



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

col 23 Hilary Benn (Labour): ... I must confess that, like many people, there are things I have learned in the last few days about the life of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, that I did not previously know. They include the difficult circumstances of his early life, his mother's bravery in hiding a Jewish family from the Germans in Greece during the war, for which she is remembered at Yad Vashem as one of the righteous among the nations, and just how deep and long-standing was his personal commitment to wildlife and nature conservation ...

col 32 Bernard Jenkin (Conservative): ... The Duke founded a profoundly changing institution, St George's House, which is committed to effecting change for the better and nurturing wisdom through dialogue. That was in 1966, before there was much interfaith dialogue between the Christian Churches, let alone between Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Christians of all denominations. That powered a new direction of religious thinking in this country. ...

col 47 Robert Halfon (Conservative): ... It was good to read over the past few days not just about his heroic service in the second world war but about his defence of Jewish children who were being victimised by the Nazis when he attended a German school, and about how his late mother protected Jewish families. ...

col 55 Adam Holloway (Conservative) ... This morning, I learned from a Jewish friend of mine that in the second world war, when the Nazis started shipping Jews out from Athens in 1942, his mother hid the Cohen family for nearly a year, despite the fact that her small flat was pretty much next door to the Gestapo headquarters. Her body now rests on the Mount of Olives, and she is honoured as Righteous Among the Nations. ...

col 107 Fiona Bruce (Conservative): ... many who knew him have testified to the depth of his faith also. Indeed, although he is often described as a man of action, it is less well known that he was also very much a thinker, with a theologically inquiring mind. He invested time to understand, discuss and reflect on matters of faith. He founded St George's House at Windsor, a conference centre where clergy and lay people gather to

discuss and explore issues. The theme of their first meeting in 1966 was: “The role of the Church in society today.”

Prince Philip authored or collaborated on a number of books, three of them notably about matters of faith. ... In ... “A Question of Balance”, the Duke concluded: “Religious conviction is the strongest and probably the only factor in sustaining the dignity and integrity of the individual.” ...

col 108 Prince Philip promoted interfaith dialogue long before its importance was widely recognised, as it is today. In 1986, he gathered leaders of a range of world faiths to consider with environmentalists how together they could work to better sustain the natural world. In 1995, he furthered this aim by founding the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

In closing, and speaking as the Prime Minister’s special envoy for freedom of religion or belief, I refer to the tribute from the Council of Christians and Jews, which expressed gratitude for Prince Philip’s contribution to strengthening relationships between those faiths and expressed confidence that for “those who work for reconciliation and cooperation between people of different faiths and communities”, his “legacy of quiet and faithful service will continue to be an inspiration to all”. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-04-12/debates/318D37CC-AFE4-41EB-BDAF-5D04513513A2/HisRoyalHighnessThePrincePhilipDukeOfEdinburgh>

House of Lords Debate

His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

col 1062 **The Archbishop of Canterbury:** ... The Duke of Edinburgh had a profound moral imagination, extraordinary foresight and even vision. He saw the world not just as it is but as it could and should be ...

His genuine and deep sense of humility and his service came from the same place, which was his faith. ... He had a sincere Christian faith absolutely untainted by false piety, of which he was very intolerant, whoever showed it—quite rightly. It was formed and developed by wrestling with great issues, and refined by meeting such an extraordinary variety of people around the Commonwealth and the world and learning about their lives. He understood deeply how important faith is for the vast majority of the world’s population. He engaged the rich diversity of faiths within the UK and the Commonwealth. He was a pioneer in recognising the crucial role that faith leaders play in advocating for creation care. ...

