

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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<https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/jeremy-hunts-passover-message-israel-is-a-huge-achievement-for-all-humanity/>

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following four questions all received the same answer

Doctors: Palestinians

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [242757] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many successful applications there have been for the Medical Training Initiative from applicants from the Occupied Palestinian Territories in each month since January 2018.

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [242758] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to work with (a) the NHS and (b) universities to increase the number of places available on the International Surgical Training Programme for trauma surgeons from Gaza.

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [242759] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people from the Occupied Palestinian Territories have travelled to the UK to take part in the International Surgical Training Programme since the start of 2018.

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [242761] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people from Gaza have travelled to the UK to take part in the International Surgical Training Programme since the start of 2018.

Stephen Hammond: The Medical Training Initiative (MTI), within which the International Surgical Training Programme (ISTP) operates, enables up to 1,000 international medical and dental graduates per year to enter the United Kingdom to

experience training and development in the National Health Service for up to two years before returning to their home country.

Applicants are prioritised if they are from countries on the Department for International Development approved priority list and Lower Income and Lower Middle Income priority countries.

The information is not held by the Department in the format requested. However, the following table shows the total number of successful applicants from the Occupied Palestinian Territories to the MTI between April 2017 and December 2018 by headcount.

Total number of successful applicants from the Occupied Palestinian Territories to the MTI between April 2017 and December 2018 headcount

	Total number of successful applicants from the Occupied Palestinian Territories to the MTI
April 2017 to March in 2018	-
April 2018 to December 2018	-

Source: Academy of Medical Royal Colleges internal management information

Notes:

“-“ indicates a number between one and ten that has been suppressed for confidentiality reasons

The Department has regular discussions with both the National Health Service and higher education institutions on a range of policy initiatives. The ISTP is run by the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has oversight in its role as the organising body behind the MTI, of which the ISTP forms part. As such, any decision allocation of places on the ISTP will necessarily be developed by the institution(s) running the programme in the first instance.

Information on the number of people from the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Gaza that have travelled to the UK to take part in the ISTP since the start of 2018 is not held centrally.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-09/242757/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-09/242758/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-09/242759/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-09/242761/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Gaza: Hospitals

The Lord Bishop of Coventry [HL14939] To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing, if any, to the al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City.

Lord Bates: The UK is not providing support to the al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City. The UK continually monitors the humanitarian situation in Gaza and we are aware of the significant strain on the health sector. We have recently announced that we will be providing £2 million to the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) Appeal to contribute to the delivery of urgently needed surgical equipment, medicines, wound dressing kits, prosthetic limbs and post-surgery physiotherapy.

It will also provide physical rehabilitation services for up to 3,000 disabled people. The UK's commitment to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) currently provides vital health services for around 3 million Palestinian refugees and provides over 800,000 Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and East Jerusalem access to basic healthcare. The UK remains deeply engaged on the challenges facing Gaza's health sector and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-01/HL14939/>

UNRWA

Lord Polak (Conservative) [HL14973] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States about new models and approaches to ensure the long-term viability of the work currently undertaken by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

Lord Bates: The UK maintains a regular dialogue with the US on a range of Middle East issues, and has discussed UNRWA's long term financial viability in light of the US decision to withdraw their funding.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-01/HL14973/>

Gaza: Children

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15020] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the study by the Norwegian Refugee Council on the mental health of children living in Gaza, published on 25 March.

Lord Bates: DFID has not made its own assessment of the study by the Norwegian Refugee Council on the mental health of children in Gaza, published on 25 March 2019, but have previously reviewed the UNICEF Overseas Development Institute December 2016 report and use it to feed into our analysis on the situation of people with disabilities. DFID is planning to commission a comprehensive assessment of needs and existing effective interventions which address the long-term needs of people living with disabilities in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-02/HL15020/>

A summary of findings of the study referred to above can be read at

<https://www.nrc.no/news/2019/march/gaza-childrens-mental-health-rapidly-deteriorating/>

