



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Antisemitism

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour)** [217670] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to Answer of 24 April to Question 136144 on Antisemitism, what progress his Department has made on creating a database of (a) symbols, (b) slogans and (c) flags that may be illegal as a result of their use to incite hatred.

**Heather Wheeler:** MHCLG supported the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to create and populate a database of symbols of proscribed organisations for use by police forces. Information about the impact that these symbols and others have on community tensions has also been included.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-06/217670/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-17/136144/>

#### Cemeteries: Vandalism

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour)** [217674] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) steps his Department has taken and (b) representations his Department has made to (i) local authorities and (ii) the police to protect (A) Islamic and (B) Jewish cemeteries from incidents of targeted vandalism and desecration.

**Heather Wheeler:** Vandalism and the desecration of cemeteries are unacceptable criminal offences and we expect police forces to take any reports seriously. In cases where these are aggravated by hostility towards particular religious communities they will be investigated as hate crimes and may attract a sentence uplift if prosecuted.

We work closely with stakeholders including the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA who support religious communities to increase reporting and respond effectively to hate crime.

## Holocaust

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Genocide: World War II

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour)** [217667] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department has spent on funding teacher training to support teachers in facilitating lessons on the holocaust in classroom settings in each year since 2015.

**Nick Gibb:** Since 2015 the Department has provided the Centre for Holocaust at UCL with £500,000 a year to train trainee and serving teachers to teach this important subject and to set up a network of schools to share good practice. In addition, the Department funds the Holocaust Education Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme, one element of which provides teachers with visits to Auschwitz that are designed to improve their teaching of the Holocaust. Total funding for the programme since 2015 is shown in the table below. A new grant agreement is in place for 2019-22.

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
£1,850,000	£1,954,479	£2,002,758	£2,080,054

The Department is fully committed to Holocaust education. The recent disturbing report by the Community Security Trust, which shows that anti-semitic incidents continue to rise, shows how important it is to continue to educate children about the Holocaust and the lessons it provides for today.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-06/217667/>

## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Occupied Territories: Economic Situation

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [216233] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to develop long-term economic sustainability in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Alistair Burt:** We have scaled up our work on economic development across the West Bank and Gaza. We are providing up to £38 million over five years (2018-2023) to help tackle the problems of low growth and high unemployment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

Our support will focus on efforts to increase trade and job creation by working with the Palestinian and Israeli authorities to enable greater movement and access for people and goods, and improve water and energy supply, particularly in Gaza. We will also continue to support the implementation of Paris Protocol measures in relation to the transfer of taxes and fees Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and any measures agreed by the parties to transfer the responsibility of revenue collection. Our support in these areas will help thousands

of Palestinians in their daily lives, support the financial sustainability of the PA and contribute to preserving the viability of the two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-04/216233/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: Gaza

**Baroness tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13183] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, or will make, to the government of Israel about the withholding of international donations intended for Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly urge Israel to go further in easing access restrictions on Gaza. The UK supports the UN Access Coordination Unit, which works with the Israeli Government, the Palestinian Authority and aid agencies to facilitate the transfer of humanitarian goods including some medical equipment and supplies, into Gaza. We are also calling on all donors to fulfil their financial pledges to aid the reconstruction efforts in Gaza without delay.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13183/>

### Jerusalem: Schools

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13184] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they taking, if any, in relation to the cancellation of permits for the operation of UNWRA-run schools for Palestinians in East Jerusalem and their replacement by schools operated by the municipality of Jerusalem.

**Lord Bates:** UK Officials have contacted UNRWA following media reports surrounding the future of UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem. UNRWA stated that they have not received any official indication that there will be any change to their operation in East Jerusalem.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13184/>

### Jerusalem: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13185] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to protect the rights of those Palestinians in East Jerusalem whose refugee status has been threatened by the withdrawal of funding to UNRWA by the government of the United States.

**Lord Bates:** We are concerned about the impact on UNRWA's activities whenever unexpected reductions occur. Last year the UK led international efforts to help ensure UNRWA's essential services were maintained, by almost doubling our original core support of £33.5 million to £65.5 million in total, including £5 million for Gaza, and lobbying other donors to step up to ensure the funding burden is shared more evenly across the international community. Both the UK and UNRWA recognise the need for UNRWA to reform to ensure its sustainability and ability to provide essential services to refugees. UNRWA has undertaken significant cost-cutting measures to respond to budget cuts and growing need. We welcome UNRWA's efforts to broaden its donor base and are encouraging partners to step up with more funding and more predictable disbursements. The UK has a multi-year commitment to support UNRWA and we remain firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and Palestinian refugees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13185/>

### **Gaza: Hospitals**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13186] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that hospitals in Gaza have been closed due to power shortages; and what steps they are taking to ensure that hospitals are able to function.

**Lord Bates:** The UK continually monitors the humanitarian situation in Gaza and is ready to respond to spikes in humanitarian need. DFID is aware that hospitals in Gaza continue to face power shortages, although the most recent WHO report suggests that hospitals remain open for now. To help ensure hospitals in Gaza can continue to provide essential services we provided £1.5 million for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) OPTs Appeal in 2018. This funding has helped treat patients in 11 hospitals which are under extreme pressure in Gaza by restocking vital medical supplies including surgical equipment, bandages and medicines, and helping provide physical rehabilitation services for around 4,000 people. We will keep our response under review.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13186/>

### **Palestinians: Water**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13265] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to provide financial support to the water and sewage projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that were previously funded by the government of the United States; and if so, what will be the nature of any such support.

