



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Debates

#### **Coronavirus Bill: Second Reading**

*col 39 Rehman Chishti (Conservative):* ... On the human rights perspective, I thank the Secretary of State and the Government for listening to faith organisations. Initially there were concerns that under part 2 loved ones would have to be cremated. As somebody from a Muslim background and the Prime Minister's special envoy for freedom of religion or belief, it was completely unacceptable to consider that if taking account of the views of the Muslim and Jewish communities. I therefore thank the Government for ensuring that the wishes of the deceased will be taken into account in relation to their final rites. ...

**The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):** I pay tribute to my hon. Friend, who has worked hard to ensure that we come to a solution in the Bill, through the amendments we have tabled today, that ensures we can not only have dignity in the case of a large proportion of the workforce not being available, but accede to the wishes of families from the many different faith communities who had concerns about the way it was originally drafted. ...

**Imran Hussain (Labour):** ... many of my constituents—both those from a Muslim background and those of the Jewish faith—were naturally concerned. It is one of the major tenets of faith that everybody has the right to dignity in death, so I am grateful to the Government for listening. Will the Secretary of State join me, at this difficult time for all our communities, in thanking our faith communities for the role they are playing, the difficult decisions they are taking and the support they are giving? ...

*col 40 Matt Hancock:* ... I am also grateful for the work the hon. Member and many others have done with faith groups of all religions who want to gather. Understandably, it is upsetting not to be able to do that, but it is right that they cease large gatherings—or, indeed, any gatherings—where there is social contact that can spread the disease. It is happening around the world. It is a difficult thing for some, and I pay tribute to the faith organisations and faith leaders across all faiths who have made the right decision. I urge all faith leaders to see what has been done by those who have taken the right steps and to follow them. ...

*col 92 Paul Bristow (Conservative):* ... My one concern related to the proposal in schedule 27 to disregard the wishes of the deceased, which would have allowed all bodies

to be cremated indiscriminately if the system could not cope. Understandably, that caused alarm to anyone whose religion forbids cremation, including my local Muslim community in Peterborough, who made their feelings clear to me this weekend. However difficult circumstances become in the weeks and months ahead, it would be extremely undesirable for their religious beliefs to be ignored. To get through this crisis, we need to bring every community in our country with us. For that reason, I am enormously grateful to the Government for their reassurances today on that issue. Because of the speed required, we all understand that not every measure announced will be perfect or complete first time. Today's notice of the amendment from the Secretary of State, combined with his comments, will give our Muslim and Jewish communities much of the security they need. I sincerely hope that this will now mean that local authorities will never enforce cremation of a dead body against the express wishes of the family when they have ample burial plots available and the ability to transport the body to the plots. ...

**col 96 Imran Hussain (Labour):** ... The Government must also make clear their commitment to ensuring that all local authorities have sufficient capacity to handle an increased number of deaths. On that point, I pay tribute to the work of Bradford Council over recent days and weeks to build additional capacity to handle deaths in a faith-compliant manner, to ensure that in Bradford we never have to compromise on the right to faith and dignity in death. As the leader of Bradford Council has firmly set out: "Those of faith where burial is a prerequisite will always have that wish respected, and that will always be Bradford Council's position in all circumstances."

I think that point should be put clearly on the record.

In short, our Muslim and Jewish faith communities are rightly concerned about the measures in the Bill and want firm assurances from the Government—assurances I urge the Government to provide today—that they will never compromise the rights to faith and dignity in death. Those are fundamental and absolute rights, and they are non-negotiable. ...

**col 97 Yasmin Qureshi (Labour):** It is clear from the words set out in sub-paragraphs 13(1)(a) and (b) in part 3 of schedule 27 that it is desirable for local authorities to consult with religious communities and groups in the event of a deceased person. However, that provision does not say that if a family or person objects to the cremation taking place, the local authority can still go ahead and cremate. I would like the Minister's assurance that that is correct; or will the Bill be amended during its passage to say very clearly that if a person does not wish to be cremated, then a cremation will not take place? ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-03-23/debates/F4D06B4F-56CD-4B60-8306-BAB6D78AC7CF/CoronavirusBill>

### **Coronavirus Bill: Committee Stage**

**col 115 The Chairman of Ways and Means (Eleanor Lang):** Amendment 66, in schedule 27, page 317, line 6, at end insert—

"5A In respect of sub-paragraphs 5 (a), (b) and (c), where a deceased is to be cremated and it goes against their religious belief, the designated authority must consult the next of kin or designated Power of Attorney or the relevant local faith institution in so far as reasonably possible, to find a suitable alternative before proceeding with the cremation."

