

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Gaza: Food Aid

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15862] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East that more than a million people in Gaza may not have enough food in June unless international donors can raise £46 million in funding due to the deficit created by cuts by the government of the United States to Palestinian refugee aid.

Baroness Sugg: The UK is deeply concerned about the challenges facing over a million Palestinian refugees who rely on food assistance in Gaza. We recognise that Palestinian refugees need UNRWA to be on a more secure financial footing. To that end, the UK is working with UNRWA and other donors to support cost cutting efforts, diversify donor income, and encourage multi-year funding commitments.

The UK is a leading donor to UNRWA and I can confirm that the UK has committed to providing up to £80m to UNRWA over the next two years. However, a long-term solution requires a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for Palestinian refugees. Until that happens the UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and Palestinian refugees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-20/HL15862/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/more-one-million-people-gaza-%E2%80%93-half-population-territory-%E2%80%93-may-not-have>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Andrew Murrison's statement on Israeli settlement construction

On Thursday 30 May, the Israel Land Authority announced plans to advance tenders for

556 housing units in East Jerusalem.

Minister for the Middle East Andrew Murrison said: The UK Government is gravely concerned by plans announced on 30 May to advance tenders for hundreds of settlement housing units in occupied East Jerusalem. We are clear that settlements built on occupied Palestinian territory are contrary to international law and an obstacle to a two-state solution. Regrettably this takes us further away from a negotiated peace agreement.

I visited Jerusalem on 28-30 May where I reiterated UK support for a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as a shared capital for both states.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/andrew-murrisons-statement-on-israeli-settlement-construction>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UK co-sponsors a UN resolution to commemorate victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief

On 28 May, the UK joined 87 other states in co-sponsoring a United Nations resolution establishing 22 August as an international day commemorating victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief. ...

The UK remains deeply concerned about violations of Freedom of Religion or Belief in many parts of the world. This year alone, we have seen a staggering number of attacks on places of worship: from the Philippines to Burkina Faso; New Zealand to Sri Lanka. All faiths and beliefs are vulnerable, and there is an urgent need to strengthen efforts to protect and promote the right to FoRB for all individuals. ...

The Resolution raises awareness within the international community of the scale of violence motivated by intolerance, and it promotes inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. It also encourages States to provide support and assistance to victims and their families.

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, said: I welcome the adoption of the Resolution tabled by Poland. Violence and discrimination based on religion or belief blight the lives of millions of people around the world.

Protecting the right of people to practise their faith, or to have no faith at all, is an ongoing battle. No country is immune from intolerance. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-co-sponsors-a-un-resolution-to-commemorate-victims-of-acts-of-violence-based-on-religion-or-belief>

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Other Relevant Information

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

Report on the Netherlands

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-the-netherlands/168094c577>

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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>

Regulation of pre-paid funeral plans (closing date 25 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-pre-paid-funeral-plans-consultation-on-a-policy-proposal>

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