



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Ministry for Communities, Housing and Local Government

**COVID-19: Updated guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

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## Israel

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

#### **UK statement on Israeli settlements, January 2021**

The UK government has set out its position on the Government of Israel's decision to approve new settlements in the West Bank.

A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said: The UK is seriously concerned by the Government of Israel's decision to approve the construction of 780 new settlement units across the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including areas deep within the West Bank which could threaten future peace negotiations.

Settlements are illegal under international law and risk undermining the physical viability of the two state solution. We call for the construction of these in East Jerusalem and elsewhere in the West Bank to cease

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-statement-on-israeli-settlements-january-2021>

#### **Enhancing cooperation between the Arab nations and bringing peace and stability to the region**

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States.

... The League [of Arab States] has played and continues to play an important role in promoting regional peace and security. Enhancing cooperation and friendship between the Arab nations, and between the region and the rest of the world. Throughout its history it has been a voice of moderation and mediation during times of regional conflict. ...

With regards to the Middle East peace process, the United Kingdom remains committed to a two state solution, leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State, based on the 1967 lines and with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. The United Kingdom is clear that all actions that undermine this objective must cease, including terrorism, incitement, settlement expansion, and demolitions. The United Kingdom has welcomed recent Arab-Israeli normalisation agreements, which show that dialogue triumphs over hostility. The closer ties and benefits of these agreements must also be extended to the Palestinians. We encourage the parties to harness the new regional dynamic, and through dialogue and compromise, to move towards a lasting solution to the conflict. ...

As we build back better towards a long-term, sustainable, peaceful, and prosperous future, we look forward to deepening and developing the relationship between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/enhancing-cooperation-between-the-arab-nations-and-bringing-peace-and-stability-to-the-region>

## Welsh Assembly Oral Answer

### Questions to the First Minister

**Adam Price (Plaid Cymru):** It's right, of course, for us not to be just parochial, if you like, and comparing ourselves to other nations in these islands, but comparing ourselves to some of the best in the world. We know, of course, by Sunday, Israel had vaccinated 20 per cent of its population—I think it's now up to 28 per cent. It was initially expected that their programme would also suffer a slow down with Pfizer doses running low, but the Israeli Government secured a commitment from the company to bring forward deliveries on the grounds that they would share statistical data, in return giving scientists a case study to which to analyse the impact of the vaccine roll-out. That means that they're on target to meet a complete vaccination of their citizens over 16 within two months. First Minister, would you commit to contacting Pfizer to explore avenues for Wales to reach a similar agreement, or failing this, would you make representations to the UK Prime Minister to pursue a similar path, so that we can make this lockdown that we're going through now the last lockdown?

**The First Minister (Mark Drakeford):** Well ... we do have direct contact with suppliers of the vaccine, but that is not about a contract that is struck with them, that is done by the UK Government on behalf of all four nations. I'll raise the points the Member has made at my next meeting with the UK Government tomorrow, but the negotiations that they carry out on our behalf have succeeded in securing for the United Kingdom, and therefore for Wales, supplies of vaccine that mean that the United Kingdom, and Wales as part of it, is ... at the leading edge of vaccination on the world stage. ...

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/11171#C346756>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2622>

#### **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 (Approved Organisations) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2537>

#### **Marriage (Authorised Belief Organisations) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2795>

#### **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>

#### **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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## **Consultations** \*\* new or updated today

**Introduction of a statutory opt-out system for organ donation for Northern Ireland**  
(closing date 19 February 2021)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/organ-donation>

**Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19**

(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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