



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Antisemitic Hate Crime: Prosecutions

**Robert Largan (Conservative):** What steps the CPS is taking to improve the prosecution rate for antisemitic hate crime. [900807]

**The Solicitor General (Michael Ellis):** The proper disclosure of unused material is vital if there is to be a fair trial, and we will continue to focus on these issues, including on the issue of better meeting the disclosure obligations. We will work with investigators to pursue all reasonable lines of inquiry.

**Robert Largan:** The CPS does not currently publish figures on hate crime prosecution rates disaggregated by racial and religious bias. Will the Solicitor General join me in urging the CPS to make that data available so that we can judge its performance on antisemitism and properly tackle this most hateful form of crime?

**The Solicitor General:** The issue of antisemitism, which my hon. Friend rightly raises, is one of very considerable concern. Just last week, I visited the Community Security Trust in north London; the work that the trust does with the Jewish community to combat antisemitism is significant and very much appreciated. My hon. Friend is right that it is important that proper records are kept by the CPS in respect of these matters, and we are constantly discussing with the CPS how better it can review its statistics and keep these things properly in the mind of the general public.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-13/debates/9BCE7564-4909-4609-8E87-C7F4BE6715CA/AntisemiticHateCrimeProsecutions>

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Religious Hatred

**Naz Shah (Labour) [14833]** To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what funding his Department allocates to the Government adviser on (a) Antisemitism and (b) Islamophobia; and how many members of staff does each adviser have to support their work.

**Luke Hall:** John Mann was appointed as an independent adviser on Antisemitism by the Prime Minister in July 2019. The Department has not allocated staff or funding to John Mann.

We continue to take a zero-tolerance approach to anti-Muslim hatred and recognise the importance of this matter. We will continue to explore and interrogate the issue of publishing a definition of Islamophobia in further detail.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-10/14833/>

## House of Lords Oral Answers

### Islamophobia

**Lord Sheikh (Conservative):** To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards the adoption of a formal definition of Islamophobia.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Viscount Younger of Leckie):** My Lords, the Government remain committed to stamping out anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of hate crime. It is unacceptable for anyone to feel unsafe while practising their religion. We continue to take a zero-tolerance approach to Islamophobia. The definition proposed by the APPG is not in line with the Equality Act 2010 and could have consequences for freedom of speech. We recognise the importance of this matter and will interrogate it in further detail.

**Lord Sheikh:** ... Islamophobia is of great concern to the Muslim community. I have raised this subject before in your Lordships' House. Can the Minister assure the House that the process to be undertaken will not involve any preconditions such as recognising Islamophobia as a form of racism? Does he agree that any definition proposed by the Government must have the support of the Muslim community and Muslim representative groups, without which it will have little value? If so, can he confirm that this will be done?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** I agree with my noble friend that Islamophobia, while a hate crime, is not a form of racism as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Section 9 of the Act defines race as comprising "colour, nationality" and "ethnic or national origins", none of which would encompass a Muslim or an Islamic practice, so conflating race and religion in conflict with any definition could cause confusion.

On the second question, it is important for the Government to listen to and engage with Muslim groups and communities, which we will continue to do.

**Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench):** My Lords, emotive definitions such as Islamophobia are simply constraints on freedom of speech. A phobia is a fear, and the best way to combat irrational fear or prejudice suffered by all religions and beliefs is through healthy, open discussion. Will the Minister endorse the commitment given last week by Heather Wheeler, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, to protect all religions and beliefs without fear or favour?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The noble Lord is right. As I said, it is unacceptable for anyone to feel unsafe while practising their religion and the Government will never allow prejudice and discrimination of any kind against the Muslim or any other community. We take a zero-tolerance approach and recognise the importance of this matter.

**Baroness Warsi (Conservative):** My Lords, the definition of Islamophobia proposed by the APPG, like the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, is not a legally binding working definition, so there is no conflict with the Equality Act. My noble friend will recognise that the Government and the Conservative Party rightly criticised the party opposite when it felt that it could make the definition better and amend it, despite the Jewish community saying, "This is our definition"; that party was wrong for doing so. Does he further recognise the

irony and hypocrisy of the Government's position on Islamophobia, as opposed to the position that we took on anti-Semitism?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** There are a couple of points there. The IHRA definition is widely accepted internationally and, by adopting this non-binding definition, we underline the UK Government's determination to tackle anti-Semitism wherever it occurs. On my noble friend's other point, as she will know, Islamophobia is a complex matter and there are different views in this House on the issue. There has been strong opposition to the adoption of the all-party definition from a wide range of organisations, including Civitas, Policy Exchange, the Barnabas Fund and the Henry Jackson Society. It is an ongoing issue and discussions are continuing.

**Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Labour Co-op):** My Lords, there are some appalling examples of the Muslim community being harassed and suffering racial abuse. Why will the Government not adopt this definition when it has been adopted by hundreds of organisations, including many local authorities and police forces and, I think I am right in saying—perhaps the Minister can confirm it—by the Conservative Party in Scotland? We need to hear much more from the noble Lord and his party about how they will deal with this appalling abuse.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** ... it is a challenging issue. I can reassure him that we intend to move as quickly as possible to come to a definition. As I said, it is important to discuss this fully and make sure that we get it right.

**The Lord Bishop of St Albans:** My Lords, we on these Benches deplore all attacks on any religious groups and we note particularly the huge rise in the deeply concerning issue of attacks on Muslims. The Minister will be aware of the media reports on Imam Asim of Makkah mosque in Leeds and his comments on free speech. Does the Minister agree with me and the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury that Muslims and all religious groups deserve better media? Does he further agree that, alongside law, we need to seriously address this through education?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The right reverend Prelate is right. I had brief sight of the abhorrent hate crime addressed to Qari Asim and I condemn it utterly. He is also right that we need to work harder on the schools and education policy to be sure that young people are not ingrained in any of this despicable stuff.

**Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, at a time when anti-Muslim and Islamophobic hate crime has spiked by over 500%, and given that the APPG definition was arrived at after widespread consultation with hundreds of academic organisations and now has the support of most mainstream political parties, chief police officers, councils, trade unions and the Scottish Conservatives, why have the Government decided to appoint two advisers to come up with a different definition? Can the Minister not see that doing that, and delaying coming to a non-binding position on this, leads to the community losing confidence in the Government even further because they appear to be kicking something as important as this into the long grass and not taking it seriously?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Not at all—we take it very seriously. The question asked by the noble Baroness is very similar to that from the noble Lord, Lord Kennedy. I say again that the definition goes against not only the Equality Act 2010 but international human rights law, which treats race and religion separately. Criticising somebody because of their race is regarded in international law as unacceptable, but criticising religions or beliefs is permitted. This remains a challenging issue, and we want to move quickly to resolve it.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-13/debates/D2C6CF82-DDBD-4AB5-949D-C1205E3AF0A4/Islamophobia>

*Information about the APPG definition of Islamophobia, referred to above, can be read at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>*

The IHRA working definition of antisemitism, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' commitment, referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-06/debates/39461207-892D-4E68-A5F0-F772500BB2A6/PersecutionOfChristians#contribution-376471B0-7D08-47F0-810B-2137674207DD>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Hate Crime

**Lord Vinson (Conservative)** [HL1341] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 3 February (HL187), whether it is possible that a hearsay remark, if construed by a bystander as offensive, could be reported as a hate crime and the perpetrator interviewed by the police as a result; and if so, what steps they intend to take to protect freedom of speech.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** It is an operational matter for the police to determine whether to investigate all incidents reported to them. When investigating allegations of hate crime it is for the police to apply the relevant legislation, including the freedom of expression defence contained in section 29J of the Public Order Act 1986.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-04/HL1341/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL187/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### Out-of-school Education: Islam

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL1377] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 4 February (HL646), how many madrasas in the UK are teaching for less than 18 hours per week; and how they assess whether extremist ideology is being taught in them.

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL1414] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 4 February (HL646), what estimate they have made of the number of pupils that are taught in madrasas in the UK.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** A madrasa operating for fewer than 18 hours per week would generally be considered to be an out-of-school setting. The department does not hold data on the number of out-of-school settings in the UK and therefore does not collect data on the number of children who are attending these settings.

As indicated in the answer I gave on 4 February 2020, out-of-school settings are not captured by a regulatory framework, therefore they are not subject to any assessment regarding their teachings. However, as set out in my previous answer, the department is taking forward a package of measures to enhance safeguarding in out-of-school settings – safeguarding children from all forms of harm, including extremism.

