission in Washington on the Middle East Peace Process.

**Alistair Burt:** The US' decision to close the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in Washington is a matter for the US Administration. The UK remains committed to achieving a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. We continue to believe that the best way to achieve this is through negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, and for all parties to focus on steps that are conducive to peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-11/173621/>

### **Israel: Bedouin**

**Antoinette Sandbach (Conservative)** [172517] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment has he made of the effect of recent judgments in the Israeli courts on Khan al-Ahmar on Bedouin settlements in the West Bank; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK remains gravely concerned by proposals to demolish the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar which the UN has said could amount to 'forcible transfer', in violation of International Humanitarian Law. Following the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court on 5 September the Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued a statement with France, Germany, Spain and Italy reiterating our call to the Israeli Government not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village – including its school – and displace its residents. Khan al-Ahmar is located in an area of strategic importance for the continuity of a future Palestinian state. Its demolition would strike a major blow to prospects for a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital by paving the way for settlement building in E1.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-10/172517/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/khan-al-ahmar-france-germany-italy-spain-and-uk-joint-statement>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Kate Hollern (Labour)** [173588] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Israel on its plans to demolish the village of Khan Al Mar.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK remains gravely concerned by proposals to demolish the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar which the UN has said could amount to 'forcible transfer', in violation of International Humanitarian Law. Following the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court on 5 September, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued a statement with France, Germany, Spain and Italy, reiterating our call to the Israeli Government not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village – including its school – and displace its residents. We will continue to raise concerns with the Israeli authorities as opportunities arise.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-11/173588/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/khan-al-ahmar-france-germany-italy-spain-and-uk-joint-statement>

### **Palestinians: Television**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [173496] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2018 to Question 165444 on Palestinians: Television, what information her Department holds on the steps that have been taken by the Palestinian Authority in response to the UK government's raising of the issue of incitement.

**Alistair Burt:** The Palestinian Authority (PA) has taken action to help address concerns raised. This has recently included piloting new textbooks, and confirming their commitment to engaging seriously with the findings of an independent review of the PA curriculum. I continue to press the Palestinian Authority on these issues.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-11/173496/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165444/>

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

### **UNRWA: Finance**

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative)** [HL10217] To ask Her Majesty's Government when the UK will deliver its next round of aid to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA); what action they are taking to ensure the continued sustainable delivery of UNRWA's services, further to the United States State Department's announcement on 31 August that the United States will no longer commit to further funding for UNRWA; and what representations they have made to the government of the United States about the State Department's characterisation of UNRWA as "irredeemably flawed".

**Lord Bates:** The UK has so far provided £45.5 million to the Programme Budget of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), including two recent uplifts totalling £17 million the past four months; an increase of 60% to our planned Programme Budget contribution of £28.5 million.

We continue to work with international partners to help unlock further funding for UNRWA and are considering further financial support. When the US announced their intention to withhold a planned disbursement to UNRWA in January, we were sympathetic about the need for a broader donor base, but made clear our concerns about the impact on UNRWA's activities that any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements might have, and our widely shared concerns about risks to regional stability. We continue to engage with the US on this at official and Ministerial levels.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-10/HL10217/>

### **Jerusalem: Hospitals**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10230] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action, if any, they plan to take to support hospitals situated in East Jerusalem following recent reductions by the United States in financial aid.

**Lord Bates:** The UK is working closely with our international partners to ensure a coordinated response to ensure the effective delivery of medical services across the OPTs. UK financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority helps to enable around 185,000 medical consultations annually.

The UK is also a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which provides basic services, including basic healthcare, to over 800,000 Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. We have recently provided two financial uplifts to UNRWA, totalling £17 million to the Programme Budget, which will help to alleviate pressures on health services for Palestinian refugees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-10/HL10230/>

### **Gaza: Hospitals**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10231] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action, if any, they plan to take to ensure that hospitals in Gaza are able to operate following recent shortages of UN emergency fuel.