**col 125 Nick Thomas-Symonds (Labour):** ... The issue of burial has clearly caused great controversy. I know that the Paymaster General is one of the people who have come up with the final version on this matter, and I thank her for the efforts that she has made. This issue is clearly vital for Muslims and those of the Jewish faith. Clearly, they need to be in a position where we respect their rights about burial as far as we possibly can. The wording of Government amendment 52 is now much stronger, and I welcome that, but the Government could also communicate with local authorities as to how they want that

measure to be interpreted in the days and weeks ahead.

**col 136 The Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt):** ... The policy that has been developed on dealing with excess deaths has involved all faith groups from the start. The purpose of the provisions is to ensure that people's choices can be adhered to, that the dignity of the deceased is respected and that support services for families are in place, even in times of great stress. There should be no public health reason or capacity reason why someone who wished to be buried would be cremated. I hope that is very clear. I can give the House that reassurance. ...

**col 137 Yasmin Qureshi (Labour):** ... The provision states that it is desirable for a local authority or public authority to seek the wishes of the deceased person's family or a place of worship if there is no next of kin. Saying that it is desirable to take their views into consideration does not mean that those views will apply if a local authority or public authority decides that a cremation is going to take place, under the legislation as it stands. The Government could make an amendment to clearly specify that if somebody does not wish to be cremated, they will not be cremated. That is missing from the Bill at the moment. ...

**Penny Mordaunt:** We have brought forward an amendment that gives those guarantees with regard to someone's beliefs, religion or wishes. In addition, I stress that it has never been the case—there has never been any doubt about this—that somebody who wished to be buried would have to be cremated. There is no public health reason or capacity reason why that should be the case. We have worked from the off with all faiths to produce the guidelines, and the amendment was produced through consultation. I see no circumstance—and it certainly would not relate to these powers—in which somebody would be cremated against their wishes. I do not think I can give any more guarantees than that. That is absolutely not the intent of the policy and it is certainly not anything to do with the practice. ...

**col 139 Naz Shah (Labour):** ... We know how life as we know it will have to change, and the origins of this Bill have caused huge distress to religious communities, especially those of Muslim and Jewish background. Death is a sensitive time for everyone, and losing a loved one is difficult for us all. We all want dignity in death for our loved ones, and the idea that, in extreme circumstances, when capacity issues arise, the deceased would have to be cremated was something hard to bear, especially for those from the Muslim and Jewish faiths, which strongly oppose cremation. I further thank the Minister for clarifying in the assurance and the guarantees that she has just given that nobody will be cremated against their wishes.

The aim of my amendment was to give, in such difficult circumstances where capacity issues arise for local authorities, further legal protection and to ensure that the next of kin and the relevant faith institutions were consulted, in order to provide added support and protect the deceased from being cremated. I would like to take this opportunity to thank ... the more than 110 cross-party MPs who formally showed their support. I also thank the all-party group on British Muslims for its tireless work behind the scenes, as well as community organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain, the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, Wifaqul Ulama, the British Board of Scholars and Imams, and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. ...

**col 140 Government amendment 52** recognises those rights and provides legal protection for the deceased of Muslim and Jewish communities, requiring their wishes and faith to be shown due regard, to prevent cremation. In some ways, it is clearer and goes further than my amendment. It provides protection to those from faiths where people choose to be buried and to those who choose to be cremated. I therefore do not press my amendment 66 and will support Government amendment 52 to provide this much-needed addition to the Bill. ...

**col 147 Yasmin Qureshi:** Earlier, I asked the Minister about cremation and I know that

she gave me the assurance that no one would be cremated or buried against their religious wishes. However, with all due respect, assurances from the Minister are not the same as provisions in the Bill. The Bill still says that it is “desirable” to ask for views and to do something, but unless the body of the Bill actually states that nobody can be buried or cremated against their religious wishes, the law as it stands is that that is not compulsory—the idea is only advisable or only something to do with consultation. I say that because currently the legislation is that someone cannot be cremated without the consent of the person.