If the department became aware of a setting where extremist activity was taking place resulting in children being at risk of harm, we would work closely with the local authority, police and other relevant agencies to take action. For guidance that covers both out-of-school settings and unregistered schools setting out how the department, Ofsted and local authorities can work collaboratively to help ensure

that children attending unregistered independent schools and out-of-school settings, are safe and are receiving a suitable education is attached and available from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/690495/La\\_Guidance\\_March\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690495/La_Guidance_March_2018.pdf)  
[HL1377 HL1414 guidance](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-05/HL1377/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-06/HL1414/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-21/HL646/>

## Department for Education

### Further crackdown on illegal schools

... Ofsted will be given an extra £400,000 to help investigate unregistered independent schools and support the regulator in bringing together evidence for prosecution. The Secretary of State has also reiterated the Department for Education's commitment to bring forward new legislation to strengthen the watchdog's powers. ...

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said: Unregistered schools present a serious risk to children. They often do not offer the kind of balanced, informative curriculum all schools should, and can expose pupils to dangerous and extreme influences.

That's why I am determined that anyone found to be running one faces the full force of the law. ...

To further address these issues and make sure Ofsted has the legal powers it needs to tackle unregistered schools, the Government intends to review and strengthen the legislation in place at the next opportunity.

The government is also launching a consultation today, seeking views on legislation which will require any setting attended full-time by children of compulsory school age to be registered with the Department for Education and meet the independent school standards. In addition to this, the department will soon be publishing a new out-of-school safeguarding code of practice, to ensure legitimate out-of-school settings such as part-time tuition centres, sports clubs and religious settings offering education in their own faith know how to create a safe environment for the children in their care; and supporting guidance for parents – setting out key questions to consider, and red flags to look out for, when choosing a setting for their child.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-crackdown-on-illegal-schools>

### Warning notices to independent schools

**Talmud Torah Yetev Lev: warning notice**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/774925/Talmud\\_Torah\\_Yetev\\_Lev\\_Notice\\_03.12.18.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/774925/Talmud_Torah_Yetev_Lev_Notice_03.12.18.pdf)

on the basis of

**Ofsted Inspection**

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/27/131435>

## Beis Trana Girls' School: warning notice

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/806679/Beis\\_Trana\\_School\\_Notice\\_16April2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/806679/Beis_Trana_School_Notice_16April2019.pdf)

on the basis of

## Ofsted Inspection

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/27/131342>

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## Holocaust

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1248] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) adequacy of the security arrangements required for the planned National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, and (2) arrangements to keep access to the Gardens open to children using the playground there.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will have security arrangements similar to the many other public buildings in Westminster. We are working with security experts, government agencies and the Metropolitan Police to ensure the necessary security measures are put in place and the gardens remain accessible for all users. Horseferry playground will also be enhanced and updated.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1248/>

#### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1249] To ask Her Majesty's Government what environmental impact assessment has been made relating to the planned National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens and, in particular, any consideration given to possible damage to trees in the Gardens and the drainage system.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Detailed assessment has been made of the environmental impact. The full reports are publicly available as part of the planning application (the attachment is too big to attach) at:

<https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PL0CVYRP27000>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1249/>

#### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1250] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likely contribution of the planned National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens to (1) understanding the causes of antisemitism, and (2) reducing antisemitic attitudes

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The Holocaust Memorial will serve as a permanent reminder that political decisions have far-reaching consequences. In light of Holocaust denial, revisionism, the rise of antisemitism and indifference, it is more important than ever to ensure that the story of what happened during the Holocaust resonates with ordinary people and raises questions about Britain's role at the time. The Learning Centre will explore the role of our Parliament and democratic

institutions in the Holocaust, what we did and what more we could have done both at the time and subsequently to tackle the persecution of the Jewish people and other groups.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1250/>

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

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1251] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likely effect of the planned National Holocaust Museum and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens on traffic along (1) Millbank, and (2) Abingdon Street

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Detailed assessments have been made of the impact on traffic of both the construction and operation phases. The full reports are publicly available as part of the planning application (the attachment is too big to attach) at:

[https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-](https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PL0CVYRP27000)

[applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PL0CVYRP27000](https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PL0CVYRP27000)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1251/>

### **World War II: Genocide**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1252] To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in assisting Holocaust survivors and their descendants to secure the restitution of their property in Poland; and what discussions they have had with the government of Poland about such restitution.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The UK government's Post Holocaust Issues Envoy takes the lead in discussions regarding restitution of property of Holocaust survivors. The Envoy is involved in ongoing conversation on the issue with the Polish government, national and international community organisations, and international intergovernmental representatives.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1252/>