His service was a profound expression of his faith. He knew who he was, and his faith was central to who he was and how he lived his life. ...

col 1067 **Lord Alderdice (Liberal Democrat):** ... He was extraordinary, but he was also a man of great depth, as the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury has said. For him, meaning, faith and commitment in life were truly important. I think for him it was not always just the content of belief but the conduct of life that was crucial: to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God. It seems to me that the one who worshiped was a servant king, and that was the transformation the Duke engineered in our monarchy. He and Her Majesty the Queen entered at a time of imperial rule; they leave when the monarchy represents public service. ...

col 1097 **Baroness Deech (Crossbench):** ... I am glad to have this opportunity to put on record the gratitude—indeed, the most heartfelt emotion—experienced by those who are aware of the heroic acts of His Royal Highness’s mother, Princess Alice. The daughter of a Holocaust survivor who was saved by her has recounted how, in 1943, it was clear in Athens that Greek Jews were being taken to concentration camps. One Alfred Cohen, head of a prominent family and living among the community of 8,000 Jews, came across

Princess Alice's lady-in-waiting. Through her, the princess offered his family refuge on the top floor of her house, only yards from the Gestapo headquarters. Mr Cohen wrote that, for them, it was "an absolute miracle" that the lady in waiting had gone to see the Princess. An hour later, they were informed that she would take them in—father, wife, daughter and grandson. When the German generals came round looking for people in hiding, the princess pretended that she could not understand them because she was deaf. They left her alone. She did this despite the sanction of execution had she been found out. The Cohen family survived the war.

At her request, Princess Alice was buried in the Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene on the Mount of Olives. In 1994, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip became the first member of the Royal Family to visit Israel when he accepted a special recognition of his mother for her rescue effort, visited her burial site and planted a tree in her memory. It seems that His Royal Highness shared his mother's kind nature, perhaps recalling that he had come to the UK as a child refugee. Speaking on the occasion of the award to his mother, he said: "The Holocaust was the most horrific event in all Jewish history, and it will remain in the memory of all future generations."

In 2015, he and the Queen visited Bergen-Belsen.

Despite the inevitable criticism, His Royal Highness spoke many times at Jewish events and supported the Jewish National Fund, an environmental organisation. The Jewish community appreciated him and will miss him. He supported the Council of Christians and Jews and, not unsurprisingly, had a keen appreciation of religious differences. When he visited the Sternberg Centre in the 1990s, he was shown the interfaith room, with his hosts telling him that they worked hard on Jewish-Christian relationships. "Really?" he replied, "And what about Jewish-Jewish relationships?" ...

col 1108 Lord Polak (Conservative): My Lords, Psalm 133 begins: "Hinne mah tov umah na'im Shevet achim gam yachad."

"How good and how pleasant it is that people sit together in unity."

His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh has brought us together in unity as we pay our respects and celebrate a wonderful life. In so doing, I offer sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and all the Royal Family, as was done throughout the country in synagogues last Shabbat. ...

I recall as a primary schoolboy the sheer excitement that Prince Philip was visiting our school, King David in Liverpool, arriving in a helicopter and landing on our football pitch—although it is true that many of us were most concerned that he might ruin our football pitch. Growing up in Liverpool, I was an active and proud member of the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, where participation and attaining success in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme was the pinnacle of achievement; over 25,000 members of JLDB over the years have been honoured to have been DofE award recipients. ...

In July 2000, as vice-chairman of the governors of Hertsmere Jewish Primary School, I had the honour to welcome Prince Philip to officially open the school. He had great pleasure in naming it the "Joy and Stanley Cohen Hertsmere Jewish Primary School". What happened on that day, and the next, has always stayed with me; the Duke was nothing short of amazing. He stopped to talk to so many of the five year-olds who were waving union jacks on the pathway, welcoming him to the school. The official ceremony started late because he wanted to personally thank each and every one of those friends of the school who had made donations ...

As has been said, Prince Philip was ahead of his time in so many ways. The *Times of Israel* said that Prince Philip "was perhaps the closest member of the ... royal family to Jews and Jewish causes, and", as the noble Baroness, Lady Deech, said, "in 1994 made a historic visit to Israel", although a personal visit, "to honor his mother, Princess Alice ... in Jerusalem".