**Lord Bates:** DFID is concerned about the withdrawal of US aid funding from the water sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The shortage of clean water and adequate waste water treatment facilities across the OPTs drives down living standards, poses health and environmental risks, and is a significant barrier to economic growth. However, the UK is not in a position to redirect funding to projects formerly funded by the US. The UK has already committed to supporting the Palestinian water sector, through DFID's Supporting Economic Empowerment and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (SEED OPTs) programme. UK aid will help reform the water sector and co-finance critical water infrastructure to increase the supply and access of clean water across the OPTs. This includes upgrading Gaza's water carrier network to support the planned Gaza Central Desalination Plant which, once operational, will produce 55 billion litres of safe drinking water annually, benefiting all Gazans.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-29/HL13265/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13266] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the (1) government of Israel and (2) FIFA following the hospitalisation of five members of a Palestinian football team after Israeli forces fired tear gas into the Al Khader Stadium in Bethlehem.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli Government or FIFA. In our dialogue with the Israeli authorities we have recognised their legitimate need to deploy security measures to address violence. We encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension and use appropriate force. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-29/HL13266/>

### **Israel: West Bank**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13267] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the number of road closures in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement within the West Bank, including to and from East Jerusalem. Through our Embassy in Tel Aviv we have lobbied the authorities on the issue of movement and access. We continue to work closely with the Quartet and EU partners to call on Israel to ease restrictions on access.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-29/HL13267/>

### **Israel: West Bank**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13268] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to protect Palestinian children in the West Bank from (1) unlawful detention including being detained with no access to legal representation and contact with their parents, and (2) violence and abuse when detained.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to have strong concerns about reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in Israel. We advocate for the mandatory use of audio-visual recording of interrogations, a reduction in the use of single hand ties, alternatives to night arrests and for the Israeli authorities to inform more consistently detained children of their legal rights. I raised the issue of children in detention with Israeli Justice Minister Shaked during my visit to Israel on 11 April 2018. We continue to fund projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-29/HL13268/>

### **Double Taxation: Israel**

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL13187] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that the UK–Israel tax protocol signed on 17 January does not apply to trade involving illegal settlements.

**Lord Bates:** The Protocol amends the 1962 convention to improve the conditions for cross-border trade and investment. These benefits are in the interests of the UK economy.

The Protocol does not represent any change to the UK's historic position towards the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13187/>

### **Gaza: Demonstrations**

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL13190] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Palestinians who are (1) under, and (2) over 18 have been (a) killed, and (b) injured in the 44 weeks of Friday protests; and how many Israelis have been (i) killed, and (ii) injured in the same period.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we do not hold this specific information, the recent deaths on both sides of the conflict reflect the need for progress to end the cycle of violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13190/>

#### **Abdul Raouf Salha**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL13170] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have discussed, or will discuss, with the government of Israel the shooting by the Israeli Defence Force of Abdul Raouf Salha in Gaza on 4 January, and his subsequent death.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we regularly raise concerns about the situation in Gaza. We have also raised concerns about Israel's use of live ammunition, and have been clear that Palestinians have the right to peaceful protest. We have also been clear that Israel has the right to protect itself, as it is plain that Hamas and its operatives have exploited protests for their own benefit.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-28/HL13170/>

#### **Israeli Settlements: Palestinians**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL13216] To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the manslaughter charge given to a teenager for the death of Aisha al-Rabi in the West Bank, whether they have held discussions with the government of Israel about the equal treatment in law of Israeli settlers and Palestinians who have committed acts of violence.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not raised this issue specifically with the Israeli Government, we condemn all violence by settlers against Palestinians and urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and bring those responsible to justice. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-29/HL13216/>

## **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**Alistair Burt:** Appalled by the brutal murder of 19 year old Ori Ansbacher in Jerusalem last week. My thoughts are with her family. Such hatred and terror must be condemned utterly; Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in safety and peace.

<https://twitter.com/AlistairBurtUK/status/1095012696783835136>

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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>

#### **International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill**

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

## **Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/palestinianstatehoodrecognition.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

**\*\* closes in 3 days**

**Draft guidance to challenge bullying in schools** [Wales only] (closing date 15 February 2019)

<https://beta.gov.wales/draft-guidance-challenge-bullying-schools>

**One Scotland: Hate Has No Home Here** (closing date 24 February 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/hate-crime/consultation-on-scottish-hate-crime-legislation/>

**Racial harassment in higher education** (closing date 28 February 2019)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/racial-harassment-higher-education-our-inquiry>

**Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission – Draft Strategic Plan 2019-22**

(closing date 15 March 2019)

<http://www.nihrc.org/news/detail/ni-human-rights-commission-draft-strategic-plan-2019-2022-consultation>

**Scottish charity law** (closing date 1 April 2019)

<https://tinyurl.com/y9ln88df>

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