



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Lords Debate

Queen's Speech

col 215 **Baroness Merron (Labour)** [Maiden Speech]: ... My mother's advice, so as not to offend, was never to talk about religion or politics. However, we can safely say that I have made an art form of talking about both subjects, as evidenced throughout my career ...

I have also had the privilege to serve as chief executive of the esteemed representative body of the Jewish community, the Board of Deputies of British Jews. My parents grew up in the East End as children of Jewish immigrants forced to flee to Britain by pogroms that murdered Jews and destroyed communities. I reflect, with feeling, that if my grandparents, who I was born too late to know, had been told that their granddaughter— not even their grandson—would serve as a member of Her Majesty's Government, as the chief executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and as a life Peer, they would not have believed it. It would all have seemed too remarkable. ...

col 216 Our destiny should be shaped not by the conditions into which we are born but by what can be. We sit in this House with that responsibility on our shoulders. Through my years of public service, I feel I am repaying the debt to this country that gave my grandparents refuge and life for future generations, including my own. I hope that in taking my place in this House, I will do justice to their memories. ...

Lord Young of Cookham (Conservative): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness and to be the first to congratulate her on an excellent and moving maiden speech. ...

In her gap years between the other place and here, she gave strong leadership to the Board of Deputies of British Jews, addressing, among other issues, the anti-Semitism in the Labour Party at the time. She was popular and respected on both sides of the House in the other place, and I know the same will be true here. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-05-13/debates/E811DE1A-8047-422C-8D07-E538B628BC30/Queen'SSpeech#contribution-9F348D37-E7CE-45CA-9684-C97F4E070E22>

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>

Updated guidance: Celebrating religious festivals during coronavirus (COVID-19)

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

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

Updated guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-wedding-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-receptions-and-celebrations>

Scottish Government

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

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>

Welsh Government

Updated guidance for weddings and civil partnerships: receptions and celebration events

<https://gov.wales/guidance-weddings-and-civil-partnerships-receptions-and-celebration-events-html>

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland: Update to 31 March 2021

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/2020-21/q4/hate-motivations-bulletin-mar-21.pdf>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Point of Order

Charlotte Nichols (Labour): ... As you may be aware, yesterday the Minister for

Universities, speaking on Radio 4, said that it is the Government's policy to protect and promote the free speech of controversial and offensive advocates at universities. She explicitly confirmed that this would include holocaust deniers, who would be supported in law against people protesting against them. There are few more serious crimes in history than the Nazi holocaust—the murder of 6 million Jews, as well as hundreds of thousands of Roma and Sinti, disabled and LGBT people, political opponents and other minority groups—and to hear a Minister say that the Government plan to change the law to take the side of those who would deny that genocide is truly appalling.

As a proudly Jewish parliamentarian, my blood ran cold listening to the interview. There is no merit to any assertion that either academic rigour or the university experience is improved by exposure to such ideology. Holocaust denial cannot and should not be protected speech under the law. How can you assist in ensuring that the Universities Minister comes to the Dispatch Box to explain what she has said, apologise, and recant this chilling policy?

Mr Speaker: ... I want to set out on record that I find the idea of holocaust denial completely abhorrent; let me make sure that people are aware of that. The hon. Member will have the opportunity to clarify this matter when the relevant legislation is before the House. I hope that she will take it up with the Minister at the appropriate time when that legislation comes forward. In the meantime, I am sure that it would also be worth asking for a meeting with the Minister for clarification.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-05-13/debates/E3C73D9B-81D1-4612-BB36-FD172A04028A/PointOfOrder>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

Business of the House

col 264 **Owen Thompson (SNP):** ... I share the concerns of other Members about the ongoing situation in Israel and Palestine. I think that is of great concern to us all. Would the Leader of the House perhaps make time available for the Secretary of State for International Trade to give a statement to the House on the impact of arms export licences and how this has such an impact on conflicts around the globe? ...

