



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

Thematic Inspection of Hate Crime

... Issues of diversity and equality are important at any time, but have been amplified over the past year by the unequal impact of COVID-19 on different groups, and by an increase in protests around the world about racism in society.

Our review highlights that the nature and scale of hate crime in Scotland is not currently understood by Police Scotland and recognises general under reporting and difficulties with current third party reporting arrangements. The inspection focused on the standard of police investigations, procedures, policies and initiatives in place to engage with communities to ensure victims of hate have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.hmics.scot/publications/hmics-thematic-inspection-hate-crime>

HMICS Thematic Inspection of Hate Crime

<https://www.hmics.scot/sites/default/files/publications/HMICS%20Thematic%20Inspection%20of%20Hate%20Crime%202021.pdf>

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Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Palestinians: Security

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL311] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make a statement that the Palestinians under occupation are entitled to security and self-defence.

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL312] To ask Her Majesty's Government what they consider necessary to achieve a long-term resolution to the conflict in Israel and Palestine

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The recent violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK worked actively to urge the parties to work with mediators towards an immediate ceasefire. We also fully supported Egyptian, Qatari and UN efforts to that end, working closely with the US. The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May, which is an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life.

We agree with President Biden's recent remarks that Palestinians and Israelis equally deserve to live safely and securely and to enjoy equal measures of freedom, prosperity, and democracy. Our long-standing objective is a negotiated two-state solution which will allow Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace, lessening the likelihood of politically driven violence and incitement to violence. We continue to believe that the best way to advance a two state solution is through dialogue. We therefore urge all sides to show maximum restraint and refrain from taking actions which endanger civilians and make peace more difficult.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-17/hl311>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-17/hl312>

Israel: International Law

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL353] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether action needs to be taken to ensure that there is a cost to the government of Israel if it is found to have broken international law.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a steadfast supporter of international justice and does not hold back from voicing or raising concern about Israel's actions when warranted. However, Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-18/hl353>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL355] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the possibility of independent (1) reporting, and (2) monitoring, of human rights during the current conflict in Israel and Palestine.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made this assessment. However, the UK continues to engage with the Israeli government on human rights issues in the context of the occupation. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. The situation on the ground demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. We will continue to support human rights scrutiny in Israel and the OPTs, and support Palestinian self-determination.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-18/hl355>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL351] To ask Her Majesty's Government what are

the criteria necessary for them to recognise Palestine as a State.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue. We continue to work closely with international partners to strongly advocate for a two-state solution and encourage a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-18/hl351>

World Health Organisation

Staggering health needs emerge in Gaza, following Israel-Hamas conflict

... WHO has so far provided essential medicines to support trauma care and ambulance services for more than 2,000 injured beneficiaries in the Gaza Strip, and ten triage and treatment tents by WHO have been set up outside six MoH emergency departments, also in the Gaza Strip.

“The situation is volatile. WHO remains concerned about the situation in oPt and calls for unhindered access for humanitarian and development-related essential supplies and staff into Gaza and referral of patients out of Gaza whenever needed”, said Dr Rik Peepkorn Head of Office WHO oPt.

With COVID-19 still a persistent threat, WHO & UNICEF, through COVAX, has supported the delivery of more than 260,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to oPt ... and WHO provided essential medicines and consumables to East Jerusalem. ...

Earlier armed conflict in oPt sparked further population displacement and exacerbated a prolonged humanitarian crisis. Hostilities resulted in a loss of 278 Palestinian lives and over 9,000 injuries. Over 77,000 people were internally displaced and around 30 health facilities have been damaged. Around 600 referral health facilities were affected due to closure of the crossings during the escalation of hostilities. ...

“Palestinians’ lives are deteriorating; many of the people affected by the conflict are in urgent need of aid and face other health threats like COVID-19. WHO is working to support the Palestinian health system and its partners in its emergency humanitarian response and calls for the support of the international community in these efforts”, said Dr Rik Peepkorn ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.emro.who.int/pse/palestine-infocus/staggering-health-needs-emerge-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-in-the-wake-of-recent-escalations.html>

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Other Relevant Information

European Union

The rise of antisemitism online during the pandemic

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d73c833f-c34c-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

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

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Race Equality Action Plan: An Anti-racist Wales (closing date 17 June 2021)

<https://gov.wales/race-equality-action-plan-anti-racist-wales>

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>

Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance (closing date 16 July 2021)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-curriculum-for-wales-religion-values-and-ethics-guidance.pdf>

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