The precise reason why the Government introduced the legislation was so that they could circumvent that by putting in the provision saying it is “desirable”. In a court of law, “desirable” is not the same as saying “you must” or “you cannot cremate or bury somebody unless they wish that to be so”. That is the kind of guarantee that is required in the body of the Bill. ...

*Six hours having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings, the debate was interrupted ... The Chair put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair ...*

*col 169* “PART 3A: DECEASED’S WISHES ETC

“13A(1) In carrying out functions under this Schedule local authorities and the appropriate national authorities must have regard to the desirability of disposing of a dead person’s body or other remains—

(a) in accordance with the person’s wishes, if known, or

(b) otherwise in a way that appears consistent with the person’s religion or beliefs, if known.

(2) In carrying out functions under the legislation listed in sub-paragraph (3), designated local authorities must have regard to the desirability of disposing of a dead person’s body or other remains—

(a) in accordance with the person’s wishes, if known, or

(b) otherwise in a way that appears consistent with the person’s religion or beliefs, if known. ...

*col 170* This amendment ensures that in carrying out functions under Schedule 27 and certain other legislation, local authorities and other public authorities have regard to the desirability of disposing of bodies in accordance with people’s wishes, religions and beliefs (if known).

*Schedule 27, as amended, agreed to. ...*

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-03-23/debates/1BF3C655-EAD2-45DF-BAE2-30052908F7E6/CoronavirusBill>

## House of Lords Debate

### Coronavirus Bill: Second Reading, House of Lords

*col 1656 Lord Falconer of Thoroton (Labour):* ... The House will be aware that concerns have been raised about how cremations could conflict with some religious teachings. Cremation is forbidden in Islam and Judaism, and therefore the possibility of forcing a cremation on a loved one from those communities would add further anguish and trauma to bereaved families who may themselves be in self-isolation. We understand that these provisions are designed to deal with a potential surge in deaths and a lack of grave space capacity. What steps will the Government take on this? In particular, are there plans to consult the deceased person’s family and local faith representatives to find suitable alternative arrangements? ...

*col 1662 The Lord Bishop of Rochester:* ... we in the faith communities absolutely accept that our places of worship are now closed. Such things as weddings are suspended and postponed until a later time. But though the buildings are closed, I hope the communities

and people are not closed. Particularly in relation to our caring and charitable activities, I hope that people of faith, alongside others, will continue to engage. ...

The point has been made about the need for sensitivity to the funerary practices of different faith communities and I know that conversations have been going on with Downing Street about that. We trust that local authorities and others will act in appropriate ways. I think I can speak for all the churches, faith communities and indeed civil celebrants when I say that for as long as we possibly can, we will wish to provide people to officiate at funeral services, even if those services are attended only by the deceased person in their coffin and the officiant—that is part of treating these situations with dignity. ...

*col 1703* **Lord Sheikh (Conservative):** ... The permission granted to local authorities to cremate the deceased caused anxiety within the Jewish and Muslim communities. ...

*col 1704* There should be respect for the souls of our dead. Our collective human dignity and preservation should not be compromised and defeated by this pandemic. It is important to emphasise that Islam strictly forbids cremation of the deceased in any circumstances. There are verses in the Holy Koran which state that the body must be buried. We regard what is written in the Holy Koran as the words of God, and we need to abide by them. There is a great deal of disquiet and concern about the provisions of the Bill relating to this subject.

I have had discussions with, and received correspondence from, leaders of mosques, burial grounds and Muslim organisations, and scholars, who all recognise the practical challenges of burials due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has caused deaths in the community to become a major talking point ...

Although I welcome the Government's concession, I fear that it may not go far enough, as there is a chance that cremations could occur in exceptional circumstances. I would therefore be grateful if my noble friend the Minister could inform your Lordships' House as to whether Her Majesty's Government will give further guarantees to ensure that cremations do not take place against the will of the deceased's loved ones in any circumstances. These guarantees are absolutely essential.

The Muslim community is keen to work with local authorities to find solutions to the challenges arising from the coronavirus pandemic. A fatwa has been issued by the Ulama Council of the UK Islamic Mission, which has declared that the practices of Ghusl and Kafan have been suspended in the present climate. Ghusl means washing the body and Kafan means shrouding the body in accordance with Islamic principles. The deceased's body will therefore be buried as it is received in a body bag. Furthermore, the burial prayers will be performed in a graveyard from a convenient distance at the time of the burial or offered at the grave after the burial has taken place.