Jacob Rees-Mogg: ... The hon. Gentleman rightly raises the question of arms export licences. They are extremely carefully controlled and Her Majesty's Government work closely with our allies to ensure that we sell arms only to those countries with which we have the closest relationship, as of course we do with the state of Israel. ...

col 271 **Steven Bonnar (SNP):** On this holy day of Eid, a day of salvation for Muslims across the world, many including in my own constituency are watching with horror as an abhorrent humanitarian crisis escalates against the Palestinian people in that region. It may well be an uncomfortable truth for the UK Government that they have fuelled, and continue to fuel, deadly conflicts such as the one we are seeing in Gaza through the reckless sale of arms to right-wing coalition Governments, but it is a truth none the less. Given the continued intransigence of this UK Government and their willingness to turn a blind eye, will the Leader of the House allow a full and frank debate on such matters, and allow us, the Members of this House, the opportunity to work to stop such atrocities being committed at the hands of our perceived allies?

Jacob Rees-Mogg: The hon. Gentleman has mentioned Eid, and this is an opportunity to wish people a joyous Eid. It is also, of course, the feast of the

Ascension, so it is an important religious day for many communities. I mentioned earlier the issue of the sale of arms, which is covered very carefully by regulations that ensure that arms are sold only to regimes that we have close relationships with, that are our key allies, and that behave in a humane and proper way. The Government have called for restraint on both sides and pointed out that the killing of unarmed civilians is always wrong in the conflict that is currently going on, but Israel is a very important ally to the United Kingdom. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-05-13/debates/59538CA6-BB3A-4A08-B525-765D78B49A45/BusinessOfTheHouse>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Violence in Israel and Palestine

The answer to Wednesday's Urgent Question in the Commons (included in *Political Affairs Digest 2,121*) was read in the Lords.

col 190 Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour): ... We need to know that this Government, at the highest level, are working with all our allies to get all sides around the table to talk, with the Palestinian people recognised as equal partners in that conversation. I ask the noble Lord the Minister: has the Prime Minister spoken to President Biden? Following yesterday's closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council, can the Minister update the House on whether the council will take any concerted action to protect civilians?

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: ... The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. As the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have said, we want to see both sides stepping back from this. The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his call to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on Tuesday and to Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh yesterday. We are working with our partners, including those in the region, and remain in close contact with the US Administration and European allies.

Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, this is an extremely dangerous situation, and we condemn violence on all sides, particularly today, as many—including, no doubt, the Minister the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad—are celebrating Eid. But rocket boosters must now be put under a peace and justice process, not violent attacks. Will the Government condemn the forced evictions from east Jerusalem, Israeli actions in the al-Aqsa mosque and the bombing and possible ground war in Gaza as clearly as they have rightly condemned rocket attacks from Gaza? It is in no one's interest to escalate conflict here, and all must be held properly to account for any human rights abuses and breaking of international law.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The noble Baroness is right; de-escalation is important, and that is a point we are making to all parties. Clearly, violence against peaceful worshippers at the al-Aqsa mosque was unacceptable. The UK is committed to preserving the religious status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan and today as, as she says, Eid al-Fitr begins. We wish all those celebrating Eid Mubarak. We urge all parties to respect this and to refrain from provocation.

Baroness Deech (Crossbench): My Lords, it is too simplistic, and morally inept, to start apportioning blame, counting lives lost on either side and comparing damage. Funds poured into Gaza have been used to build rockets, not alleviate poverty. This confrontation is the work of Iran, which: funds Hamas; is calling for the use of missiles; wants to disrupt the Abraham Accords; and is behind the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives in the area.

The escalation of tension was long-planned and fuelled by Abbas fearing that Hamas would win an election. Will the Minister use the forthcoming G7 gathering to point out the dangers of appeasing Iran by returning to the ineffective Iran nuclear deal? And will he position the UK to fill the power vacuum left by President Biden's inaction?

col 191 Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My Lords, the UK unequivocally condemns the firing of rockets into Israel. We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism from Hamas and other terrorist groups, which must permanently end their incitement of and rocket fire against Israel. We are working, as I say, with our partners in the region. We have engaged Egypt, Qatar and the United Nations to support their efforts to mediate and are stressing that we want to see both sides step back from this and the situation de-escalated.

