

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

Trade Promotion

Lord Grocott (Labour) [HL17249] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie (HL16983), whether they will include the list of Trade Envoys and appointment dates in the text of the Written Answer for inclusion in Hansard.

Lord Young of Cookham: I refer the Noble Lord to the Written Ministerial Statement given by my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade on 18 July 2019, HCWS1760.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statements/?page=1&max=20&questiontype=AllQuestions&house=commons%2Clords&uin=HCWS1760>

On the 18 July 2019 my Noble Friend Lord Risby was appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Lebanon which is in addition to his current role as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Algeria. Also on the 18 July 2019 the Hon. Member for Dudley North, Ian Austin MP, was appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Israel. These two new appointments take the total number of Trade Envoys to 27 parliamentarians covering 58 markets.

Full List of Prime Minister's Trade Envoys, their Markets and date of appointment

Trade Envoy Name	Designated Markets	Date of PM Appointment
Lord Risby	Algeria	Nov-12
	Lebanon	Jul-19
Baroness Morris	Jordan, Kuwait, Palestinian Territories	Nov-12
Baroness Bonham Carter	Mexico	Nov-12
Richard Graham MP	Indonesia	Nov-12
	Trade Envoy to the ASEAN Economic Community	Jul-15

	Philippines, Malaysia	Jan-16
Baroness Nicholson	Iraq	Jan-14
	Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan	Apr-16
	Kazakhstan	Jul-17
Lord Janvrin	Turkey	Jan-14
Mark Prisk MP	(Investment Envoy) Nordic and Baltic Region	Apr-14
	Brazil	Mar-16
Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP	Egypt	Nov-15
Adam Afriyie MP	Ghana	Jan-16
	Guinea	Sep-17
Lord Popat	Uganda, Rwanda	Jan-16
John Howell MP	Nigeria	Jan-16
Rushanara Ali MP	Bangladesh	Mar-16
Lord Astor of Hever	Oman	Nov-16
Lord Faulkner	Taiwan	Jan-16
Lord Lamont	Iran	Jan-16
Baroness Northover	Angola	Jan-16
	Zambia	Jul-17
Paul Scully MP	Myanmar, Brunei, Thailand	Jul-17
Jeremy Lefroy MP	Ethiopia	Jul-17
Andrew Selous MP	South Africa	Jul-17
Mark Pritchard MP	Georgia, Armenia	Sep-17
Mark Menzies MP	Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Chile	Sep-17
Simon Hart MP	Panama, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica	Sep-17
Ed Vaizey MP	Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia	Sep-17
Sir Henry Bellingham MP	Libya	Jun-18
Pauline Latham MP	Kenya	Aug-18
Andrew Rosindell MP	Tanzania	Sep-18
Ian Austin MP	Israel	Jul-19

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-17/HL17249/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-08/HL16983/>

Palestinians: Academic Freedom

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL17405] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, or intend to make, to the government of Israel about (1) international academics at Birzeit and other Palestinian universities reportedly being denied entry or residence visas by Israel, and (2) academic freedom and harm to those universities caused by any such visa refusals.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the difficulties some foreign passport holding academic staff have faced in their attempts to teach at Palestinian universities, in particular the visa denials and delays they have faced. The Government is concerned about the possible increasing trend of the Israeli immigration service limiting access, and denying entry or residency to the West Bank, especially for academics. This is impacting on the ability of academics to

teach in the OPTs, affecting the quality of Palestinian higher education provision, and further disadvantaging Palestinians. We continue to raise our concerns about Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the OPTs, including for foreign nationals, with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17405/>

Hezbollah

Lord Maginnis of Drumglass (Independent Ulster Unionist) [HL17417] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Hezbollah forces are being deployed along Lebanon's and Syria's borders with Israel; and what plans they have in place to protect the UK's interests in that region.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government has serious concerns about the actions and behaviours of Hezbollah in the Middle East. Its continued role in Syria, amassing of weapons outside of state control and, therefore, the lack of distinction between its political and military wings is what led the former Home Secretary to extend proscription of Hezbollah to the entirety of the organisation. The former Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa raised this during his visit to Lebanon in March this year, when he expressed his concerns over Hezbollah's regional role; the former Foreign Secretary also raised concerns over Hezbollah's destabilising activities and behaviours when he met the Lebanese Foreign Minister on 12 June. The British Government routinely discusses concerns about the actions of Hezbollah with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17417/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL17433] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking following reports of an escalation in violence by the Israel Defense Forces and settlers, including an attack on two Palestinian children.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are very concerned by any instance of Palestinian children being killed or injured by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We have publicly and privately expressed our longstanding concerns about the use of live ammunition and excessive force by the Israel Defense Forces. We continue to urge Israel to provide the necessary protections for Palestinian children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are also clear that Israel has the legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. We also condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance and bring those responsible to justice. We have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17433/>