Today, I was told that there is a shortage of body bags in mortuaries. That needs to be addressed. Mosques and burial grounds are providing protective clothing to their members who will deal with burials. The number of friends and relatives of the deceased at the funeral is being kept to a minimum. The community also acknowledges that there may be problems regarding burials in the light of a shortage of land and is willing to work with authorities to find solutions. A number of proposals have been made, including: burying bodies one on top of the other; burial in the garden of the deceased person, if this is possible; and burial in mass graves. In relation to the latter, local authorities will need to provide the appropriate land for this to happen. Today, I spoke to the head of a major Muslim charity who is willing to provide support. ...

*col 1718* **Baroness Uddin (Non-affiliated):** ... The Bill suggests using powers to direct the deceased to be cremated if there is a lack of capacity at storage facilities, thus suspending Section 46(3) of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, which prohibits cremation against the wishes of the deceased. This has caused serious panic and anxiety in many parts of our communities and many have written to ask us to raise that matter as Members of Parliament. The honourable Member for Bradford West tabled

an amendment to the Bill and has now withdrawn it. I am thankful for her outstanding campaign to mobilise and bring about the Government's understanding that, even in these times of national existential threat and crisis, we will remain resolute in remaining a society that values freedom of choice, particularly around the dignity of human death.

I spent the whole weekend speaking to various organisations that lead funeral services, including those I mentioned earlier. ... I appreciate the fact that the Paymaster-General has given his assurance, but will the Minister assure us that the provisions in Part 4 of Schedule 28 in relation to the wishes of the deceased will be respected? ...

**col 1737 Lord Bethell [The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care]:** ... [concerning] steps we have taken to ensure that there are no forced cremations for religious followers. This is a very delicate issue, and stakeholder engagement has been moving and persuasive. I reassure noble Lords that we are engaging with faith communities to make sure that contingency measures are designed with due consideration for different practices around managing the deceased.

**Lord Sheikh:** Is my noble friend able to give me the guarantees that the community is looking for with regard to burial and cremation? They are looking for assurances and guarantees.

**Lord Bethell:** ... The amendment agreed to in the Commons is, I believe, an extremely important step in the right direction. A huge amount of discretion is given to local councils to make arrangements with the communities that they know best. This is a set of decision-making that is best made at a local level, and for that reason I would prefer to leave it in the hands of the amendment and in the hands of the local councils. However, I want to be clear that faith communities will be involved in the drawing up of statutory guidance that will be issued before any direction affecting burial or cremation is issued. It is of the utmost importance during this difficult time that we continue to respect people of faith and their beliefs. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/3B3D6FC6-499A-422B-B2DD-B06D6802844D/CoronavirusBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/8570A6D4-3516-4114-B70C-A57638B56C08/CoronavirusBill>

## House of Commons Written Answer

### European Institute of Human Sciences: Muslim Brotherhood

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [29860]** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on potential links between the European Institute for Human Sciences and the Muslim Brotherhood.

**James Brokenshire:** The Government's comprehensive review of the Muslim Brotherhood, completed in December 2015 and published on gov.uk, concluded the movement is a secretive organisation and that parts of it – globally – have a highly ambiguous relationship with violent extremism. The Government keeps under review the views promoted and activities undertaken by the Muslim Brotherhood's associates in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-16/29860/>

*The review referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486948/53163\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood\\_Review\\_-\\_PRINT.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486948/53163_Muslim_Brotherhood_Review_-_PRINT.pdf)

## House of Lords Written Answer

### School of Oriental and African Studies: EuroPal Forum

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL2260] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of SOAS University of London's compliance with the (1) public sector equality duty, and (2) International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism, further to the decision to host a student workshop on advocacy for Palestine on campus on 7 March sponsored by EuroPal Forum; and what assessment they have made of (a) EuroPal Forum's, and (b) EuroPal Forum's senior leadership's, relationship with Hamas.

**Baroness Berridge:** This government has committed to strengthen academic freedom and free speech in universities and ensure they are places where free speech and debate can thrive – this includes considering the underpinning legal framework. We have made it clear that if universities do not uphold free speech, the government will.