## **United Nations**

**Holocaust survivors rebuild lives and traditions in Rio de Janeiro**

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1057241>

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## **Israel**

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

#### **West Bank: Nature Reserves**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL1270] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about its announcement that it intends to create seven new nature reserves in Area C of the occupied West Bank; and what assessment they have made of who is likely to be affected (1) positively, and (2) negatively, as a result.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of Israeli Defence Minister Naftali

Bennett's announcement on 15 January. We would be concerned by any measures taken that would damage the Palestinian presence and development in Area C. We are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1270/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL1278] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with the government of the United States about their proposal Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of Palestinian and Israeli People prior to its publication on 28 January.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The US Administration shared details of their proposals with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in advance. The Prime Minister discussed the United States' proposals during a call with President Trump on 28 January and the Foreign Secretary has also spoken to Jared Kushner and Secretary of State Pompeo.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1278/>

*The proposal referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Peace-to-Prosperity-0120.pdf>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL1279] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of the United States' proposal Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of Palestinian and Israeli People, published on 28 January.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** All serious proposals for peace deserve a fair hearing. A peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians that leads to peaceful coexistence could unlock the potential for the entire region, and provide both sides with the opportunity for a brighter future. Only Israeli and Palestinian leaders can determine whether these proposals can meet the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. We encourage them to give these plans genuine and fair consideration, and explore whether they might prove a first step on the road back to negotiations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1279/>

*The proposal referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Peace-to-Prosperity-0120.pdf>

#### **Israeli Settlements**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL1280] To ask Her Majesty's Government what status Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank currently hold under international law.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa made clear in his statement on 7 January, it is the UK's longstanding position that settlements are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of the two-state solution. We want to see a contiguous West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as part of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders. We urge Israel to halt its settlement expansion, which promotes the effective annexation of the West Bank, immediately.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1280/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-condemns-plans-for-new-housing-units-across-the-west-bank>

### **Israeli Settlements**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL1282] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the risks to peace of unilaterally annexing land in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concerns about unilateral annexation with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 4 February. As the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement on 31 January, we are concerned by reports of possible moves toward annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel. Any such unilateral moves would be damaging to renewed efforts to re-start peace negotiations, contrary to international law and could not pass unchallenged.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1282/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/possible-israeli-annexation-of-the-west-bank-foreign-secretary-statement>

### **Israeli Settlements: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL1287] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about (1) the punishment of settlers reported to have damaged a Palestinian school in South Nablus, (2) any damages to be paid to the school, and (3) plans for its future protection.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not raised the case in question, we 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 to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised the issue of settler violence with the Israeli authorities on 17 December 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1287/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL1288] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Demolitions and Displacement Bulletin, published by Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights covering the period covering December 2019 with an overview of 2019.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the report in question. The British Government is seriously concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our concerns about the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East

Jerusalem with the Israeli authorities. They did so most recently on 17 December. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to cease the counter-productive 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/2020-02-03/HL1288/>

*The Bulletin referred to above can be read at*

<https://lphr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LPHR-Demolitions-and-Displacement-Bulletin-for-Dec-2019-inc-overview-of-2019-FINAL.pdf>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL1290] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israel's acting Justice Minister Amir Ohana has issued an order to seize 4.2 million shekels in assets from the Palestinian Authority as compensation for terror victims.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the announcement made by Justice Minister Ohana. We strongly condemn all acts of terrorism, there can be no justification for such acts of violence, and every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. That said, we look to Israel to work with the PA and meet all its economic obligations under the Oslo Accords, including financial transfers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1290/>

#### **West Bank: Climate Change**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL1291] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of climate change on the living conditions of Palestinian communities in the West Bank, in particular those who are unable to construct proper shelter or obtain water supplies.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The impacts of climate change are already being felt across the Middle East, and will become much worse over time. That is why climate change and the implementation of the Paris Agreement is such a high priority for this Government.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1291/>

#### **Israel: West Bank**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL1292] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations are they making to the government of Israel about the reported destruction of a well in the Palestinian village of Zawiyah in western Salfit.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made any representations on this specific incident. We continue to raise with our Israeli counterparts our concerns about the humanitarian and environmental impact of the damage to water sources.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1292/>

## **UK Parliament House of Lords Library**

**Briefing: Israel-Palestine: The New US Peace Deal**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2020-0059/LLN-2020-0059.pdf>

### Where is the 'peace' in Trump's Middle East Peace Plan?

President Trump's so-called 'Vision for Peace' for Israel and Palestine would violate international law and Palestinian human rights. ...