Palestinians: Prisoners

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL17434] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the abuse of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has concerns about mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and about Israel's respect of its

obligations in this regard, as an Occupying Power, under applicable international law. We have raised concerns over treatment of Palestinian minors detained by the Israeli authorities on many occasions, most recently on 6 June. We have concerns over the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17434/>

Palestinians: Prisoners

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL17435] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) treatment of, and (2) information supplied to, families of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons without charge.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17435/>

Israel: West Bank

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL17436] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about the reported confiscation of tents and solar panels from Palestinians in Nahalin.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not raised this specific issue, our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised confiscations with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 July. We remain gravely concerned by the continued confiscation of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Confiscations cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17436/>

Palestinians: Detainees

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL17437] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about reports that Palestinian students were detained for celebrating their graduation with fireworks.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not raised this specific issue, British ministers and officials continue to make repeated representations to the Israeli Government about their detention practices. The UK remains committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding Palestinian children in detention in Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17437/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL17438] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 10 July (HL16850), what steps they are taking to ensure the security of the Palestinian population living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as the security of the Israeli population living in that area.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We understand and share the deep frustration on all sides at

the lack of progress on the Middle East Peace Process. The ongoing violence underlines that a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. As part of our commitment to Israel's security and the fight against terror, the UK continues to provide the Palestinian Authority with professional support in helping develop its security institutions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17438/>

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/HL16850/>

Downing Street

PM call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel: 3 August 2019

The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel.

The leaders discussed the strength of the UK-Israel partnership and agreed to look for new ways to build on this when the UK leaves the EU, including by stepping up our trading ties. They discussed the need to continue working together to counter Iran's destabilising activity in the region, to defend freedom of navigation, and to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The leaders looked forward to seeing each other again at the earliest opportunity.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-3-august-2019>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary statement on West Bank settlements

On 5 and 6 August, the Israeli Higher Planning Committee of the Civil Administration announced plans to advance 2,304 settlement housing units in Israeli settlements, in the West Bank.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said: We urge Israel to halt its settlement expansion, which is contrary to international law and promotes the effective annexation of the West Bank.

While the Israeli Cabinet approved construction permits for 715 Palestinian units in Area C, much more needs to be done to fulfil the needs of the estimated 300,000 Palestinians there.

The UK continues to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms that allow Palestinians to build within Area C.

The UK also remains seriously concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities, including in Wadi al Hummus on 22 July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-west-bank-settlements>

European Union

Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest settlements' approved by the Israeli authorities

Israeli authorities have approved the advancement of well over 2,000 housing units in illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. The European Union's position on Israeli

settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territory is clear and remains unchanged: all settlement activity is illegal under international law and it erodes the viability of the two-state solution and the prospects for a lasting peace.

The approval of 715 housing units for Palestinians in Area C was announced last week by the Israeli Cabinet. The Palestinian population living in Area C continues to face repeated confiscations, demolitions, displacements and land expropriation, while almost all of their submitted master plans and building permits for Palestinian development remain unapproved.

The EU expects the Israeli authorities to fully meet their obligations as an occupying power under International Humanitarian Law, and to cease the policy of settlement construction and expansion, of designating land for exclusive Israeli use, and of denying Palestinian development. The EU will continue to support a resumption of a meaningful process towards a negotiated two-state solution, the only realistic and viable way to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of both parties.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-Homepage/66238/statement-spokesperson-latest-settlements%E2%80%99-approved-israeli-authorities_en

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Written Answer

Saudi Arabia: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL17404] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that over 150 Palestinians have been recently arrested in Saudi Arabia, possibly because of alleged links with the Muslim Brotherhood; whether any of those people have refugee status; and what action they intend to take to ensure that those arrested are not held indefinitely.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by the reports that 150 Palestinians have been arrested in Saudi Arabia. Our Embassy in Riyadh plan to raise this at the next available opportunity.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-23/HL17404/>

TOP

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>

TOP

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/>

TOP

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