

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Colin Clark (Conservative)** [257106] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the key obstacles to peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

**Andrew Murrison:** We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that act as key obstacles to peace and undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including terrorism, anti-Semitic incitement, settlement expansion, demolitions in the West Bank and the dire situation in Gaza.. We continue to believe the best way to achieve this is through direct negotiations between the parties, supported by the international community, leading towards a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-21/257106/>

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Lord Judd (Labour)** [HL15800] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the suitability of the United States acting as a mediator of Israeli–Palestinian peace talks.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to discuss Middle East peace efforts with the US Administration, including the Foreign Secretary with Jared Kushner on 10 April. We continue to encourage the US Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for a viable Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-16/HL15800/>

#### Israel: Bedouin

**Lord Judd (Labour)** [HL15802] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are

taking, and plan to take, to safeguard Khan al-Ahmar and other Bedouin villages from demolition; and what representations they have made to the government of Israel in this respect.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly raise our concerns with the Israeli authorities at senior levels, including with the Israeli Prime Minister and Israeli Attorney General, urging them not to go ahead with the proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv discussed this issue with the Israeli National Security Council on 7 March and the Israeli Office for the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories on 3 January. Officials from our Consulate General in Jerusalem continue to visit the Khan al-Ahmar community regularly, most recently on 28 March. The UK has repeatedly called on Israel to abandon demolition plans entirely, and instead provide a transparent route for construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-16/HL15802/>

### **Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements**

**Lord Judd (Labour)** [HL15804] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the effectiveness of guidance given to UK businesses and banks against trading with illegal settlements in the West Bank; and what action they will take to strengthen that guidance where necessary.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We routinely update our guidance to British businesses on the Overseas Business Risk website. We advise British businesses to bear in mind the Government's view on the illegality of settlements under international law when considering their investments and activities in the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-16/HL15804/>

*The guidance referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-israel/overseas-business-risk-israel--3>

*and*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-palestinian-territories/overseas-business-risk-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

## **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**Andrew Murrison:** Saw the threat that Hamas tunnels and rockets pose to people living in the Gaza periphery. Such violence has to stop.

<https://twitter.com/AWMurrison/status/1133640241737342976>

**Andrew Murrison:** Interesting discussions today with MK @yairlapid of @BlueWhite2019 about the importance of the UK-Israel relationship and future prospects for the region, followed by a meeting with Israeli Minister for Regional Cooperation @Tzachi\_Hanegbi

<https://twitter.com/AWMurrison/status/1133066371917602817>

**Andrew Murrison:** Pleased to visit #Gaza for the first time today. Met inspiring young adults at an @UNRWA school, and health workers trying to improve the lives of ordinary Palestinians. UK aid making a real difference. Clear that Gazans also need a long-term political solution.

<https://twitter.com/AWMurrison/status/1133396695750991874>

## Department for International Development

### **More than 380,000 people in Gaza will receive life-saving medical treatment with help from UK aid**

... The new Minister for the Middle East, Dr Andrew Murrison, has today announced a new package of UK aid which will help to provide life-saving treatment to more than 380,000 people in Gaza.

To mark his visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Dr Murrison said that UK aid to the World Health Organisation (WHO) would establish a new limb reconstruction unit in Gaza, as well as providing valuable expertise to help Gaza's health service deal with emergency patients more efficiently.

Minister for the Middle East Dr Andrew Murrison said: The situation in Gaza is unsustainable and the health services are struggling to deliver basic care to those in need of emergency medical attention.

I've seen first-hand how important this new UK aid package is to save the lives and limbs, relieving at least some of the strain on Gaza's health system.

But only a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians will fully resolve the problems facing Gaza. The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution.

This new package of UK aid support will help to carry some of the strain placed upon Gaza's struggling health service, with more than 28,000 trauma patients in the last year.

UK aid support to Gaza through the World Health Organisation will:

- establish a limb reconstruction unit to provide centralised expertise for patients with complex injuries including gunshot wounds
- create an emergency medical team coordination cell to manage the treatment of patients in urgent life-threatening conditions more efficiently
- provide equipment such as radios and GPS maps to the ambulance service to improve their ability to respond. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-380000-people-in-gaza-will-receive-life-saving-medical-treatment-with-help-from-uk-aid>

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## Other Relevant Information

### United Nations

#### **General Assembly Proclaims 22 August International Day for Victims of Violence Based on Religion, Other Beliefs**

Following an unprecedented rise of violence against religious communities and people belonging to religious minorities, the General Assembly today adopted a resolution proclaiming 22 August as International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, among other matters. ...

The International Day will aim to honour the victims and survivors who often remain forgotten, Mr. Czaputowicz [Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland] said, recalling the spate of attacks, including on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the targeting of Christians in Sri Lanka during Easter Sunday. Hatred towards religious groups may lead to mass killing of innocent people, he cautioned, citing reports that one third of the world's population suffers from some form of religious persecution. Acts of terror are intended to intimidate members of religious communities and, as a result, to hold them back from

practicing their faith. ...

The representative of the United States said the recent tragic events in such places as San Diego, Sri Lanka and Christchurch — as well as ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Yazidis in Iraq and other groups — remind the international community that it must come together to work across borders to protect religious communities and minorities all over the world. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12147.doc.htm>

**International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief (A/73/L.85)**

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.85>

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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

**Scottish Human Rights Commission Draft Strategic Plan** (closing date 28 June 2019)

<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/1860/strategic-plan-consultation-vfinal-eh.docx>

**Online Harms White Paper** (closing date 1 July 2019)

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

**Opt-out organ donation: organs and tissues excluded from the new system** (closing date 22 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/opt-out-organ-donation-organs-and-tissues-excluded-from-the-new-system>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438