



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Lords Written Answers

Marriage: Ceremonies

Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat) [HL8715] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the safeguards which would be required for commercial independent celebrants to perform legally recognised marriages.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government announced in June 2019 that the Law Commission will conduct a fundamental review of the law on how and where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of that review, the Government invited the Law Commission to make recommendations including considering how independent celebrants could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme for all marriages that is simple, fair and consistent.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8715>

Information about the review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-begins-work-on-weddings-reform/>

and

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Marriage: Humanism

Lord Desai (Labour) [HL8717] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Law Commission to complete its current review of marriage law; and what plans they have to introduce legal recognition of humanist marriages after that review.

Lord Desai (Labour) [HL8718] To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the High Court judgement in R (Harrison and others) v Secretary of State for Justice [2020] EWHC 2096 (Admin), what plans they have to extend legal recognition to humanist marriages, after the current Law Commission review of marriages concludes.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government announced in June 2019 that the Law Commission will conduct a fundamental review of the law on how and where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of that review, the

Government invited the Law Commission to make recommendations about how marriage by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme for all marriages that is simple, fair and consistent.

The Commission initially delayed its publication of the consultation paper due to the Coronavirus pandemic, but the consultation launched on 3 September 2020 and will last until 3 December 2020. The law on wedding ceremonies is a complex and important area of the law. The Commission considered it essential to conduct a proper consultation with the wide range of interested groups and individuals who would be affected by reform. It did not feel that publishing during the initial period of public emergency would achieve this, particularly when weddings were being postponed.

The Commission expects to report to Government with its recommendations in the second half of next year. The Government will decide on provision on the basis of the Law Commission's recommendations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8717>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8718>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2020/2096.html>

Information about the review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-begins-work-on-weddings-reform/>

and

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

TOP

Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Democracy

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8783] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the rejection by the Knesset of a bill aimed at introducing equality for all Israeli citizens, what assessment they have made of the functioning of democracy in Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Israel is a thriving democracy which maintains a fine balance between its Jewish identity and its democratic values. As a friend to Israel, we have regularly expressed our concern in cases where Israeli laws could undermine the equality of members of minority groups. We encourage the Israeli Government to do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all enshrined in its laws.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8783>

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8782] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take to prevent (1) the demolition of property, and (2) the levelling of land, owned by Palestinians by the Israel Defence Force for the expansion of any illegal settlements in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by the continued demolitions of Palestinian structures by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

We have made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Our longstanding position on settlements is that they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. The UK funds a number of projects that support Palestinians communities in the West Bank, from the effects of settlement expansion in particular. Our legal aid programme also supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home eviction in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8782>

Gaza: Ammunition

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8781] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of heavy metal residues from munitions in the environment on (1) foetal, and (2) subsequent child, development in Gaza; and what studies, if any, they have commissioned on this issue.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made an assessment of this issue, we are deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. In addition to our emergency support to aid the COVID-19 crisis, we are providing a further £2.5m to UN agencies to provide food assistance, medical supplies and personal protection for the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees and non-refugees. The UK urges all parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8781>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8785] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that 23 Palestinians were abducted by the Israel Defence Force on 23 September in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made an assessment of these reports, we remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8785>

Abd al-Rahman Jabarah

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8784] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the shooting of Abd al-Rahman Jabarah by police in that country.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made representations on this specific incident, we remain deeply concerned by the ongoing cycle of violence. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/hl8784>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Hard-won equality and human rights at risk of going backwards in wake of pandemic

... Caroline Waters, Interim Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, said: “In the early days we said that coronavirus did not discriminate. However, the virus has torn through our lives exposing stark inequalities which show that ultimately, the outcomes it creates, do. We cannot afford for inequality in our society to become further entrenched. And as we learn to live with coronavirus and look to re-build our society, we have to strike a difficult balance between making sure that lives are protected, but also protecting the hard-won freedoms that are the hallmark of life in Britain. ...

The pandemic has painfully exposed the fragility of the gains that we’d made towards becoming a fairer and more prosperous society. As we look towards the future and consider what our ‘new normal’ may look like, we have to decide what sort of a society we want to become. ...”

The negative effect on people from different ethnic minorities is evident as many have faced a perfect storm of being both more likely to die from the virus and more likely to experience financial hardship as a result of the pandemic. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/hard-won-equality-and-human-rights-risk-going-backwards-wake-pandemic>

How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equality_and_human_rights_commission_how_coronavirus_has_affected_equality_and_human_rights_2020.pdf

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

Genocide Determination Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

Scottish Parliament

**** Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

Bill as introduced

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill/introduced/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill-as-introduced.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill/introduced/explanatory-notes-domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill.pdf>

Policy Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill/introduced/policy-memorandum-domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill.pdf>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill/introduced/delegated-powers-memorandum-domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill.pdf>

Financial Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill/introduced/financial-memorandum-domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill.pdf>

Equality Impact Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill-eqia/>

Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill-crwia/>

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>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type B Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations
(closing date 20 November 2020)

<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/consultation-specified-type-b-procedures/>

Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Weddings Law (closing date 3 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

Hate crime laws (closing date 24 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

TOP