**Lord Bates:** The UK recently provided £1.5 million to support the International Committee of the Red Cross appeal to help address urgent needs in Gaza, including hospital supplies and emergency fuel. UK officials continue to closely monitor emergency fuel supplies in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-10/HL10231/>

### **Israel: Gaza**

**The Earl of Sandwich (Crossbench)** [HL10015] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the destruction of the Said al-Mishal Cultural Centre and Theatre by the Israel Defence Forces on 9 August; and what plans, if any, they have to contribute to its rebuilding.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. We have no plans to contribute to its rebuilding.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-04/HL10015/>

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## **Other Relevant Information**

### **Court of Justice of the European Union**

**Advocate General Wahl proposes that the Court find that products from animals that have been the subject of ritual slaughter without prior stunning can be issued the European 'organic farming' label**

In 2012, the French association Œuvre d'Assistance aux bêtes d'abattoirs ('OABA') submitted to the Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation (French Minister for Agriculture and Food) a request for a ban on the use of the indication 'organic farming' in the advertising and marketing of minced beef patties certified 'halal' from animals slaughtered without pre-stunning. The certification body concerned, Ecocert, implicitly refused the request, and the court with jurisdiction to annul the refusal dismissed OABA's application. The Cour administrative d'appel de Versailles (Administrative Court of Appeal, Versailles, France), hearing the appeal, asks the Court whether the applicable rules of EU law deriving from, inter alia, the Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products, 1 its Implementing Regulation 2 and the Regulation on the

protection of animals at the time of killing 3 must be interpreted as permitting or prohibiting approval of the use of the European label 'organic farming' in relation to products derived from animals which have been slaughtered in accordance with religious rites without being stunned.

In today's Opinion, Advocate General Nils Wahl dismisses at the outset any question of interference with the freedom of worship that might be posed by the impossibility of combining the certification 'organic farming' with the indication 'halal'. ...

The Advocate General also considers that the question submitted to the Court is not so much whether the certifications 'organic farming' and 'halal' are compatible, but rather whether an 'organic farming' certification may be issued for products from animals killed without pre-stunning. ...

The Advocate General observes that organic products are subject to stricter production requirements than those applicable to non-organic ones. ... However, the relevant legislation says relatively little about the standards applicable to the slaughter of animals and does not prohibit slaughter without stunning, as it is only required that, during slaughter, any suffering is to be kept to a minimum. ...

The Advocate General adds that, although they say relatively little on slaughter without stunning, the Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products and its Implementing Regulation impose no conditions in relation to stunning prior to killing in order to benefit from the indication 'organic farming'; therefore, they do not exclude the practice of ritual slaughter. It is the Advocate General's position that the fact that these provisions are silent cannot be regarded as purely fortuitous, given that, inter alia, that question has long been known and recognised in the provisions governing the slaughter of animals. ...

Thus, applying his reasoning to 'kosher' and 'halal' indications, the Advocate General considers that to conclude that ritual slaughter is incompatible with the label of 'organic farming' would be tantamount to adding a condition not provided for in the current rules and would deny consumers of kosher or halal products the right to benefit from the guarantees provided by the 'organic farming label' in terms of quality and food safety.

Therefore, the Advocate General proposes that the Court find that the Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products and the Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing do not prohibit the issue of the European 'organic farming' label to products from animals which have been the subject of ritual slaughter without prior stunning carried out in the conditions laid down in the latter regulation.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2018-09/cp180136en.pdf>

**To read the full Opinion see**

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=9ea7d0f130dcf29a02e68a1d47e9a248b9064396b741.e34KaxiLc3eQc40LaxqMbN4Pbh0Ke0?text=&docid=205942&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=712947>

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## Relevant Legislation

\*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

## Online Forums Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

## Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Reform of the legal requirements for divorce** (closing date 10 December 2018)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reform-of-the-legal-requirements-for-divorce/>

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