



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### **Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour):** What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 in increasing the number of organs available for donation. (900827)

**The Minister for Care (Helen Whately):** The organ donation opt-out system has increased the number of organs available for transplant and is saving hundreds of lives. Since the law changed last year, 296 people in England have donated their organs under the opt-out system. These donations account for 29% of the 1,021 donations that took place last year.

**Dan Jarvis:** I am grateful to the Minister for that response. She will know that 20 May marked one year since Max and Keira's law came into effect—a change that will give hope and save lives—but despite the tireless efforts of NHS staff, covid has had a devastating impact on patients in need of life-saving operations. Can the Minister outline how she is going to get organ transplant services back to pre-pandemic levels and tell us what additional resources will be committed in order to support an increase in organ availability?

**Helen Whately:** I would first like to thank the hon. Member for the part he played in campaigning for this life-saving change to organ donation and bringing about the increase that I mentioned earlier. The current services are now running at pre-covid levels and NHS Blood and Transplant is working with the wider healthcare system to enable as many transplants as possible. The new Organ Donation and Transplantation 2030: Meeting the Need strategy, which was launched last Tuesday, sets out the steps we are taking to increase organ availability further.

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-06-08/debates/8E86ABBA-EBD2-4348-AB33-490BEBCE72DF/OrganDonation\(DeemedConsent\)Act2019](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-06-08/debates/8E86ABBA-EBD2-4348-AB33-490BEBCE72DF/OrganDonation(DeemedConsent)Act2019)

*The Strategy referred to above can be read at*

<https://nhsbtbde.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/23463/meeting-the-need-2030.pdf>

## Scottish Parliament Written Answer

### Covid-19: Religious Events

**Monica Lennon (Labour)** [S6W-00297] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will define religious events, such as Baptisms and Holy Communions, as “life events” in order for them to take place safely, allowing for celebration in residential and public places.

**Christina McKelvie:** We acknowledge how challenging these past 15 months have been for everyone in our society, including our faith and belief communities who have not been able to come together to celebrate important occasions as they normally would.

Ceremonies that take place within places of worship to mark religious life events and that form part of a wider service (including baptisms, christenings and coming-of-age ceremonies) have been permitted in accordance with the guidance on the safe use of places of worship since the resumption of congregational worship in March 2021, and are subject to the guidance on calculating physical distance based capacity .

Marriages, civil partnerships, and funeral services are exceptions to the general restrictions on gatherings in public or at private dwellings in the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) Regulations 2020 at all the protection levels of the updated Strategic Framework, along with receptions and post-funeral gatherings in public places at protection levels 0 to 3. We have also published guidance on these events, including on the numbers who can attend at the different protection levels. Marriages, civil partnerships and funerals are of particular importance to people and society and they are protected under the European Convention on Human Rights. Additionally, funerals are extremely important events with every funeral celebrating and commemorating a life lived and a loved one no longer with us. There are also very practical reasons why funerals cannot be postponed for any significant length of time.

However at this time, there are no specific exceptions for other religious life events, or any associated receptions and celebrations following them, outwith a place of worship. These remain subject to the general restrictions on gatherings, including in public, for example at a hospitality venue.

While the Scottish Government appreciates these would normally be occasions which are shared with families and loved ones, the Covid situation is still serious, and we need to continue to minimise the spread of the virus, balancing the harms from the virus which are potentially fatal, with the impact on faith and belief communities of the restrictions on places of worship.

We will continue to engage with our faith and belief stakeholders and we keep this under constant review as we cautiously progress out of lockdown.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-00297>

*The guidance referred to above can be read at*

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

*and*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnership-registrations/>

*and*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/>

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## House of Commons Written Answers

### **Gaza: Overseas Aid**

**Julie Elliott (Labour)** [7174] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional funding the Government plans to provide for emergency assistance to Gaza.

**James Cleverly:** I announced on 20 May that the UK is providing an initial £3.2 million to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, which launched on 19 May. The emergency appeal by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) focuses on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of vulnerable Palestinians living in Gaza.

This UK support will help UNRWA deliver life-saving humanitarian aid to those that need it most. Existing UK aid to UNRWA is already helping the Agency to provide food supplies to more than one million refugees in Gaza this year. The international community needs to ensure UNRWA is able to save lives and reduce the suffering.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-25/7174>

*The announcement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-package-to-help-provide-emergency-relief-for-civilians-in-gaza--2>

### **Gaza: Israel**

**Julie Elliott (Labour)** [7175] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK funded projects in Gaza of the 11 day Israeli bombardment.

**James Cleverly:** 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. It is now important for Israel to facilitate rapid humanitarian access in and out of Gaza. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop.

We have not yet completed an assessment of the effect of the conflict on UK supported programmes. We are following up with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which the UK funds, on their initial assessment of damage to their installations and interruption to services. The World Bank is commencing a more comprehensive Rapid Damage and Needs assessment, which is expected to report in one month.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-25/7175>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Julie Elliott (Labour)** [7176] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many meetings officials based at the embassy in Tel Aviv have had with representatives of Palestinian citizens of Israel in the last (a) 12 months and (b) five years.

**James Cleverly:** The British Embassy in Tel Aviv maintains relations with a wide range of contacts, including Arab citizens of Israel, as part of the normal business of the embassy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-25/7176>

### **West Bank: Demolition**

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [6253] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2021 to Question 678 on West

Bank: Demolition, if he will make it his policy to publish the data and records he holds as a result of the monitoring the UK Government undertakes with key partners of any incidents of confiscation and demolition of donor-funded assistance and structures.

**James Cleverly:** Data on demolition and displacement in the West Bank is published by The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/reports/west-bank-demolitions-and-displacement>

On the issue of confiscations and demolitions, the UK's position is clear. We call on Israel to end these practices, and to allow the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid for those who have had their homes demolished or confiscated.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-24/6253>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/678>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

**Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat)** [HL535] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of reductions in the Overseas Development Assistance Budget on donations to organisations bringing humanitarian aid to Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Allocation decisions have been taken by Ministers in line with the objectives set out in the Integrated Review. Ministers were appraised of qualitative analysis, sectoral analysis of thematic trends, and further quantitative analysis of draft business plans to assess the impacts of ODA reductions. Ministers have also considered the impact on FCDO's supply partners, drawing on FCDO programme managers' advice on how best to manage reductions to specific programmes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-24/hl535>

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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

**\*\* closes in 8 days**

**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>

**Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life in the EU** (closing date 5 July 2021)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13068-Strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-Jewish-life-in-the-EU\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13068-Strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-Jewish-life-in-the-EU_en)

**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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