

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Holocaust

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280914] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2019 to Question 270269 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, which operating models the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation is considering to cover the running costs of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Luke Hall:** A range of operating models are being considered.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280914/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270269/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280915] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2019 to Question 270272 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what further studies commissioned by the Government are under way or planned to establish the extent of the tree roots which will be affected by the construction of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Luke Hall:** As the opportunity arises, for example as we carry out further geo-technical and archaeological bore holes and trial pits, we will assess the presence of tree roots to increase our understanding of their extent and depth.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280915/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270272/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280916] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2019 to Question 270274 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, if he will define the green space referred to in the calculation that around 85 per cent of the green space in Victoria Tower Gardens will be retained after the construction of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Luke Hall:** The green space refers to all soft landscaping, including grass, planting and trees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280916/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270274/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280917] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2019 to Question 270267 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, if he will list the elements in the search for potential sites for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre other than that conducted by the CBRE; and for what reason separate searches were undertaken for potential sites.

**Luke Hall:** Other efforts to identify a suitable location included publishing the search criteria, consulting the Government Property Unit and engaging with a wide range of organisations such as the Royal Parks, Holocaust commemorative and educational organisations, property owners and developers, property agents, London Borough authorities, universities, museums and cultural centres. Separate searches were undertaken to ensure a wide range of options were considered.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280917/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270267/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280918] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2019 to Question 229625 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, how many of the 24 possible sites for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre reported by the CBRE to the board of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation on 11 January 2016 were not among the almost 50 possible sites identified between 7 September and 30 October 2015.

**Luke Hall:** All 24 sites reported were amongst the almost 50 possible sites previously identified.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280918/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-07/229625/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280919] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing,

Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2019 to Question 270268 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, which Ministers authorised representatives of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation to engage with Royal Parks on 2 December 2015 about the possible use of Victoria Tower Gardens for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Luke Hall:** The then Secretary of States for the Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280919/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270268/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280920] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason Royal Parks was not informed in January 2016 that the Government planned to build the Holocaust Learning Centre and the Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens subject to constraints being overcome.

**Luke Hall:** In January 2016 the then Prime Minister announced that the national memorial to the Holocaust would be built in Victoria Tower Gardens. The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation's advice has consistently been that the Memorial and Learning Centre should be co-located. Information obtained through the design competition allowed Ministers to conclude that co-location would be feasible and they announced on 24 October 2017 their decision to proceed with an integrated design.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280920/>

*The announcement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/adjaye-associates-and-ron-arad-architects-win-uk-holocaust-memorial-international-design-competition>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280921] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2019 to Question 274442 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what the membership was of the property sub-committee of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation from November 2015 to January 2016.

**Luke Hall:** The property sub-committee was a sub-set of the Foundation's members, a full list of which can be viewed on its website.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280921/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-08/274442/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280922] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2019 to Question 274442 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, on what date in November 2015 the property sub-committee of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was asked to undertake a search of Government sites.

**Luke Hall:** The search for possible sites was already underway by November 2015

through a range of methods, including through engagement with the Government Property Unit.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280922/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-08/274442/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [280923] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2018 to Question 203300 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, if he will require the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation to publish the minutes of its meetings as a condition of receiving public funds and support.

**Luke Hall:** The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation is an independent advisory body to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. It does not receive public funds and its minutes are the property of the Foundation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280923/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-18/203300/>

## **European Commission**

### **European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová**

Ahead of the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, we pay tribute to the 500,000 Roma victims of the Holocaust. This year in particular, we commemorate with deep sadness the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder of the last Roma who were so wrongly and brutally incarcerated in the 'Gypsy Family Camp' in Auschwitz – people who were put to death just for being who they were.

There is no place in our modern European societies and political discourse for the dehumanisation of the Roma or any other minority groups. The atrocities of the past stand as a reminder that equality and non-discrimination are values which cannot be taken as given: upholding them requires our constant attention and readiness to challenge those who would attack them. ...

**To read the full press release see**

[https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-19-4869\\_en.htm](https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-19-4869_en.htm)

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## **Israel**

### **House of Lords Written Answers**

#### **Israel: European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL17139] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 6 March 2018 (HL5686) which stated

that they are "firmly opposed to sanctions or boycotts against Israel", what representations they are making to the European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation about its decision to cancel its planned conference in Israel, allegedly due to fear that it will come under pressure from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is strongly opposed to the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Movement against Israel. Boycotts divide people and reduce understanding, but ultimately it will be the decision of an individual, organisation or company whether to operate in Israel. We believe the best way to combat this movement is through discussion rather than legislation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17139/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-02-20/HL5686/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Israel: European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL17200] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation's compliance with Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights following its cancellation of a planned conference in Israel allegedly due to fear of pressure from anti-Israel activists.

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL17201] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation's compliance with the Principle of Universality of Science and Academic Freedom following its cancellation of a planned conference in Israel allegedly due to fear of pressure from anti-Israel activists.