The [Middle East Peace Plan](#) launched by President Trump on 28 January tramples on Palestinian human rights while treating Palestinians as observers of their destiny.

It talks boldly about their "legitimate desire for self-determination", but there was no serious dialogue with the Palestinian community when the plan was being drawn up. So it's not surprising that the Palestinian Authority [rejected](#) the plan outright. ...

The [UN has after all reaffirmed](#) that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem have: no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just and lasting comprehensive peace ...

Despite this, the Middle East Peace Plan proposes formalising and extending Israel's sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and the majority of the settlements in the rest of occupied West Bank.

In stating that Jerusalem is the sovereign capital of Israel and should remain an "undivided city", the 'vision' also ignores the legitimate Palestinian claim for a national capital in East Jerusalem. And its proposals for annexation [violate](#) international humanitarian law.

The proposed land swaps to create a State of Palestine could leave tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel outside Israel, leading to disenfranchisement. ...

Any peace plan which calls for violating international law and human rights is not a serious proposal and should not be [welcomed](#) as such by the UK government.

Nearly 140 UK parliamentarians have [written](#) to Prime Minister Boris Johnson expressing their "grave concern" over the contents of the plan and calling on our government to reconsider its position in welcoming this "unworkable and unfair 'deal'". ...

To deliver a just and lasting peace, any plan has to be based on respect for international law and human rights and be negotiated by Palestinians and Israelis – as equals.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/where-peace-trumps-middle-east-peace-plan>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### UN expert applauds database, says Israeli settlements deprive Palestinians 'land base for genuine state and viable economy'

An independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council applauded the release of a database on business enterprises involved in certain activities relating to Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank "as an important initial step towards accountability and the end to impunity".

Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, said: "While the release of the database will not, by itself, bring an end to the illegal settlements and their serious impact upon human rights, it does signal that sustained defiance by an occupying power will not go unanswered."

The expert said that the 240 Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory have been repeatedly determined to be a 'flagrant violation under international law' by the international community.

"The Israeli settlements are a significant source of human rights violations against the protected Palestinian population in the occupied territory," said Lynk. "Because of the settlements, thousands of hectares of Palestinian land have been expropriated, thousands of Palestinian homes and properties have been destroyed, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been displaced, natural resources are confiscated, freedom of

movement is curtailed, and the land base for a genuine Palestinian state and a viable economy is undermined.

"These Israeli settlements are supported by the economic activity of scores of Israeli and foreign companies," Lynk said. "Without these investments, wineries, factories, corporate supply and purchase agreements, banking operations and support services, many of the settlements would not be financially and operationally sustainable. And without the settlements, the five-decade-long Israeli occupation would lose its colonial raison d'être." Hundreds of millions of dollars (US) of goods produced by Israeli settlements are exported to international markets each year. "The international community has rightly condemned the illegal status and harmful impact of the Israeli settlements," the Special Rapporteur said. "But by engaging in trade and commerce with the settlements, the international community sustains their viability and undercuts its own pronouncements." ...

The Special Rapporteur called for the database to become a living tool, with sufficient resources to be updated annually. ...

In welcoming this recommendation, the Special Rapporteur urged the Human Rights Council to explore whether the database has captured all meaningful business enterprise activity in the occupied Palestinian territory which sustains the Israeli settlement project.

Finally, the Special Rapporteur called upon the member states of the United Nations to enact domestic legislation that would ban the importation of goods produced in illegal settlements domiciled in any occupied territory. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25558&LangID=E>

*The database referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session43/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_43\\_71.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session43/Documents/A_HRC_43_71.docx)

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/assisteddying.html>

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

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

#### **Education (Assemblies) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/educationassemblies.html>

#### **Genocide Determination Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/genocidedeterminationbill.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageandcivilpartnershipminimumage.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education** (closing date 27 March 2020)

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf>

**\*\* Regulating Independent Educational Institutions** (closing date 8 May 2020)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/regulating-independent-education-institutions/>

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