On that trip, Prince Philip also visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem to participate in a ceremony honouring his mother as a Righteous Among the Nations who

saved three members of the Cohen family in Athens during the Nazi occupation of Greece. In his speech, Prince Philip said: “We did not know, and, as far as we know, she never mentioned to anyone, that she had given refuge to the Cohen family ... I suspect that it never occurred to her that her action was ... special.”

col 1110 I conclude as I began, for while the children were singing and entertaining the attendees at the school opening, they sang the popular song “Hinneh Mah Tov Umah Na'im”, Psalm 133. A number of tunes are sung to these words and, as the children sang the fourth melody, the Duke touched my arm and whispered to me. He said, “I recognise that Jewish tune”. I replied, “Indeed, Your Royal Highness. It's the Flintstones”. He giggled like a schoolboy. He was able to share the excitement of the day with the children, parents and teachers—a day they will never forget, a day I will never forget, and a day His Royal Highness repeated for so many people thousands of times. *Yehi zichro baruch*: may his memory be a blessing. ...

col 1113 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench)**: ... That leads me to the two special ways in which His Royal Highness supported the Queen in this role. One was the international interfaith group, which he founded with Prince Hassan of Jordan and Sir Evelyn Rothschild. The difference between that and other groups was not only that it was international, but that it brought together clergy as well as distinguished lay people, ambassadors and senior businesspeople to meet in different parts of the world. They met over a number of years, with the Duke, as a key founder member, always present.

Prince Philip clearly had a keen interest in religion, and I understand that his personal library was absolutely chock-full of books on religions of one kind or another. However, it is his public role to which we pay tribute here, where we know that he wanted to make a difference. He saw that one way of doing that was by helping religious institutions relate better to one another through their senior lay people. ...

col 1120 **Baroness Uddin (Non-affiliated)** ... Today is the eve of our precious month of Ramadan, a month of charitable giving, prayer and contemplation, common values embodied by men and women of all faiths and none. I hope that the House will indulge this very personal expression as a woman of faith in remembering His Royal Highness Prince Philip, a man of faith, through words of my faith and prayers. *Inna lillahe wa inna ilayhi raji'un*—verily from God we are and to God we return. May the Almighty accept His Royal Highness Prince Philip the husband, the father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and his extraordinary contribution to public service and to Her Majesty the Queen. May we all wish her the very best and may His Royal Highness Prince Philip rest in the eternal gardens of peace. ...

col 1123 **Baroness Warsi (Conservative)** ... The second contribution is His Royal Highness's role in faith, including its impact on British Muslims and Muslims across the world. As we have heard, His Royal Highness had a keen interest in faith and faiths. The noble and right Reverend Lord, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, detailed much of this work. His vision and convening of the interfaith summit of Assisi in the mid-1980s set the course for much work on tackling climate change. His invitation, “Come, proud of what you bring of your own, but humble enough to listen”, reflected his belief that faith had a crucial role to play in the big issues of our time. As Imam Qari Asim, chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, said, His Royal Highness exemplified loyalty, fortitude and altruism, but, above all, service to our nation. In Islamic tradition, there is a saying that the one who does good to others will not fall, but should he fall he will always find something to lean on. Prince Philip has much to lean on as he leaves us. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-04-12/debates/20E886D8-815E-4448-AF9F-482456A88704/HisRoyalHighnessThePrincePhilipDukeOfEdinburgh>

House of Commons Written Answers

The following five questions all received the same answer

Weddings: Coronavirus

Alberto Costa (Conservative) [174888] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether wedding breakfasts will be able to proceed under Step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of covid-19 lockdown.

Royston Smith (Conservative) [174907] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether wedding ceremonies can take place at private wedding venues with up to 30 guests, under Step 3 of the roadmap out of covid-19 restrictions.

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [176049] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether children who are five years old or under are included in guest limits given for wedding ceremonies and receptions during the period of covid-19 restrictions.

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [176050] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans publish a comprehensive covid-19 roadmap for (a) weddings, (b) civil partnership ceremonies and (c) receptions detailing permitted arrangements at each step including but not limited to (i) the bubbling of households for ceremonies and receptions, (ii) how food can be served and (iii) the use of private land and garden weddings.

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [176051] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether alternative wedding ceremonies as defined in COVID-19: Guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships are permitted from 12 April 2021.

Penny Mordaunt: In the [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021](#), the Government has set out the gradual and cautious approach to reopening different sectors in England, guided by science and the data.

We understand the unique significance that marriages and civil partnerships hold in people's lives, but we have to take necessary steps to limit transmission of COVID-19. This includes restrictions on wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, as well as other forms of social contact. By their very nature, weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are events that bring families and friends together, making them particularly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19.

