



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Organ Donation: Deemed Consent

Neil Coyle (Labour) [15005] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what the date presumed consent for organ donation will be implemented.

Helen Whately: The Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 heralds a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation in England, known as 'opt-out' or 'deemed consent'. The new consent arrangements mean that all adults over 18 will be considered potential organ and tissue donors after death, unless they make a decision that they do not want to be a donor, they have nominated a representative to make a decision on their behalf after death or are in an excluded group.

The Government intends to implement the new system later this spring and is planning to announce the exact date shortly.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-12/15005/>

Department of Health and Social Care

Government Response to the Consultation on the draft Human Tissue (Permitted Material: Exceptions) (England) Regulations 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/867918/Government_response_to_opt-out_organ_donation_-_organs_and_tissues_excluded_from_the_new_system.pdf

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House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinian Islamic Jihad

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [1209] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the threat posed to that country by Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

James Cleverly: As we made clear in our statement on 13 November 2019, indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and unjustifiable, and make peace harder to achieve. The ongoing decision by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) to embrace violence and reject the Quartet principles lies at the heart of the Gaza situation. The UK fully supports Israel's right to self-defence and to defend its citizens from such acts of terror. PIJ and other terrorist groups must cease all actions that are violent or provocative, or that put civilian lives at risk.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-12/1209/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gaza-hostilities-uk-statement>

Middle East Peace Envoy

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [1239] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress towards a two-state solution in Israel was made under Rt Hon Tony Blair's tenure as the Quartet's Middle East Peace Envoy.

James Cleverly: The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution and supports any serious proposal to bring about that outcome. In that context we welcome the efforts of the Rt Hon. Tony Blair who served as Quartet Envoy until May 2015. Progress is difficult to achieve, but the realisation of the two-state solution is the best outcome for the parties and the countries of the region, and is in the UK's national interest. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-12/1239/>

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [14976] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

James Cleverly: We continue to work closely with international partners including the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel, strongly advocating a two state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations. The US has offered proposals for breaking the current deadlock. We do not believe these proposals are the end of the road, but we hope that they may lead to a first step towards resolving the conflict. The UK consistently calls for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including terrorism, incitement, settlement expansion, and the demolition of Palestinian property in the West Bank. Steps to transform the situation in Gaza are also needed. We are encouraging both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-11/14976/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL1500] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report produced by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights which alleges that, between 23 and 29 January, Israel committed 262 violations of international law against Palestinians.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment of this report, we have a regular dialogue with the Government of Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We continue to urge Israel to ensure it abides by its obligations under international law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-10/HL1500/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.pchrgaza.org/en/?p=14134>

Hebron: Offences against Children

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL1502] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the reported beating of a three year old Palestinian child by Israeli settlers in front of Israeli forces in Hebron.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of these reports. We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised this issue with the Israeli authorities on 17 December 2019. 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/2020-02-10/HL1502/>

Hebron: Press Freedom

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL1504] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the reported injuries to journalists caused by Israeli forces in Hebron.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government is committed to the promotion of media freedom and the protection of journalists, as an essential element of democracy and an important attribute of human rights. We urge Israel to investigate any such cases in which journalists are injured or killed while doing their jobs.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-10/HL1504/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL1545] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that a Palestinian policeman was killed inside a police station in Jenin on 6 February.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made representations on this specific case, but have regular discussions with the Government of Israel about allegations of mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli custody, and Israel's obligations as an occupying power under international law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv most recently raised this issue on 16 December 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-11/HL1545/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Israeli settlements, February 2020: UK statement

James Cleverly, Minister for the Middle East and North Africa said: The UK condemns Israel's announcement to move forward with the construction of 1,077 housing units in Givat Hamatos, in southern Jerusalem. This follows the announcement on 20 February to advance 2,200 units in the existing settlement of Har Homa.

Settlement construction in these highly sensitive areas undermines the viability of a future Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem. The UK's position on Israeli settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations. We urge Israel to reverse this decision immediately

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/israeli-settlements-february-2020-uk-statement>

United Nations

Annexation Threat, Continuing Exchanges of Fire Undermine Chances for Peace between Israel, Palestinians, Special Coordinator Warns Security Council

The threat to annex Palestinian territory, as well as the exchange of fire between militants and Israeli security forces, are undermining the prospects for peace between the two sides, the senior United Nations official for the Middle East peace process warned today. ...

Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said: "It is not enough to reaffirm the internationally agreed parameters on how the conflict can be resolved." ...

Detailing recent developments, including the threat of partial annexation, he recalled that Israeli and United States officials have said that such a step would only be taken after a joint committee completes detailed maps of the relevant areas in the occupied West Bank. ... "The Secretary-General has consistently spoken out against unilateral steps and plans for annexation." Such measures would have a devastating impact on prospects for a two-State solution, he said, adding that they would close the door to negotiations.

He went on to report that the situation in the Gaza Strip is escalating, with projectiles being fired from the Palestinian enclave towards Israel and that country's defence forces responding with retaliatory air strikes. Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants fired more than 40 rockets since 23 February, and the Israeli Defense Forces are conducting aerial bombardment over the enclave in response, he reported.

More than 100 projectiles fired from Gaza towards Israeli communities injured four people, including a woman and a child, he said, adding that more than 100 incendiary balloons were released towards Israel, many carrying explosive devices. In response, the Israeli forces fired 102 missiles against Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza.

Violence also continued in the West Bank, where Israeli security forces killed 7 Palestinians, he reported, adding that Palestinians injured 16 Israeli security personnel and 7 civilians. "With no meaningful bilateral negotiations on the horizon, developments on the ground continued to undermine prospects for a two-State solution," he said. ...

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on 20 February that he had approved the construction of some 3,000 housing units in Giv'at Hamatos and some 1,000 units in Beit Safafa. He also declared that he could allow the beginning of planning processes for 2,200 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Har Homa.

"These projects, if implemented, would consolidate a ring of settlements cutting between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, significantly constraining the possibility of a future contiguous Palestinian State," the Special Coordinator pointed out, stressing that all settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace. Concerning intra-Palestinian developments, he reported that the prospects for reconciliation and elections remain stalled. With legislative and presidential elections not

having been held since 2006, it is critical to renew the legitimacy of Palestinian national institutions, he said, underlining that Palestinians must be allowed to elect their leaders. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14119.doc.htm>

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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>

Stage 1 evidence session, Equalities and Human Rights Committee

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12527&i=113233#ScotParlOR>

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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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