However, there is no place in our society - including within higher education (HE) – for hatred or any form of harassment, discrimination or racism, including antisemitism. The government will continue to work with universities to ensure we stamp out antisemitism in all its forms.

The government expects HE providers to take their responsibilities, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and for freedom of speech, seriously. We expect HE providers to have robust policies and procedures in place to meet, and balance, their legal obligations effectively and to investigate and swiftly address reports of hate crime, including any antisemitic incidents that are reported.

We expect HE providers to have clearly set out procedures and policies for events and the hosting of external speakers, which allow for open, transparent events, challenge and debate and ensure that lawful speech can occur on campuses. Under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, HE providers have a legal duty to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure freedom of speech within the law for their members, students, employees and visiting speakers.

The government does not support blanket no-platforming of individuals or organisations. There have been some examples of attempts to restrict free speech under the banner of no-platforming or safe spaces and it is important that this does not become commonplace.

The government adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2016 and has written to HE providers on several occasions encouraging them to consider adopting this definition. The government sees the IHRA definition as an important tool in tackling antisemitism and a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously, which is why we will continue to call on higher education providers to adopt this definition.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-05/HL2260/>

## Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

### Covid-19 (Justice)

**Anas Sarwar (Labour):** ... Will the Scottish Government provide guidance to funeral operators, and particularly community-organised funeral operators? Muslim and Jewish burials are done with a ritual of washing of the body before the burial takes place. Will there be guidance on what should happen with Covid-19 patients in those circumstances? If that is to be done by those community organisations, will the Government help them to acquire PPE so that they can keep themselves safe at this really difficult time? ...

**Humza Yousaf:** I am happy to answer the question. It perhaps does not fall within the remit of the justice secretary, but I work closely with my colleagues in public health, and Joe FitzPatrick in particular. In addition, Anas Sarwar will understand, as I do, that on matters relating to the Muslim community, he and I will often be approached regardless of what our official remits are or are not.

To answer the question directly, I note that guidance has been provided to Glasgow central mosque, which does the vast majority of such funerals in the west of Scotland, but I have been told that it has also been passed to the Muslim Council of Scotland, which will disseminate it across mosques. In relation to the Jewish community, I will have to look that up, but I will ensure that advice is sent to all communities on the specific rituals that they have in dealing with the deceased.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12598&i=113888&c=2252337#ScotParlOR>

## Welsh Assembly Written Answer

### Religion, values and ethics curriculum

**Darren Millar (Conservative)** [WAQ79577] Will the Minister provide details on how she intends to engage with stakeholders when consulting on the new religion, values and ethics curriculum?

**Minister for Education:** There has been engagement with both stakeholders and partners in the development of the new curriculum guidance. This continues in relation to Religion, values and ethics (RVE) through the development of an RVE Framework which will form part of the statutory guidance for the new curriculum. This will be consulted on later this year.

An advisory group was formed in February 2019 to draft the supporting framework guidance for RVE. The group is comprised of the following members:

- Practising teachers of religious education
- Quality Improvement practitioners
- Religious education bodies in Wales, other relevant educational bodies (from England and Wales),
- Religious Education experts, academics and professional associates

Consultation is also planned on this new supporting framework guidance for RVE and will outline how RVE will form the statutory component of the new curriculum. The purpose of this new framework will be to support local authorities and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) when they are reviewing their locally agreed syllabus. This will ensure that the agreed syllabi support the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience.

<https://record.assembly.wales/WrittenQuestion/79577>

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Israel: Coronavirus

**Margaret Ferrier (SNP)** [30792] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to advise against all but essential travel to Israel during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:** The Foreign Office now advises against all but essential travel

globally. The situation is changing rapidly, with many countries imposing restrictions and closing borders. We urge all British nationals in country to speak to their travel provider if they wish to return to UK and follow the guidance of local authorities while they remain overseas. Travellers should speak to their tour operator, airline, transport/accommodation provider and insurance company (as applicable) to discuss the options available to them.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-17/30792/>

#### **Palestinians: Textbooks**

**Scott Benton (Conservative)** [30196] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate she has made of the amount of UK funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency that was disbursed on education using Palestinian Authority approved textbooks in the latest period for which figures are available.