Alternative wedding ceremonies are permitted in line with the regular wedding or civil partnership rules, in the same locations, at each step.

From 29 March, wedding and civil partnership ceremonies have been able to take place indoors or outdoors in COVID-Secure venues that are not expressly closed by the Regulations, or where a broader exemption applies. From 12 April, 15 people are permitted to attend. This approach allows couples to marry in legally binding licensed venues for wedding ceremonies (where outdoor options are limited) while remaining in line with the reopening of sectors and venues as set out in the roadmap. Wedding ceremonies should follow government guidance to reduce the risk of transmission.

Receptions (of up to 15 people) can resume from 12 April. The evidence shows that it is safer for people to meet outdoors rather than indoors. That is why receptions are only permitted outdoors at this Step and should be in a COVID-Secure venue. From Step 3, no earlier than 17 May 2021, weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are permitted for up to 30 people in COVID-Secure venues that are not required to close, or where a broader exemption applies. Receptions can also proceed with up to 30 people in a COVID-Secure indoor venue, or outdoors, which includes private gardens.

Guidance for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations can be

found here

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

At each step, the limits on the number of attendees includes children of all ages, but not workers.

For further information, please refer to the 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>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-24/174888>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-24/174907>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-25/176049>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-25/176050>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-25/176051>

Coroners

Jessica Morden (Labour) [175779] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average waiting time was for the completion of a coroner's report after a death in England and Wales in (a) 2018 (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Alex Chalk: The Ministry of Justice publishes annual coroner statistics that include the average time taken to process an inquest. The timeframe of each inquest is defined between the date the death was reported, until the conclusions of that inquest.

In 2018 the average time taken to process an inquest was 26 weeks; in 2019, the average was 27 weeks. Information for 2020 is not yet available but will be included in the annual coroner statistics scheduled to be published on Gov.uk on 13 May.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-25/175779>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Clergy: EU Visas and Residence Permits

The Lord Bishop of Leeds: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of new (1) visa, and (2) residence, permit regimes for United Kingdom citizens working in the European Union on the numbers of Church of England clergy securing such permits.

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: My Lords, the withdrawal agreement protects UK nationals who were lawfully resident in the EU before the end of the transition period. Thirteen member states require them to apply for new resident status. British citizens travelling to the EU for work may need visas or permits from relevant member states. Member states are, of course, responsible for implementing their domestic immigration systems, and the UK does not hold information on the specific occupations of UK nationals abroad.

The Lord Bishop of Leeds: ... This is of course a question that goes wider than the Church, but let us consider a diocese in Europe supporting UK citizens which is now unable to assign clergy for locum duty, for example, because of the lack of clarity regarding work permits. How do the Government intend to support UK citizens in what was an

inevitable outcome of the withdrawal agreement? Can the Minister give any practical encouragement to the Bishop in Europe as he seeks to resolve these issues?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I assure the right reverend Prelate that, as he may well be aware, we are working very closely with the Church of England—for example, on citizens' rights—as it is one of the implementing partners of the UK nationals support fund. In addition, through our embassies, we are providing direct and relevant support as well as an extensive communications programme for all citizens across the European Union.

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Labour): ... the Church of Scotland also has deep concerns about the position of locum ministers serving congregations throughout the European Union following Brexit. We also have concerns about split ministries, where the minister involved may be part-time in two different, perhaps neighbouring, countries, in two different churches. Will the Government guarantee to involve the Church of Scotland in any discussions about resolving these issues, including, of course, other Churches and faiths?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I can of course assure the noble Lord that we will work with all organisations, including the Church of Scotland. If there are specific issues that he wishes to raise with me, I will be happy to answer them directly. ...

