



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Hamas

Steve Double (Conservative) [22173] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the extent of involvement of Hamas's political wing in its military activities; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster: The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-25/22173>

House of Lords Written Answer

Islam and Palestinians: Discrimination

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL1247] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) Islamophobic, and (2) anti-Palestinian, rhetoric in the UK as part of expressions of support for Israel.

Lord Greenhalgh: The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government maintains a dialogue with communities, stakeholders and key victim reporting and support centres such as Tell MAMA and the Community Security Trust during periods of heightened community tension. Our assessment of anti-Muslim and antisemitic hate crime in relation to recent events in the Middle East has been based on information regarding hate crime statistics, hate incidents and online sentiment released publicly by Tell MAMA and the Community Security Trust.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-21/hl1247>

Welsh Government

Updated guidance to local authorities, approved premises and places of worship on marriages civil partnerships and related wedding ceremonies: coronavirus
<https://gov.wales/guidance-marriages-and-civil-partnerships-coronavirus-html>

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Israel

See also *House of Commons written answer 22173 " Hamas", and House of Lords written answer HL1247 "Islam and Palestinians: Discrimination" which are included in the Home Affairs Section above.*

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza: Overseas Aid and Reconstruction

David Simmonds (Conservative) [22222] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the extent of potential misappropriation of UK aid and reconstruction materials by Hamas in Gaza since the 2014 conflict.

James Cleverly: The FCDO has robust controls against fraud and diversion of aid. We work with implementers and partners that have strong safeguards in place, which reduces risk and ensures the maximum impact of UK aid for Palestinians. FCDO funding agreements commit partners to understand and comply with UK and international counter-terrorism legislation. In Gaza, we implement robust controls to monitor spending, including enhanced due diligence assessments, annual audits, and regular field visits. All these ensure that UK aid reaches its intended beneficiaries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-25/22222>

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [25116] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is planning on spending more than £10 million of aid in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as set out on his Department's Development Tracker in the financial year 2021-22.

James Cleverly: Full budgets per country will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-30/25116>

The Development Tracker referred to above can be read at
<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>

Israel: Palestinians

Steve Double (Conservative) [22172] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing with the US Administration an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

James Cleverly: The UK government shares the objective of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. In support of this, we continue to fund peacebuilding projects focused on Israel and the Occupied

Palestinian Territories. US planning for the International Fund is at a very early stage and they have not yet approached us to discuss it. Once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-25/22172>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Palestinians: Schools

Mark Jenkinson (Conservative) [22206] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the EU report into the Palestinian Authority school curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Palestinians: Antisemitism and Violence

Mark Jenkinson (Conservative) [22207] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the findings of the EU report into the Palestinian Authority school curriculum, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK aid to the Palestinian people does not finance material inciting violence or antisemitism.

James Cleverly: It is essential to have a strong and thriving Palestinian education system to provide opportunities for the next generation. This report on Palestinian textbooks highlights progress in key areas, but also indicates that anti-Israel content remains. We have been clear that incitement to hatred or violence is unacceptable from all parties and should have no place in education. We will continue to raise concerns about this with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and continue to urge all parties to condemn incitement wherever and whenever it occurs. The UK does not fund textbooks in the OPTs. Our education funding to the PA contributes to the salaries of carefully vetted teachers/education workers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-25/22206>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-25/22207>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://owncloud.gei.de/index.php/s/FwkMw8NZgCAJgPW/download>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Torture

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL1246] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the article by Derek Summerfield 'Is the international regulation of medical complicity with torture largely window dressing? The case of Israel and the lessons of a 12-year medical ethical appeal', published in the Journal of Medical Ethics on 15 June.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of this article. 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/2021-06-21/hl1246>

There is a fee to read the article referred to above. A free abstract is available at

<https://jme.bmj.com/content/early/2021/06/14/medethics-2021-107340>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL1248] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of "skunk water" by Israeli forces as a means of crowd control in areas with Palestinian populations.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: 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. We also urge the Israeli Government to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of peaceful, legal protestors. 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-21/hl1248>

Gaza: Israel

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL1249] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning that government's denial of permission for patients in Gaza to leave for medical treatment in Jerusalem or abroad.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities, most recently on 1 June.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-21/hl1249>

Ministry of Justice

Lord Wolfson speech: UK-Middle East Legal Services Week

Welcome, Ahlan Wa Sahlan, Broochim Habaim. ...