Palestinians: Demonstrations

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15124] To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the grounds for their abstention from the vote on the motion endorsing the Report of the detailed findings of the independent international Commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, published on 18 March, at the Fortieth Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 22 March.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our abstention followed from our position in May 2018, when we abstained on the resolution that created the Commission of Inquiry into the Gaza protests. Our expectation is that accountability must be pursued impartially, fairly, and in a balanced manner. We could not therefore support a resolution that failed to call explicitly for an investigation into the action of non-state actors such as Hamas. It is a source of great concern that, between 30 March 2018 and 31 March 2019, over 29,000 Palestinians have been injured and 195 Palestinians have been killed during the Gaza protests. So while we are clear that Israel has the right to self-defence, and that Hamas operatives have cynically exploited these protests, we have also expressed to Israel our serious concerns

about the use of live ammunition and excessive force by the Israel Defence Forces. We continue to fully support an independent and transparent investigation into the deadly events in Gaza. Our decision to abstain alongside Denmark, Croatia, Italy and Japan, reflects this balanced approach.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-08/HL15124/>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIOPT/A_HRC_40_74.pdf

Israel: West Bank

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15125] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Israel about reports of the continued demolition of homes and animal shelters by Israel in Area C of the West Bank under the pretext of a lack of planning permission.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank. We call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-08/HL15125/>

Imports: Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15126] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Fairhead on 2 April (HL14807), what is their definition for the boundaries of (1) territories brought under Israeli administration since 1967, and (2) the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Baroness Fairhead: It has been the position of the UK Government since 1967 that, in line with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Occupied Palestinian Territories (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza) are not lawfully part of the State of Israel.

The UK does not recognise Israeli settlements as part of Israel. 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/2019-04-08/HL15126/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-25/HL14807/>

Imports: Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15128] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Fairhead on 2 April (HL14807), what steps they are taking to ensure that products from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories of Palestine are identified as such and are not re-labelled as Israeli, when exported via Israel.

Baroness Fairhead: As referenced in my Written Answer on 2 April (HL14807), products produced in the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) are not entitled to benefit from preferential tariff treatment under the EU-Israel Trade Agreements. These areas are set out in a list of postcodes, which will be hosted on gov.uk, alongside a notice to importers. Tariff preferences will be implemented by UK customs authorities.

We will also continue to implement the EU's interpretive notice on the indication of

origin of products from Israel settlements. These guidelines are an important step to ensure correct and coherent implementation of EU consumer protection and labelling legislation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-08/HL15128/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-25/HL14807/>

Mohammad Ali Dar Adwan

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15129] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel following the killing of Mohammad Ali Dar Adwan in Qalandiya refugee camp by Israeli forces and reports of the subsequent mistreatment of the body leading to violent clashes with local residents.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the case in question. We have regularly lobbied the Israeli authorities to avoid civilian casualties, to ensure that any actions they take are proportionate and to adhere to international humanitarian law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-08/HL15129/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15172] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 3 April (HL14802), what (1) steps they have taken, and (2) representations they have made, to the government of Israel about changing and improving the detention practices used by that government in relation to Palestinian children since the publication of the report by a delegation of British lawyers on the treatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military law *Children in Military Custody* in June 2012; whether they intend to take further steps, involving international organisations, in regard to the detention practices that government uses; if so, what; and if not, why not.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention remains an important concern for the UK. While welcoming the positive steps that Israel has taken since the last review in 2012, we continue to call upon Israel to improve its practices in line with international law and obligations. Officials at our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns about children in detention with the Israeli authorities on 18 March 2019 and reiterated the UK's offer of expert discussions on the issue. We also raised the issue in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Human Rights Report, and on the international stage, including at the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Israel in January 2018.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-09/HL15172/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-25/HL14802/>

The report "Children in Military Custody", referred to above, can be read at

http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Children_in_Military_Custody_Full_Report.pdf

The FCO Human Rights report referred to above can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/725552/FCO1124_Human_Rights_Report_2017_ONLINE.PDF
(for “The State of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories” see pp41-42)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon’s statement in relation to the Universal Periodic Review referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universal-periodic-review-29th-session-lord-ahmads-statement>
(fourth heading)

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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>

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

Online Harms White Paper (closing date 1 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

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