Lord Flight (Conservative): My Lords, many religious communities are not yet aware of how they will be affected by Brexit. They have relied on EU members to fill temporary posts; this will be hit when free movement ends on 31 December, along with routes for the previous temporary priest cover for summer holidays, for example. They can no longer sponsor a worker in the tier 5 category to fill the post of temporary minister of religion. Do the Government anticipate that the basis of an individual's visits will fall within the visitors' visa rules?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I will write to my noble friend on the specific question he raises and, of course, place a copy in the library.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon: My Lords, the Question reminds us that we have inextricable ties of culture, trade and even religion with our former partners in the European Union. Does the Minister agree that, rather than looking selectively to the concerns of Anglicans, we should be looking to better working arrangements for all branches of Christianity, as well as other faiths and cultures, in reducing onerous visa requirements and enhancing better living and working arrangements with our former partners in Europe?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I will first perhaps correct the noble Lord by saying that we do not regard the European Union as former partners; we continue to have a strong partnership with the European Union on a range of different issues. On the issues of religion and communities across Europe, yes, diversity is a strength of the continent and we should encourage those who wish to visit different parts of it. In this regard, the noble Lord will be aware of what has already been agreed: the ability to visit different countries on a rolling basis without the necessity of visa requirements. Anyone wishing to visit the European Union from the UK can do so for 90 days on a revolving 180-day basis. ...

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I want to press the Minister on reciprocity. There are expatriate communities in this country that also have religious services—the Swedish Church in London, in which I have sung, and other Lutherans; French and Polish congregations; Jewish congregations with visitors from the continent—so there are clear mutual interests. Are we negotiating on the basis of reciprocity or are we asking for greater freedom of access for UK citizens in the EU than for EU citizens in the UK?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, the noble Lord raises an important issue on reciprocal arrangements. There are a whole range of areas where we have seen reciprocal arrangements put in place. The whole purpose of the Specialised

Committee on Citizens' Rights, which is supported both by the UK and by the EU—officials are meeting regularly—is to unlock those very issues that can provide for the kind of access that he is suggesting. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-04-13/debates/105EB47E-3609-4E59-B086-56E84F4E6D71/ClergyEUVisasAndResidencePermits>

House of Lords Written Answer

Animal Welfare

Baroness Hayman of Ullock (Labour) [HL14637] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise animal sentience in law.

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: This Government has a manifesto commitment to introduce new laws on animal sentience, which we will do as soon as parliamentary time allows.

We can be rightly proud that the UK already has world-class animal welfare standards, but the Government is committed to strengthening these further, including increasing maximum sentences for animal cruelty, banning third party sales of puppies, and introducing one of the world's toughest bans on ivory sales.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-25/hl14637>

House of Lords Library

Letter from Baroness Berridge to Baroness Deech regarding the issue of antisemitism in higher education, as raised during a question on institutional racism

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0335/letter_from_Baroness_Berridge_to_Baroness_Deech.pdf

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

COVID-19: Updated guidance for the safe use of places of worship

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>

COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

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

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>

COVID-19: Updated guidance for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations

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

Public Health England and Department of Health and Social Care

COVID-19: Updated guidance for arranging or attending a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

The Charity Commission

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Updated guidance for the charity sector

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=268d3e82-7d43-425a-bf5a-693cee540432&utm_content=daily

StatsWales

Ethnicity by area and ethnic group

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/ethnicity-by-area-ethnicgroup>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Trade Agreements: Israel

Craig Tracey (Conservative) [175949] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on negotiations with Israel on an agreement for further trade cooperation beyond the trade continuity deal; and what steps she is taking to strengthen the UK's trade relationship with Israel in the science and technology sector.

Ranil Jayawardena: The United Kingdom's trade relationship with Israel is already strong, totalling £4.9 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2020. The United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement entered into force on 1st January 2021. As the Foreign Secretary noted, the United Kingdom is now able to start scoping for greater ambition in our trade relationship with Israel. Science and innovation are key elements of this relationship and we are currently building a framework for a new Britain-Israel Science Partnership. Moreover, the 'TechHub', based in British Embassy Tel Aviv, continues to partner Israeli expertise with British companies, delivering significant benefits to the British economy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-25/175949>

