



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL14505] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to participate in the Palestinian elections scheduled for May; and what steps they will take to ensure that they are able to participate.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have welcomed President Abbas' announcement of dates for legislative and Presidential elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for the first time since 2006. We encourage the Palestinian leadership to work toward strong, inclusive, accountable and democratic institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights. Free and fair elections are an important and necessary step. The UK will work closely with the Palestinian Authority and international partners to support this, including encouraging the Government of Israel to allow elections in East Jerusalem, in keeping with the Oslo Accords.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/hl14505>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL14505] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the demolition of Palestinian homes in Al-Bustan, East Jerusalem, and (2) the displacement of Palestinian residents from that area.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is supporting communities in Area C, whose homes have been demolished, to remain on their land. We continue to engage frequently with the Israeli authorities on issues affecting Palestinians, including demolitions. The UK urged the Government of Israel to end demolitions of property in the West Bank at the UN Security Council on 25 February 2021. On the same day, the British Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised his concerns about the demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020.

UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to

areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/hl14504>

The UK speech to the Security Council, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/working-towards-a-two-state-solution>

The Minister's call to stop demolitions referred to above, can be read at

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1357723513940045824>

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Lord Judd (Labour) [HL14507] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel is planning to remove 37 Palestinian households from the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan areas of East Jerusalem; and what action are they taking, both unilaterally and multilaterally, to prevent any such removals.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly make clear our concerns about the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem to the Israeli authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem, both bilaterally and in co-operation with like-minded diplomatic partners. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity.

The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 February 2021. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa raised the issue of evictions of Palestinians from their homes, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October 2020, and the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raises this issue regularly with the Israeli authorities. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. On 25 November 2020, the UK Consul General Jerusalem visited families at risk of eviction in Sheikh Jarrah, restating UK opposition to evictions of Palestinians from their homes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/hl14507>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL14536] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of Palestinian families in the West Bank being attacked by Israeli settlers; what steps they will take to support such families; and what further representations they will make to the government of Israel to protect such families.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemns any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. We call on the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and allegation of crimes against protected persons in the West Bank, and where appropriate bring those responsible to justice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/hl14536>

Atef Yousef Hanaysha

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL14537] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the reported killing of Atef Yousef Hanaysha by Israeli forces during a protest against the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the reports surrounding the death

of Atef Yousef Hanaysha. Whilst we have not made representations on this particular case, in instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/hl14537>

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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>

Domestic Abuse Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2709>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

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

Freedom of Speech (Universities) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2820>

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>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

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