Baroness Blackstone (Independent Labour): My Lords, as the Minister says, the first objective must be to de-escalate and stop the terrible violence on both sides. But in working to achieve this, no one should lose sight of the underlying problems that have led to it. Will the Government reconsider their position on a referral to the International Criminal Court? What discussions are the Government having with the US about putting concerted pressure on the Israeli Government to: stop ethnic cleansing in east Jerusalem, in which Palestinians are being forced out of the houses they own; stop the creeping, de facto annexation of the West Bank via further illegal settlements; and, more generally, respect the human rights of Palestinians, both within Israel and the Occupied Territories? These include their right to worship in the al-Aqsa mosque without it being stormed by right-wing thugs and the Israeli police.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My Lords, the UK is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court. We are committed to strengthening the court so it can best serve international justice. We oppose the investigation related to the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the grounds that the court does not have jurisdiction in the OPTs. The UK is a friend of Israel, but our concerns about evictions of Palestinians from their homes are long-standing and well known. They are unacceptable and contrary to the cause of peace.

Lord Gold (Conservative): My Lords, the alarming conflict that Israel and the people in Gaza are now enduring was instigated by an unprovoked attack on Israel on Monday night by terrorists in Gaza. In its military action since then, Israel has made every effort to minimise civilian casualties, including warning of a planned strike on a building complex so that occupants could safely leave. The terrorist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad have no respect for life and have fired over 1,500 rockets indiscriminately into Israel, killing Israelis and Arabs alike. What steps are the Government taking to ensure an end to weapon smuggling into Gaza, particularly by states such as Iran?

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My Lords, the UK unequivocally condemns the firing of rockets at Jerusalem and any locations within Israel. As I say, there is no justification for the targeting of civilians. We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism from Hamas and other terrorist groups and want them permanently to end their incitement and rocket fire. Our priority now must be an immediate de-escalation on all sides and an end to the killing of civilians.

col 192 Lord Hain (Labour): My Lords, everybody should condemn these rocket attacks, but do the Government agree that Israel's absolute right to exist cannot justify evicting its own Arab citizens from their homes in Jerusalem? As the respected Human Rights Watch reported, the State of Israel is perpetrating international crimes against the Palestinian people, and these practices are at the root of the current tit-for-tat civil war, tragically endangering its own, Jewish citizens as well.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My Lords, we are aware of the Human Rights Watch report, which the noble Lord mentions, and we will review the findings. The UK continues to engage with the Israeli Government on human rights issues in the context that the report raises. The situation on the ground demonstrates the urgent

need to make progress towards peace and, of course, the immediate situation is best helped by de-escalation on both sides.

Lord Polak (Conservative): ... Leaders make choices for their people. Some will choose to save lives by purchasing vaccines or investing in Iron Dome technology to defend their people; others may prefer to buy deadly rockets and complain, to those who shamefully listen, that they have no vaccines. Our integrated review said: "we will increase our efforts to protect open societies and democratic values where they are being undermined." In that spirit, can my noble friend name one country on earth that would be expected to tolerate the incessant attacks on innocent civilians by Hamas, the Iran-backed terror organisation committed to its annihilation?

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The UK remains resolute in its commitment to Israel's security. We utterly condemn Hamas's indiscriminate and abhorrent rocket attacks, as I say. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence. In using it, it is vital that all actions it takes are proportionate, are in line with international humanitarian law and avoid civilian casualties.

Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated): My Lords, how can terrorists import thousands of Iranian rockets but Israel be blamed for a lack of food or medicine? How can anyone believe that Hamas wants peace when it is committed to Israel's destruction, with no regard whatever for innocent life? Hamas is exploiting the PA's weakness after it cancelled elections, a century-old legal dispute about four houses, and violence in Jerusalem to provoke this crisis. Does the Minister agree that there is no equivalence between terrorists raining down rockets on civilians and a legitimate, democratic Government defending itself?

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Hamas's military wing, as the noble Lord will know, has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001. The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas in its entirety. The UK unequivocally and strongly condemns the firing of rockets into Israel. We want them to stop, and we want a permanent end to this incitement and rocket fire, and a de-escalation of the situation today.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-05-13/debates/A379DE7A-F5FD-4BC9-B8BE-D7E2DBB7ECB5/ViolenceInIsraelAndPalestine>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/04/israel_palestine0421_web_0.pdf

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Robert Halfon (Conservative) [3A1] Violence perpetrated by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in Sheikh Jarrah – Leave out from 'the' in Line 1 and insert, 'firing of more than 1,600 rockets by the Hamas terror group into Israel since 10 May 2021; supports Her Majesty's Government assertion of Israel's right to self-defence to protect its citizens from indiscriminate rocket attacks and condemnation of Hamas; notes that Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system has saved the lives of countless Israeli civilians; calls for Gaza-based terror groups to immediately halt rocket fire against Israel; notes the tragic death of 6 Israelis and a number of Palestinian civilians in Gaza; condemns Hamas's cynical locating of terror infrastructure and launching of rockets in civilian areas; and calls for a peaceful resolution to the violence and the resumption of direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to secure a negotiated, lasting two-state solution'.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58469>