It's a pleasure be able to address so many esteemed colleagues representing law firms, chambers and international businesses from here in the UK and all over the Middle East, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar and beyond. ...

We have, through this forum, an opportunity to deepen the relationship between the UK and countries across the Middle East ...

... the signing of the Abraham Accords has spurred a new wave of expanded business opportunities in and between Israel and the UAE in a wide range of sectors which rely on legal services. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/lord-wolfson-speech-uk-middle-east-legal-services-week>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Attacks against critics must stop, those responsible arrested – UN experts

UN human rights experts today expressed serious concerns about a number of attacks by security forces against critics of the Palestinian Authority, including the death in custody, reportedly as a result of beatings, of a well-known commentator and opposition candidate. "Nizar Banat's death in the occupied West Bank shortly after his nighttime arrest on 24 June by Palestinian Security Forces has all the makings of a criminal act," said the experts. "Initial reports indicate that he was badly beaten with steel batons during his arrest at home by Palestinian Security Forces. After being taken away by the security forces, he died several hours later in their custody.

"His death must be investigated in a truly impartial and transparent manner and in compliance with the *Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*. If the investigation reveals that his death was a homicide, those responsible must be held fully accountable, regardless of rank or command and full reparations must be granted to

the family of Mr. Banat. The findings of the investigation, including the results of the autopsy on Mr. Banat's body, must be published in full." ...

"Mr. Banat's public criticisms, however harsh, were protected by the basic human rights of freedom of expression and of association," said the experts. "The Palestinian Authority has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to hold opinions without interference and the freedom to express information and ideas of all kinds.

"The ability for critics to exercise these freedoms and hold governments and public authorities to account is a vital means to measure how much, or how little, public freedoms are enjoyed in the society."

Following the death of Mr. Banat, demonstrations erupted in Ramallah and other West Bank cities with protesters demanding justice and accountability. The demonstrations were met with - what appears to be - unwarranted and excessive force by Palestinian Security Forces.

"We are extremely concerned with the use of excessive force by Palestinian Security Forces against demonstrators, including allegations of attacks carried out by non-uniformed persons and the targeting of women present in the demonstrations," the experts said.

Several days before Mr. Banat's death, Palestinian forces arrested Issa Amro, an internationally respected human rights defender in Hebron, after he wrote a social media posting critical of the Palestinian Authority. He was released the following day. In recent years, Mr. Amro has been regularly harassed, detained and subject to security charges by both the Israeli military and the Palestinian Authority.

"The obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights rest with the competent authority exercising power. Notwithstanding a harsh occupation by Israel, Palestinian civil society has every right to demand that its own political and security leaders live up to their solemn promises to abide by international human rights commitments," the experts said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27267&LangID=E>

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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 (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

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

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

**** Nationality and Borders Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0141/210141.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0141/en/210141en.pdf>

European Convention on Human Rights Memorandum

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0141/ECHRmemo.pdf>

Factsheet

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-factsheet/nationality-and-borders-bill-factsheet>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

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

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

**** Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

Bill as introduced

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/legislation/bills/executive-bills/session-2017-2022/organ-and-tissue-donationdeemed-consent-bill/organ--tissue-donation-deemed-consent---as-introduced---full-print-version-.pdf>

Explanatory and Financial Memorandum

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/legislation/bills/executive-bills/session-2017-2022/organ-and-tissue-donationdeemed-consent-bill/organ-and-tissue-donation---as-introduced-efm_.pdf

First Stage

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2021/07/05&docID=345817#3563460>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 10 days**

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>

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