

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Community Security Trust (CST)

**Engine of Hate: the online networks behind the Labour Party's antisemitism crisis**  
<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/f/e/Engine%20of%20hate%20-%20The%20online%20networks%20behind%20the%20Labour%20Party%27s%20antisemitism%20crisis%20WEB.pdf>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### **Palestinians: Recognition of States**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17376] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 15 July (HL16851) that continuing Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank makes the two-state solution more difficult to achieve, when they intend to recognise Palestine as an independent state.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is clear on our position regarding Israeli settlements in the West Bank: they are illegal under international law and make the two-state solution harder to achieve. We are clear that we want to see the creation of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian state - living in peace and security, side by side with Israel. The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-22/HL17376/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-01/HL16851/>

### **Gaza: Fuel Poverty**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17377] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of collective punishment by the government of Israel, and in particular, the impact of that policy on the level of fuel poverty in Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have serious concerns about Israel's movement and access restrictions on Gaza, and are deeply concerned by the fuel shortages, which are exacerbating the dire humanitarian situation. The Minister for the Middle East discussed the situation in Gaza during his visit there in May. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate-General in Jerusalem frequently urge the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to take steps to improve conditions in Gaza. Addressing Gaza's energy shortfall is critical. We are working to address the underlying causes of the humanitarian situation in Gaza by focusing on economic development, including enhancing the supply of electricity.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-22/HL17377/>

### **Israeli Settlements**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17378] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Prime Minister of Israel that the government of Israel will never dismantle any settlements in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** 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. We regularly raise our grave concerns on this issue 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/2019-07-22/HL17378/>

### **Gaza: Agriculture**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17379] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the reported (1) destruction of crops, and (2) long-term damage to farmland, in Gaza caused by the use of herbicides by Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of reports of the spraying of herbicides by the Israeli military. We will raise our concerns on this matter with the Israeli authorities in due course. Such damage is would be destructive to peace efforts.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-22/HL17379/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17380] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether there is any difference between the treatment of Palestinians and Israelis who have committed a crime by Israeli authorities.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned by aspects of the Israeli military justice and detention system which applies to Palestinians. We continue to regularly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-22/HL17380/>

### **Jerusalem: Demolition**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL17381] To ask Her Majesty's Government what

steps they are taking to prevent the demolition of homes and buildings in the Palestinian Authority-controlled area of Wadi Hummus; and what assessment they have made of any future implications of any such demolition for other properties in Palestinian Authority areas.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In a statement on 23 July the British Government, along with the Governments of France, Germany and Spain, strongly condemned the demolition by Israel of buildings in the district of Wadi al Hummus.

We remain seriously concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolition in occupied territories is contrary to International Humanitarian Law and to UN Security Council resolutions. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. The UK is focused on preventing demolitions from happening in the first place through our funding to the Norwegian Refugee Council legal aid programme which helps residents challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-22/HL17381/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/wadi-al-hummus-france-germany-spain-and-uk-joint-statement>

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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