**James Cleverly:** In 2018/19 DFID provided £65.5 million to UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) including £47.5 million to UNRWA's programme budget, which includes their education programme. On average UNRWA spends 58% of this budget on education enabling UNRWA to educate more than 533,000 children, half of whom are girls. Around 325,000 children attend schools in Gaza and the West Bank.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-16/30196/>

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

#### **Palestinians: Travel Restrictions**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2378] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the reported closure of the West Bank and Gaza strip to people and goods for Israeli elections and religious holidays and the effect of such closures on residents' ability to work.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We recognise the Israeli authorities' legitimate need to deploy security measures in some circumstances, including the closure of checkpoints and crossings, and we encourage them to do so in a way which minimises tensions. Through our Embassy in Tel Aviv we have lobbied the authorities on the issue of movement and access, most recently on 17 December 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-09/HL2378/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Israeli Settlements: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2379] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of damage caused by settler vandalism on the livelihoods of Palestinians.

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2380] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ecological damage and loss of income caused by Israeli settlers reportedly spraying poisonous chemicals on Palestinian crops in the Jordan Valley.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are troubled by reports of vandalism of Palestinian agricultural land. Such damage is destructive to peace efforts. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-09/HL2379/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-09/HL2380/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2381] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the reported killing of an unarmed Palestinian near Tul Karm in the West Bank by an Israeli soldier and the subsequent deprivation of the family's Israeli work permits.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made representations on this specific case, the UK is very concerned at such issues. We have raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-09/HL2381/>

### **Israel: Textbooks**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2463] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the contents of any Israeli school text books contain incitement of racial hatred toward Palestinians.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government has not made an assessment of this issue. We have a regular dialogue with both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for peace. We urge both the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, any type of action and language that could be considered incitement to violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-10/HL2463/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2464] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about reports by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel that a 12 year-old Palestinian boy with a heart condition was taken into custody by Israeli forces on 25 February and was interrogated without family or legal support.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are not aware of these reports and have not made representations to the Government of Israel on the case. Nonetheless, the UK has strong concerns about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. Reports of the high number of Palestinian children who are not informed of their legal rights, in contravention of Israel's own regulations, are particularly concerning. We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on this issue. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv did so most recently on 16 December 2019. We continue to fund projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers. Specifically, we advocate for the Israeli authorities to inform more consistently detainees of their legal rights.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-10/HL2464/>

## Iran: Palestinians

**Lord Polak (Conservative)** [HL2356] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Iran's (1) involvement in, and (2) policy of, encouraging peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Iran continues to support a number of militant and proscribed groups in the region, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Palestinian rejectionist groups. This support is concerning, and directly undermines prospects for regional security and lasting peace in the region. 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. We will continue to work with likeminded partners to advance the Middle East Peace Process, countering those who embrace violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-09/HL2356/>

TOP

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

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

#### **\*\* Coronavirus Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/coronavirus.html>

Second Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-03-23/debates/F4D06B4F-56CD-4B60-8306-BAB6D78AC7CF/CoronavirusBill>

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0122/amend/coronavirus\\_daily\\_cwh\\_0320rev.1-7.html](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0122/amend/coronavirus_daily_cwh_0320rev.1-7.html)

Committee Stage, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-03-23/debates/1BF3C655-EAD2-45DF-BAE2-30052908F7E6/CoronavirusBill>

First Reading, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/3B563BA2-93EF-4888-9D2B-67C84CF7B81A/CoronavirusBill>

Second Reading, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/3B3D6FC6-499A-422B-B2DD-B06D6802844D/CoronavirusBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/8570A6D4-3516-4114-B70C-A57638B56C08/CoronavirusBill>

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

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

Third Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/3684D8F0-2B65-4646-A800-BE48EC95E97F/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-24/debates/3684D8F0-2B65-4646-A800-BE48EC95E97F/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill(HL))

## 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

### \*\* closes in 2 days

**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>

### \*\* closes in 6 days

**Hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland: an independent review** (closing date 31 March 2020)

<https://www.hatecrimereviewni.org.uk/sites/hcr/files/media-files/Consultation%20Paper%20Feb%202020.pdf>

**Electing a more diverse Assembly** (closing date 22 April 2020)

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=389>

**Amendments to the organ donation regulations (Wales)** (closing date 30 April 2020)

<https://gov.wales/amendments-organ-donation-regulations>

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

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

**Protecting places of worship** (closing date 10 May 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

TOP