



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Debate

#### Human Tissue

[draft Human Tissue (Permitted Material: Exceptions) (England) Regulations 2020]

*col 513* **The Minister for Care (Helen Whately):** ... Subject to approval of these regulations, we aim for deemed consent to become legal on 20 May. ...

*col 524* From the outset, we have been clear that deemed consent would apply only for routine transplants, to increase the number of organs and tissues available and help those that are on a waiting list. Examples of routine transplants are heart, kidneys or lungs. Novel transplants will still require express consent. The organs and tissues specified in the regulations are included because they could be used for non-routine transplants, such as a face transplant. Such transplants are outside the scope of what we want to achieve. Demand for novel transplants is very low, and people would not normally identify organ donation with them. ...

*col 517* **Alex Norris (Labour Co-op):** ... The black, Asian or minority ethnic community suffers particularly when it comes to transplants. In 2018, 21% of those who died waiting for transplants were from a black, Asian or minority ethnic group. There is a higher chance of a successful transplant if the organ comes from an individual of the same ethnic background, but that means that those from black or Asian backgrounds currently wait six to 11 months longer for an organ match. This inequality will not do, and there have to be practical things to change it, starting immediately. ...

*col 518* ... we agree that deemed consent should only apply to routine transplants. This is a matter of ensuring that public policy going forward matches the public's expectation. I share the Government's view that this would not reflect rare or novel procedures, including to create advanced therapy medicinal products, taking place without explicit consent. ...

*col 520* **Taiwo Owetemi (Labour):** ... From tomorrow, the new opt-out system in England will provide a lifeline for hundreds of people desperately in need of a transplant. ...

We must understand that some communities are apprehensive about the donation of their organs, which can be due to cultural and religious sensitivities around the displacement of organs from the body. There is also a low uptake among ethnic minorities with particular

blood types. ... The sad truth is that ethnic minorities tend to wait significantly longer for a successful match than other patients. In the light of tomorrow's change in the law, more awareness building needs to be done, to emphasise the importance of organ donation within ethnic minority communities. ...

**col 523 Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... We welcome the revised codes of practice having a greater focus on faiths and beliefs. We believe that that will support better conversations and give greater assurances to families when a potential donor's faith or belief is an important part of that decision making. ...

**col 525 Helen Whately:** ... patient safety and the involvement of the family in discussions about organ donation will remain absolutely a paramount consideration, and we will keep raising awareness of the importance of organ donation. ...

... there has been specific funding to BAME and faith groups to raise awareness within their communities, but I agree that more must be done to make sure that this is successful. ...

*col 526 Motion approved in House of Commons*

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-19/debates/D3DCA36D-1191-4C72-A426-89B58DB3F4E3/HumanTissue>

*Motion approved in House of Lords*

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-05-19/debates/346D4840-2A02-4C2A-9B49-D0245438BE67/HumanTissue\(PermittedMaterialExceptions\)\(England\)Regulations2020](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-05-19/debates/346D4840-2A02-4C2A-9B49-D0245438BE67/HumanTissue(PermittedMaterialExceptions)(England)Regulations2020)

## House of Commons Oral Answers

### Clergy's Access to Churches

**Jerome Mayhew (Conservative):** What assessment the Commissioners have made of the implications for the access of clergy to their churches of the most recent Government advice on covid-19. [902784]

**The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Andre Selous):** Clergy can now return to their churches to pray and live-stream services. For the time being, churches must remain closed for public worship, as set out in law. The Government set out their ambition to reopen places of worship from 4 July, subject to further scientific advice. No place of worship will be able to reopen before a final decision by the Government, the necessary changes to the legal position in the published regulations and the accompanying decision by the diocesan bishop, which will take into account local circumstances.

**Jerome Mayhew:** During this national crisis, there has been a vital role for the established Church to represent the concerns and fears of the whole nation. Does my hon. Friend agree that the physical presence of a parish church, open for prayer and attended by its priests, is an important signal that we are not alone in our struggle? Health workers, care workers, bin collectors, posties and now all those who are unable to undertake their work from home have been asked to accept additional personal risk to carry out their important work for the health and wellbeing of the nation. Should our clergy not be allowed to provide the same level of service to their—*[Inaudible.]* ...

**Andrew Selous:** I very much agree with my hon. Friend about the physical presence of churches, but while our buildings may be closed, the Church is very much alive and has been astonishingly present in the midst of suffering and need, providing comfort, inspiration and a great deal of practical help. Those who allege that we have done nothing or vacated the field are not correct.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-19/debates/6ADE1E1F-6F8A-4A2D-A84A-6A859309D2F2/Clergy%E2%80%99SAccessToChurches>

## Buildings, Liturgy and Worship: Adaptation

**Fiona Bruce (Conservative):** What representations the Church of England has received on the adaptation of its buildings, liturgy and worship prior to their reopening after the covid-19 lockdown. [902785]

**The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Andrew Selous):** The House of Bishops guidance issued on 5 May shows that the Church of England is committed to reopening buildings in a phased and measured manner, in accordance with the legal position. We are working with the Government and representatives of the heritage planning sector to assess the need for building adaptations related to public health.

**Fiona Bruce:** Polling shows that during the current crisis, one in four adults, and one in three of 16 to 30-year-olds, have joined a religious service remotely. Does my hon. Friend welcome that, and what is the Church doing to ensure that this continues more widely, even after lockdown?

**Andrew Selous:** I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing those figures to the House's attention and I welcome them very warmly, particularly the large viewing figures among younger people. She is absolutely right that the Church will need to keep up a significant online presence well after lockdown has finished.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-19/debates/DC546CA2-55A2-4ADE-A4F4-D923A09D3FBC/BuildingsLiturgyAndWorshipAdaptation>

*The guidance referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/house-bishops-backs-phased-approach-revising-access-church-buildings>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Palestinians: Recognition of States

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL3850] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise Palestine as a state.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** 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. The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3850/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### Israeli Settlements

**Lord Hain (Labour)** [HL3863] To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the government of Israel about its planned annexation of parts of the West Bank.

**Lord Grocott (Labour)** [HL4255] To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the government of Israel in respect of Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We made clear our deep concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank at the UN Security Council remote

meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law. The Prime Minister reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 6 February.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3863/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4255/>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

### Dominic Raab

Congratulations to @Netanyahu and @gantzbe on the swearing-in of the 35th Israeli government. I look forward to continuing to work with [Israeli flag] and my counterpart @Gabi\_Ashkenazi. The [British flag] and [Israeli flag] relationship will always be of great importance

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1262762405752270849>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Conservative)** [HL4380] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to make the position of UK Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief a permanent position; and, if so, whether the role will always be filled by a member of the House of Commons or House of Lords.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Bishop of Truro's independent Review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Support for Persecuted Christians recommended that the FCO "establish[es] permanently, and in perpetuity, the role of Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief". The choice of Special Envoy is a decision for the Prime Minister. I was honoured to be appointed in 2018 as the UK's first ever envoy, an appointment reconfirmed by the current Prime Minister in July 2019. Rehman Chishti MP succeeded me as Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in September 2019, but I continue to champion FoRB as Minister of State with responsibility for Human Rights.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4380/>

*The Review referred to above can be read at*

<https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/storage/2019/07/final-report-and-recommendations.pdf>

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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>

#### **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

#### **Protecting places of worship** (closing date 28 June 2020)

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

#### **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 24 July 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115038.aspx>

#### **Legislative proposals for religion, values and ethics [Wales]** (closing date 28 July 2020)

<https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>

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