The United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, referred to above, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [1724] Military trial, detention and treatment of Palestinian children by Israeli authorities – That this House notes with concern that Israeli forces continue to arrest, detain and try several hundred Palestinian children in the Israeli military court and detention system each year despite evidence that that process is rife with international law violations; further notes that Israel is the only country in the world that automatically and systematically prosecutes Palestinian children in military courts which lack fundamental fair trial rights and protections; notes that ill-treatment of Palestinian child detainees by Israeli authorities includes widespread physical and psychological violence, blindfolding, strip searches, denial of food and water, position abuse and isolation solely for the purpose of interrogation, and the denial of access to a lawyer before and during interrogations; remarks on the disparity between treatment of Israeli and Palestinian children in Israeli custody; asserts that Israel, as the occupying power under international humanitarian law in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is responsible for protecting the rights of Palestinian children living under military occupation; notes too that the recommendations of the 2012 Foreign and Commonwealth Office funded report, *Children in Military Custody*, and UNICEF’s 2013 report, *Children in Israeli Military Detention*, have not been met; believes that in no circumstances should civilians, particularly children, be detained or prosecuted under the jurisdiction of military courts or held in military detention; and urges the Government to engage with the Government of Israel to end the military trial and detention of Palestinian children and, as a minimum safeguard, to respect and ensure basic due process rights and the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58337>

The reports referred to above can be read at

https://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Children_in_Military_Custody_Full_Report.pdf

and

https://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel/OPT: UN experts warn of rising levels of Israeli settler violence in a climate of impunity

Violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank has risen markedly in recent months, with assaults and property destruction occurring in an atmosphere of impunity, UN human rights experts said today.

“We note that, in 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) documented 771 incidents of settler violence causing injury to 133 Palestinians and damaging 9,646 trees and 184 vehicles mostly in the areas of Hebron, Jerusalem, Nablus and Ramallah,” the experts said. “Already, during the first three months of 2021, more than 210 settler violent incidents were recorded, with one Palestinian fatality. We call upon the Israeli military and police to investigate and prosecute these violent acts with vigor and resolve.”

The experts said settler violence was predominantly ideologically motivated and primarily

designed to take over land but also to intimidate and terrorize Palestinians. The violence and intimidation often prevents Palestinians from accessing and cultivating their land, and creates a coercive environment pressuring Palestinians to stay away from certain areas or even move.

“They primarily target the livelihoods of rural Palestinians, vandalizing livestock, agricultural lands, trees and homes. Besides the presence and expansion of Israeli settlements, which are intended to establish illegal claims for Israeli sovereignty, settler violence is meant to make the daily lives of Palestinians untenable,” they said.

“Similarly worrying are reports that over 70 families living in the Karm Al-Ja'buni area of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem are under threat of forced eviction to make place for new settlements. Seven households have already received eviction orders and asked to vacate their homes by 2 May 2021. Such forced evictions leading to population transfers are strictly prohibited under international law,” the experts said.

The UN experts noted that settler violence continues to target pregnant women, young children and older persons. “The pattern of attacks, particularly by violent and ideologically motivated settlers consistently confirms that the boundaries of attacks on all categories of Palestinians is being erased.”

They said in one incident in southern Hebron on 13 March, a Palestinian family -- parents and their eight children – were attacked by 10 Israeli settlers, some of them armed. The injured parents were treated at a medical facility in Hebron, and the children left traumatized.

“We are deeply worried by the atmosphere of impunity in which these attacks are taking place,” the experts said. “In many cases, the Israeli military has been present, or nearby, and has not taken sufficient steps to protect the Palestinians from this violence. This amounts to a discriminatory two-tier approach to military protection and policing in the West Bank.”

The situation is particularly dire in the H2 area in Hebron, where a long-standing pattern of protracted Israeli settler violence, heavy ISF presence and undue movement restrictions to the benefit of settlers, has been inflicted on the Palestinian residents in the city.

The UN experts noted that, according to Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights organisation, in the period between 2005-2019, 91 percent of the investigations in cases filed by Palestinians for ideologically motivated crimes, have been closed without indictments by the Israeli military. “This number is abysmal when compared to the number and nature of crimes committed by Israeli settlers and it testifies more than anything to the institutional and systematic impunity that prevails in the occupied Palestinian territory.”

The experts pointed out that international law requires the occupying power, in all circumstances, to protect the population under occupation. Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates the protected population “shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats...”

“We call upon the international community to impose meaningful costs on Israel’s protracted occupation, and to demand that the occupying power halt its settlement enterprise immediately,” they said. “Palestinians must be protected from settler violence and the perpetrators must be held to account for their actions.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26991&LangID=E>

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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

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

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