The EDM to which the above is an amendment can be read at

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58435>

That this House unequivocally condemns the ongoing violence perpetrated by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the Sheikh Jarrah area of Jerusalem; condemns the attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli police which left hundreds of civilians injured; joins the UN in calling upon the Israeli authorities to demonstrate maximum restraint and to allow the freedom of peaceful assembly for Palestinians; opposes and will work to prevent the ongoing evictions of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem, which is part of a wider attempt to push Palestinians out of Jerusalem altogether; calls on the international community to pursue suitable sanction against the Israeli Government until all violations of international law and human rights are ceased; and recognises that the violence perpetrated by the Israeli authorities in May 2021, along with the continued evictions of Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah, increases regional tensions and frustrates efforts to broker a lasting and just peace between Israel and Palestine.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Updated travel advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated travel advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985792/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2021-05-14.pdf

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985851/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2021-05-14.pdf

STUC

STUC calls on UK and Scottish Government to condemn Israeli government action in Sheikh Jarrah

The STUC has called on the UK and Scottish Governments to condemn the action of the Israeli Government in occupied East Jerusalem, including forced relocation through the demolition of Palestinian homes in Sheikh Jarrah to create new settlements.

Pointing to the criticism of the actions from the United Nations, STUC General Secretary Roz Foyer said: “The whole world is watching events in Israel and Palestine. Most of the world is clear that the actions of the Israeli state are both wrong and a breach of human rights. It is time for our governments, and political leaders, to speak out. The historic Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank and its encouragement of illegal and often violent settler activity is a disgrace. We have an international duty both to our Palestinian trade union sisters and brothers, and to peace and justice more generally, to offer solidarity and campaign against the repressive actions of the Israeli state.”

<http://www.stuc.org.uk/media-centre/news/1595/stuc-calls-on-uk-and-scottish-government-to-condemn-israeli-government-action-in-sheikh-jarrah>

United Nations

Secretary-General Calls for Immediate Halt to Fighting in Israel, Gaza

The Secretary-General appeals to all parties to immediately cease the fighting in Gaza and Israel.

The ongoing military escalation has caused great suffering and destruction. It has claimed scores of civilian lives, including, tragically, many children. The fighting has the potential to unleash an uncontrollable security and humanitarian crisis and to further foster extremism, not only in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, but in the region as a whole.

The parties must allow for mediation efforts to intensify with a view to ending the fighting immediately. The United Nations is actively involved in such efforts, which are also crucial for delivering much-needed humanitarian aid to the affected people in Gaza.

The Secretary-General reiterates that only a sustainable political solution will lead to lasting peace. He reiterates his commitment, including through the Middle East Quartet, to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sqsm20725.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Bachelet appeals for de-escalation amid increasing bloodshed, incitement, volatility in Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Saturday called for strict respect for international law and appealed to all sides to take steps to de-escalate the increasingly alarming situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

“Over the past 10 days, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The situation in Sheikh Jarrah in occupied East Jerusalem, triggered by threats of forced evictions of Palestinian families; the heavy presence of Israeli Security Forces and violence around the al Aqsa mosque during Ramadan; the severe escalation of attacks from and on Gaza; and the shocking race-based incitement in Israel have all led to vicious attacks and mounting casualties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel,” High Commissioner Bachelet said.

“Rather than seeking to calm tensions, inflammatory rhetoric from leaders on all sides appears to be seeking to excite tensions rather than to calm them. Once again, we are seeing lives lost and terrified people being forced to flee or hide in their homes, subjected to attacks that are being carried out by both sides in what may amount to serious violations of international humanitarian law.”

Bachelet warned that the firing of large numbers of indiscriminate rockets by Palestinian armed groups into Israel, including densely populated areas, in clear violation of international humanitarian law, amounts to war crimes.

In Gaza, where there have been extensive Israeli airstrikes and shelling from land and sea into densely-populated areas, there are concerns that some attacks by the Israeli Defence Forces have targeted civilian objects that, under international humanitarian law, do not meet the requirements to be considered as military objectives.