**Lord Ahmad:** The UK is strongly opposed to the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Movement against Israel. Boycotts divide people and reduce understanding, but ultimately it will be the decision of an individual, organisation or company whether to operate in Israel. We believe the best way to combat this movement is through discussion rather than legislation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-16/HL17200/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-16/HL17201/>

#### **Hotheifa Bader Khalifa**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17183] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the imprisonment of Hotheifa Bader Khalifa under an Administrative Detention order since May 2018.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the case of Hotheifa Bader Khalifa. While we have not raised the matter with our Israeli counterparts, we remain concerned about Israel's use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should only be used when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventative rather than punitive measure.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17183/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17184] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about the case of a 17 year old Palestinian who has been held in detention for one year without charge in Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to have strong concerns about reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention, and regularly make representations to the Israeli authorities. Most recently, officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns with the Israeli Ministry of Justice on 6 June, and we continue to seek improvements to Israeli practices.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17184/>

### **West Bank: Israel**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17185] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about reports that a Palestinian nature reserve, wells, and trees, have been destroyed by Israeli forces near Yatta in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to raise with our Israeli counterparts our concerns about the humanitarian and environmental impact of the damage to water sources and the destruction of Palestinian agricultural land that has been caused by the occupation, and settlement-related activity. Demolitions and evictions also jeopardise the viability of a future Palestinian state. We have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties and call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17185/>

### **Israel: Bedouin**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17186] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to prevent the Bedouin village of Um Al-Kheir in the South Hebron Hills being demolished by Israeli forces.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are deeply concerned that demolitions and evictions of villages in the West Bank have a devastating impact on the communities concerned and will likely open the way for further settlement expansion – endangering the viability of the two-state solution. We have been clear about our grave concerns with the Israeli authorities and we regularly raise the matter through our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17186/>

### **Mohammed Samir Obeid**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17187] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about reports that it has not released the body of Mohammed Samir Obeid who was killed by Israeli forces.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of reports about Mohammed Samir Obeid. While we have not raised the case, we will continue to monitor the situation. We urge all sides to treat the dead with respect and urge Israel to return any bodies they are holding.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17187/>

## Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17188] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about reports that a 10 year old Palestinian child was shot in the head during a peaceful procession in Kufur Qaddoum in the northern West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have repeatedly made clear to Israel our concerns about the use of live ammunition by the Israel Defense Forces in response to protests. In particular we have stressed the importance of protecting civilians, especially children and medical personnel. Palestinians have the right to protest peacefully. We have also been clear that Israel has the right to protect itself. While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, 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. We regularly raise our concerns with the Israeli authorities about their treatment of Palestinian minors.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17188/>

## United Nations

### **Secretary-General Appoints Christian Saunders of United Kingdom Acting Deputy Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services is currently investigating allegations of misconduct in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The Secretary-General is committed to acting, as appropriate, once he receives the findings and recommendations.

The Secretary-General continues to consider the work undertaken by UNRWA as essential to Palestine refugees. He calls upon Member States and other partners to remain committed to UNRWA and its services and continue their support for the crucial work performed by the Agency.

With the aim to support UNRWA and ensure operational continuity, the Secretary-General has decided, in coordination with UNRWA's Commissioner-General, to appoint Christian Saunders of the United Kingdom as Acting Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

Mr. Saunders brings to the position more than three decades of experience in humanitarian and international affairs, with a strong focus on delivering results and overseeing major reforms leading to improved organizational effectiveness and efficiency. He is currently Assistant Secretary-General for Supply Chain Management and previously served as Assistant Secretary-General for the Office of Central Support Services. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sga1894.doc.htm>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Palestinian journalist must be allowed to call Jerusalem 'home', say UN experts**

Two UN human rights experts have called on Israel to halt its efforts to deport the Palestinian photojournalist Mustafa Al-Nadir Iyad Al-Kharouf, and to regularize his status in Jerusalem.

During the night between 21 and 22 July, the Israeli authorities attempted to deport Mr. Al-Kharouf to Jordan, a country where he does not have residency rights. Jordan did not

accept the deportation, and Mr. Al-Kharouf was returned to Israel.

“The effort by Israeli authorities to deport Mr. Al-Kharouf to Jordan, where he has never lived and does not have any legal residency rights, raises serious concerns under both international humanitarian law and international human rights law,” said Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits forcible transfer and deportation of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of any other country. “Forcible transfer is considered a grave breach of the Geneva Convention, and is defined as a war crime and a crime against humanity by the Rome Statute,” he said.

Mr. Al-Kharouf has previously been questioned about the nature of his work as a photojournalist. His application for family unification, which would allow him to continue to live in East Jerusalem with his wife and child, was denied on the basis of secret evidence in December 2018. The Israeli authorities arrested him in January, alleging that he has been illegally residing in Israel. Since his arrest, he has been imprisoned, without charges, in Givon Prison, within Israel. ...

“The detention and deportation of Mr. Al-Kharouf directly interfere with Al-Kharouf’s legitimate exercise of rights to freedom of opinion and expression as a photojournalist,” said David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. ...

“The precedent which could be set by this case, should we see a Palestinian deported to a country where he has no ties and no legal status, on the basis of secret evidence, is highly problematic. We take this opportunity to remind the Government of Israel of its solemn obligations under international law,” the experts said.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24865&LangID=E>

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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>

#### **Domestic Abuse Bill**

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

**Civil Partnerships: Next Steps Conversion** (closing date 20 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/civil-partnerships-next-steps-and-consultation-on-conversion>

**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>

**Islamophobia in Scotland** (closing date 26 August 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

**Human rights: Freedom of religion and belief, and human rights defenders inquiry**  
(closing date 31 August 2019)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/freedom-of-religion-and-belief-inquiry-17-19/>

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