



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL1289] To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the publication of Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People by the government of the United States, what plans they have to prevent illegal annexation in the occupied territories.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Foreign Secretary set out in Parliament on 4 February, we are concerned by reports of possible moves toward annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel. Any such unilateral move would be damaging to renewed efforts to re-start peace negotiations, contrary to international law and could not pass unchallenged. The former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concerns about unilateral annexation with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 4 February. We call on all parties to refrain from actions that would imperil the viability of a two-state solution, based on the 1967 lines, and make it harder to achieve a just and lasting peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-03/HL1289/>

"Peace to Prosperity", referred to above, can be read at

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

The Foreign Secretary's comments referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-04/debates/9F34A0FA-A2FE-4390-B7DA-723A9B2EAC88/MiddleEastPeacePlan#contribution-64F9C3A8-3C7A-4C56-8E82-66D76CA8366D>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-04/debates/68D0724D-D667-479F-9086-2A85C19B1337/TopicalQuestions#contribution-6F5BBFAD-AD28-443B-B863-9105541E189C>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL1339] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel about that government's

obligations under international law to be responsible financially for the land and people in territory it occupies.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It has long been the British Government's view that Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is governed by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which Israel is a state party. We repeatedly 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, including settlements and the treatment of Palestinian children in military custody. We also expect economic and fiscal agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to continue to be fully implemented, including Israel's obligations under the Oslo Accords and Paris Protocol.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-04/HL1339/>

Israel: Palestinians

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL1364] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Palestinian Authority following President Mahmoud Abbas' rejection of the government of the United States' plan for a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and his announcement of the cutting of ties, including security ties, with the United States and Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of President Abbas' comments. We encourage President Abbas to engage with the US and explore what options there might be for addressing his concerns. The Foreign Secretary called President Abbas on 27 January, before release of the plan. He emphasised the UK hope that the plan would permit a return to negotiations. Our Consul General in Jerusalem has been in regular discussion with the Palestinian Authority following release of the plan.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-05/HL1364/>

The peace plan referred to above, can be read at

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

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL1399] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the article by Thomas L. Friedman in the New York Times Mother Nature scoffs at Trump's mideast peace plan, published on 4 February, on water resources and ecology in the Middle East; and what plans they have to seek to establish permanent institutions for dialogue and action on those issues.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment of this article, the impacts of climate change are already being felt across the Middle East, including in the marine environment, 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. We have raised concerns over access to water in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities, including stressing the urgent need for Israel to take immediate and practical measures to improve the current situation and ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank and Gaza. These resources are limited and therefore require the effective co-operation from all parties to manage them in such a manner that ensures there will be enough for all. The UK is more than tripling our spending on economic development programming - providing £58 million between 2018 and 2023. This includes helping to improve water and energy supply, particularly in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-06/HL1399/>

The article referred to above can be read at

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/04/opinion/middle-east-climate-change.html>

TOP

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>

TOP

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/>

TOP