The failure to adhere to the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in the conduct of military operations amounts to a serious violation of international humanitarian law and may constitute war crimes.

“I urge both sides to ensure strict respect for their obligations under international law. Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty to ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance to the Gaza strip,” the High Commissioner said. “Those found to be responsible for violations must be held to account.”

The High Commissioner also called on the Israeli Government to take measures to stem the disturbing outbreak of violence between ultra-right wing groups, including Israeli settlers, and Palestinian citizens of Israel, in cities including Lod, Jaffa, Ramle and Haifa. Of particular concern is the apparent highly organised nature of some attacks as well as inflammatory language that may amount to incitement to racial and religious hatred and violence.

Reports indicate that in some instances, settlers arrived in organized convoys from Israeli settlements in the West Bank to join local groups. Violent attacks have also been perpetrated by some Palestinian citizens of Israel. Mob violence has taken place in Bat-Yam, Jaffa and Acre this week, including attacks on places of worship and cultural heritage.

“I am particularly concerned at reports that Israeli police failed to intervene where Palestinian citizens of Israel were being violently attacked, and that social media is being used by ultra-right wing groups to rally people to bring ‘weapons, knives, clubs, knuckledusters’ to use against Palestinian citizens of Israel,” the High Commissioner said. There are also reports of excessive and discriminatory use of force by police against Palestinian citizens of Israel, hundreds of whom have been detained in relation to incidents of violence.

“I remind the Government of Israel of its duty to protect all its residents and citizens without discrimination based on notions of ‘nationhood’, religious or ethnic origin, and to ensure equal treatment before the law,” Bachelet said. “Political leaders must refrain from any action that will inflame tensions, but must take action to prevent and address incitement to hatred and violence and ensure all citizens of Israel are fully and equally protected, including by taking preventive action.”

The High Commissioner said she was also deeply disturbed by the reported use of live ammunition by Israeli Security Forces in the context of protests and clashes in the West Bank, resulting in the death of 10 Palestinians on 14 May alone.

Any use of force by the ISF in the West Bank must adhere to the Basic Principles on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement, which state in particular that firearms can only be used against individuals representing an imminent threat to life or of serious injury, and only as a matter of last resort. In a situation of occupation, the unjustified and illegal resort to firearms by law enforcement officials may constitute a war crime.

Bachelet called for independent, transparent and thorough investigations into all allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

“We know from recent history how such a grave situation can advance with utterly catastrophic consequences for thousands of civilians,” Bachelet said. “There can be no winner, no sustainable peace resulting from the furtherance of the cycle of violence. I urge all sides – and States with influence – to take immediate measures to ensure respect for international law, ease tensions, and work to resolve – rather than fan – the conflict.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27095&LangID=E>

UNICEF

Eight Palestinian children killed in the Gaza Strip last night

Eight Palestinian children were reported killed north of Gaza overnight, bringing to at least 40 the number of children killed there since 10 May. The age of these children ranges between six months to 17 years. Over half of them were under 10 years old. More than 1,000 people in Gaza are reported injured, some severely, including a high number of children. In Israel, two children, including a six-year-old, were killed since the escalation began.

“In the past week, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, one 16-year old child was

killed and at least 54 Palestinian children were reported injured, another 26 children have been arrested. Most have since been released.

“In Gaza, 35 schools have been damaged while at least 29 schools are temporarily sheltering displaced families who fled their homes due to heavy violence. Up to 10,000 people have been displaced, the majority are children. UNICEF received reports that three schools have been damaged in Israel.

“The scale of violence is massive. Children are bearing the brunt of this escalation. All sides need to step back and end the violence. All sides have an obligation to protect civilians – especially children – and facilitate humanitarian access. The underlying triggers for this violence will not be resolved through further violence.

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/eight-palestinian-children-killed-gaza-strip-last-night>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-05-13/debates/987038BA-23FA-4226-96FE-A6FA318FE1B7/AnimalWelfare\(Sentience\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-05-13/debates/987038BA-23FA-4226-96FE-A6FA318FE1B7/AnimalWelfare(Sentience)Bill(HL))

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS) (closing date 30 June 2021)

<https://evensurvey.co.uk/>

Protect Duty (closing date 2 July 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19
(closing date not stated)

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

TOP

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