



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### **Social Media: Regulation**

**Baroness Kennedy of Cradley (Non-affiliated)** [HL7371] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) Google, (2) Twitter, (3) Facebook, and (4) other social media sites, about (a) the action, and (b) the time, those companies take to remove (i) racist, (ii) anti-Semitic, (iii) abusive, (iv) criminal, and (v) illegal, content online.

**Baroness Barran:** Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with social media platforms such as Google, Twitter and Facebook on a range of issues, including hate speech, abusive and illegal online content. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the Gov.uk website.

We are aiming to publish the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year which will outline the detailed proposals for keeping users safe online. We will continue to engage with industry representatives as we finalise proposals and move towards legislation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-27/HL7371/>

### Scottish Government

#### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's speech 7 August 2020**

... At the moment, the use of face coverings is mandatory in shops and on public transport. ... When it comes to other enclosed spaces, we currently advise people to wear face coverings. But we have not made it mandatory.

However, as we come further out of lockdown, the risks are [increasing]. More people are out and about. More places have reopened. And more people are gathering together.

So as a precautionary measure, I am announcing today that we are expanding the range of indoor premises where people must wear a face covering. From tomorrow, that list will include venues like libraries, museums, and places of worship. ...

I can also confirm today that we are updating our guidance on face visors. Based on the

latest scientific evidence, we are not convinced that a face visor on its own provides sufficient protection – to the wearer or to others. So again from tomorrow, if a visor is worn it must be accompanied by another type of face covering. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-7-august-2020/>

## Welsh Government

**Updated guidance to local authorities, approved premises and places of worship on marriages and civil partnerships: coronavirus**

<https://gov.wales/guidance-marriages-and-civil-partnerships-coronavirus-html>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7404] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for using the Royal Navy to protect Palestinian fishermen from attacks by the Israeli Navy.

**Baroness Sugg:** HMG have not made an assessment on using the Royal Navy in this way.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-27/HL7404/>

#### Iran: Israel

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative)** [HL7172] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the comment by the Foreign Minister of Israel on 5 July that in regard to Iran "we take actions that are better left unsaid"; and when they last discussed with the government of Israel their policy towards the government of Iran.

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK and Israel share a strong partnership, and we regularly discuss regional issues with the Government of Israel, including their policy towards Iran. We continue to urge de-escalation and dialogue in the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-22/HL7172/>

#### Palestinians: Archaeological Sites

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7405] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for providing protection for archaeological artefacts in Palestine to ensure that any such artefacts remain under Palestinian ownership.

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK acknowledges the importance of protecting archaeological artefacts in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In our meetings with the Israeli authorities we regularly raise the need to respect the status quo of the holy sites in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to avoid actions that make it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-27/HL7405/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7407] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the civil rights of Palestinians living in Israel, in particular in Jisr al-Zarqa.

**Baroness Sugg:** Israel is a thriving democracy with a long-standing commitment to equality for all. It maintains a fine balance between its Jewish identity and its democratic values. We are aware that some Israelis can face additional structural challenges, particularly Arab Israelis including in Jisr al-Zarqa, who experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment and who can face discrimination. As a friend to Israel, we have also expressed our concern in cases where Israeli laws could undermine the equality of members of minority groups, particularly the Nation State Basic Law of 2017. We encourage the Israeli government to do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all enshrined in its laws.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-27/HL7407/>

### Iyad Hallaq

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7408] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that the government of Israel does not have sufficient evidence to convict those who killed Eyad Al-Hallaq, and (2) that no footage has been recovered of the incident from the CCTV cameras or mobile phones in the area.

**Baroness Sugg:** As the UK Consul General in Jerusalem and the UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv stated on 31 May, we were deeply saddened to hear about the death of Iyad Khairi Hallaq after he was shot by Israeli police in East Jerusalem. We urge restraint in the use of live fire by the Israel Defense Forces. As we outlined at the UN Security Council meeting on the Middle East on 21 July, in instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations and if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. The perpetual cycle of violence must end.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-27/HL7408/>

*The UK contribution to the UN Security Council meeting referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/moving-toward-peace-negotiations-in-the-middle-east>*

### Israeli Settlements

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7479] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the construction of (1) a new settlement near Asira a-Shamaliya on land owned by Palestinians, and (2) earthworks by Israeli armed forces preventing Palestinians from reaching their farmland.

**Baroness Sugg:** We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including settlement expansion and restrictions on freedom of movement within the West Bank, including to and from East Jerusalem. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We urge Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians. 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/2020-07-28/HL7479/>

### **Rania Elias and Suhail Khoury**

**The Earl of Sandwich (Crossbench)** [HL7555] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the detention of Rania Elias and Suhail Khoury; and what plans they have to raise those detentions with international partners.

**Baroness Sugg:** Our Consul General in Jerusalem has publicly expressed his concern. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees. We also continue to support the Palestinian cultural presence and identity in East Jerusalem, as well as Palestinian physical presence there.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-29/HL7555/>

### **UN Interim Force in Lebanon**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7448] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of efforts by Hezbollah and the government of Lebanon to impede the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from carrying out its mandate; and what steps they have taken to raise this at the UN Security Council.

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK remains concerned by Hizballah's activities within Lebanon which are in clear breach of UN Security Council Resolutions 1509 and 1701. We regularly raise our concerns at the UN Security Council, and call on all parties to abide by the provisions of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-28/HL7448/>

### **Israel: Lebanon**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7449] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of increased tensions along the Israel–Lebanon border and the readiness of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon to mediate effectively between the governments of Israel and Lebanon as well as to diffuse any increase in hostilities.

**Baroness Sugg:** We are aware of reports of increased tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border. The UK condemns all violations of UN Security Council Resolutions 1509 and 1701, and call for all sides to adhere to the relevant resolutions. We welcome United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon's efforts to mediate between parties and decrease tensions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-28/HL7449/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Hezbollah: Guided Weapons**

**Baroness Eaton (Conservative)** [HL7205] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports by Alma Research and Education Centre indicating that Hezbollah has located at least 28 missile launch sites in residential areas in Beirut, including next to schools, hospitals and places of worship.

**Baroness Eaton (Conservative)** [HL7206] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to address at the United Nations Security Council reports that Hezbollah has located missile launch sites in residential areas of Beirut.

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK remains concerned by reports that Hizballah continues to amass an arsenal of weapons, in breach of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701. We condemn the threat this poses to regional stability.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-23/HL7205/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-23/HL7206/>

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## **Relevant Legislation**

\*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

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

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

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

#### **Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

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