

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Trade Agreements: Israel

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [261145] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress he has made in negotiating a free trade deal with Israel.

**George Hollingbery:** On 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019, the Secretary of State for International Trade signed the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, which ensures continuity in our trade and investment relationship after the proposed Implementation Period, or if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. Securing continuity is the strongest foundation on which to build further on our successful trading relationship.

The UK is committed to strengthening our excellent bilateral relationship through the dedicated trade promotion team at our Embassy in Tel-Aviv. We continue to engage with the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry and liaise with the government to maximise future trade opportunities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-06/261145/>

*The trade agreement referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781446/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-israel.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781446/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-israel.pdf)

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL16007] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the fears expressed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East concerning the food supply for Gaza from June onwards; and about the approval for the taking of new Palestinian land for the Hawara and Al-Aroub by-passes in the Occupied West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK remains concerned about the humanitarian

situation in Gaza. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has carried out demarches on the Israel authorities to go further in easing movement and access restrictions on Gaza. We would also oppose any steps to take further Palestinian land. We regularly raise our concerns on the issue of settlements with the Government of Israel and urge it to reverse its policy of settlement expansion.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16007/>

### **Gaza: Fisheries**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL16008] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the restoration of the full 20-mile coastal fishing zone at Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly raise with the Government of Israel the urgent need to ease all access and movement restrictions on Gaza. This includes easing fishing limits which would help to restore the fishing industry.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16008/>

### **Israel: Gaza**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16060] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported view of the Director-General of Reporters Without Borders, Christophe Deloire, that the Israeli army had deliberately targeted journalists in the Gaza Strip.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK fully supports the need for an independent and transparent investigation into events in Gaza since the start of the Great March of Return in March 2018. We have repeatedly stressed to Israel the importance of using proportionate force, and the specific need to protect journalists, medics and children. The UK is committed to the promotion of media freedom and the protection of journalists, as an essential element of democracy. Officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem and our Embassy in Tel Aviv hosted a roundtable in April with foreign journalists serving in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to discuss this issue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16060/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16061] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they are making to the government of Israel about the imprisonment of a 12 year-old Palestinian girl who was reportedly interrogated twice without an attorney or her parents present.

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16062] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they will make to the government of Israel about the violence reportedly used during the arrest by Israeli forces of a child in the Jabal Johar area on 22 May.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are not aware of the specific details of the incident referred to but have concerns about continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention and continue to seek improvements to Israeli practices. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised our concerns with the Israeli Ministry of Justice on 6 June.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16061/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16062/>

### **West Bank: Demolition**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16063] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they are making to the government of Israel about the demolition on 13 February by the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem of a Wastewater Screening Station and other Palestinian-owned facilities in the Bir 'Ona area of Beit Jala town without notice.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made any representations on this specific incident, 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 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/2019-06-04/HL16063/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16064] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Israel about the detention by Israeli forces of Abeer Ziyad, Director of the Women Center of A-Thuri in Silwan in east Jerusalem.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this case with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16064/>

### **West Bank: Schools**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16065] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the auction of prefabricated classrooms that were confiscated by Israeli forces from a Palestinian village in the northern West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah have written to the Israeli authorities, calling on them to 'return the confiscated items to their intended beneficiaries without precondition as soon as possible; otherwise to provide compensation without delay for the dismantled and confiscated assets'. Alongside other EU member states, the UK continues to raise these issues with the Government of Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-04/HL16065/>

### **Israeli Settlements: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16124] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the reported increase of violence by settlers towards Palestinian property in Al-Tuwani and elsewhere, including the destruction of olive groves and writing offensive graffiti.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to condemn violence by settlers against Palestinians and stress the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised settler violence with the Israeli Ministry of Justice on 6 June. Under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, has an obligation to take all measures in its power to protect the Palestinian population from acts of violence.

## UK Space Agency

### **Israeli space tech firm hiSky expands to the UK**

The Israeli company hiSky has established a UK limited company - hiSkySat Limited – based in London, with an R&D centre at Harwell to develop a satellite communications network management system (NMS) and operation centre.

The UK Space Agency provided £9 million of funding for hiSky to develop cutting-edge space telecoms technology at the Harwell Space Cluster, which is growing fast and already home to more than 90 space companies.

hiSky aims to be the world's first low-cost satellite network operator, bringing innovative technology to voice and data satellite communications, and leveraging existing satellite capacity to reduce costs associated with building and launching new satellites. ...

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said: The UK government's modern Industrial Strategy and commitment to the European Space Agency are bringing innovative companies like OneWeb, SatixFy and hiSky to Britain. ...

The UK Space Agency funding is allocated through the European Space Agency (ESA). This is targeted to support the development of hiSky's satellite receiving terminals, operations and management software for the devices and to help establish hiSky as a Virtual Network Operator – a supplier of network services using existing infrastructure – in the UK.

Shahar Kravitz , CEO, hiSky said: We are honored to be partners with the UK Space Agency. It is our privilege to establish the first real low-cost global Virtual Satellite Network and to do it in the UK. hiSky's cutting edge technology and solution was developed in order to meet with the consumers needs and can easily adjust to different satellite operators, including forthcoming Low Earth Orbit telcoms constellations.

The UK Space Agency and Department for International Trade have been very supportive of our technology and our concept from the beginning. We are grateful for the chance given to us and look forward to grow within the UK. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/israeli-space-tech-firm-hisky-expands-to-the-uk>

## World Health Organisation

### **Powering health: WHO brings solar energy to the health sector in Gaza**

The World Health Organization (WHO) and implementing partners inaugurated the newly installed solar power plant at Nasser hospital in the Gaza Strip. Funded by the Government of Japan, the solar plant as a source of alternative energy will reduce the reliance of the hospital on donated fuel for emergency generators and contribute to build resilience of critical departments providing life-saving interventions. ...

"Interruptions in energy supply have created an enormous challenge for the health sector in Gaza, putting lives of the most vulnerable patients at risk. The solar electrification of Nasser Hospital is an important step towards ensuring more sustainable power supply to health facilities," says Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, head of WHO's office for the occupied Palestinian territory. ...

Gaza has been affected by chronic electricity shortages for years, which severely compromise the provision of basic health services. As a result, the hospitals in the Gaza Strip have to rely on backup generators to sustain critical life-saving services when electricity is unavailable from the mains grid supply. Since the start of 2018, the

international community has collectively donated \$4 million USD for emergency fuel to sustain Gaza's critical health facilities. According to OCHA, 4.29 million litres of fuel were provided to Gaza's health sector to support 80 health facilities.

Power interruptions affect the functionality of health facilities and hospitals, jeopardizing essential services, including intensive care, haemodialysis, operating theatres and pharmaceutical and vaccine storage. To reduce the impact of the electricity crisis on patients, WHO and health cluster partners have been working to mobilize resources to provide main public hospitals with alternative energy sources. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.emro.who.int/palestine-press-releases/2019/powering-health-who-brings-solar-energy-to-the-health-sector-in-gaza.html>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Christianity: Oppression**

**Luke Hall (Conservative)** [261521] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to promote religious tolerance throughout the world.

**Mark Field:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief as a universal human right which should be enjoyed by everyone. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief leads this work across Government and we regularly raise this issue with governments across the world, through our diplomatic network and at the Human Rights Council and the UN. The UK also funds and supports projects that promote respect for all people of different faiths and none.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-07/261521/>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

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

#### **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>

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 10 days**

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