



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Debate

#### **Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill: Committee Stage, House of Lords**

*col 3GC* **Baroness Deech (Crossbench):** One of the worst things in this Bill, with its miasma of uncertainty, is its retrospective effect. ... We have to stop the committee considering, let alone making suggestions to change, policies that were established in the past, that are currently being lawfully implemented and on which people base their livelihoods, food and sporting pursuits.

As it stands, the Bill would allow the committee to reopen of its own volition policies that have been in place for perhaps a century, as some of our animal welfare laws have. It could make recommendations designed to undermine the use of animals in medical research, the practice of killing animals according to Jewish law and country sports, already hedged about with qualifications and reached by consensus a long time ago. ...

*col 4GC* ... retrospective legislation and changes of policy are to be assumed to be a bad thing. They may undermine settled patterns of life and livelihood, taking away certainty of freedom from criminal and civil prosecution. We cannot allow this committee to propose legislation to take away the validity of decisions made in the past and in good faith by people relying on the law as it was. In the case of the traditional Jewish way of killing animals for food, it has been permissible ever since the Jewish return to England some 350 years ago and it is established policy under UK regulations to permit it, as it was under EU legislation—although not that it could be relied on, as I explained in my last speech on this when I pointed out that the European Court of Justice allowed the Belgian prohibition of Jewish non-stunning methods. ...

*col 5GC* **Lord Benyon:** ... this Bill is about the government policy-making process. It is not about some method of changing the slaughter of animals for religious belief. I want to make that absolutely clear. ...

*col 22GC* **Lord Moylan (Conservative):** ... Science is at the heart of the Bill. Every proponent and supporter of it would agree that the claims for animal sentience must be scientific, not merely a sort of infantile anthropomorphism. ... The Bill has to rest on a proper scientific basis. ...

We are not dealing with the fundamental principles of physics, about which there is no dispute. We are not even dealing with something like climate science, on which, although it is perhaps disputed at the margins, there is broad consensus among scientists. We are dealing with something that is relatively young, relatively prone to capture and still contested to some extent, and we are putting it at the heart of government decision-making. ... it needs to be on a proper academic footing. It needs to have appeared in peer-reviewed academic journals first. ...

**col 26GC Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandevill (Liberal Democrat):** ... Lord Hamilton of Epsom ... said that he hoped that vegans and vegetarians will not be on the committee as they might sway its decisions. Can the Minister confirm that the appointment of members to the committee will not be prejudiced against those of religious persuasions or other protected characteristics? ...

**Lord Benyon:** ... It would not be our intention to edit the committee's membership by their eating habits or by any other habits or disciplines. We want a balanced committee that draws together a wide range of expertise across the whole field of animal welfare. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-07-20/debates/98AD89E5-DFBD-46DF-B48A-743480D7B5EB/AnimalWelfare\(Sentience\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-07-20/debates/98AD89E5-DFBD-46DF-B48A-743480D7B5EB/AnimalWelfare(Sentience)Bill(HL))

## House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### **Standing Advisory Councils On Religious Education: Local Government**

**Luke Pollard (Labour) [31532]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 10631 on Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Finance, what guidance his Department has issued to local authorities to support their responsibilities in the delivery of the statutory obligations of their local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education; and if he will make a statement.

### **Standing Advisory Councils On Religious Education: Finance**

**Luke Pollard (Labour) [31533]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 10631 on Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Finance, what assessment his Department has made of the appropriate and equitable level of funding via the central school services block for local authorities to support their responsibilities in the delivery of the statutory obligations of their local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education; and if he will make a statement.

**Luke Pollard (Labour) [31534]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question on Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Finance, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the appropriate and equitable level of funding via the central school services block for local authorities to support their responsibilities in the delivery of the statutory obligations of their local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:** The 'Religious education in English schools: non-statutory guidance', published in 2010, sets out advice to support the provision of high quality religious education in maintained schools in England. It also provides local authorities with information about their roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to their local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education. The guidance can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010(opens%20in%20a%20new%20tab))

In the 2021/22 financial year, the central school services block (CSSB) continues

to fund local authorities for the ongoing responsibilities that they have a statutory duty to deliver for all pupils in maintained schools and academies. The total funding for ongoing responsibilities is £257 million in the 2021/22 financial year and is a 3.8% increase compared to the 2020/21 financial year, in order to keep up with inflation and pupil numbers. The Department will confirm funding allocations for the CSSB in the 2022/23 financial year shortly. We do not specify what proportion of their CSSB funding local authorities should spend on specific central services - this is for local authorities' own discretion.

The introduction of the CSSB in the 2018/19 financial year followed extensive consultation with local authorities, schools, and other stakeholders. A total of 87 local authorities saw a gain in funding, as a result of the introduction of the CSSB, with local authorities also protected against losses of more than 2.5% per pupil in funding for ongoing responsibilities.

The Department's officials regularly meet with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government officials to discuss cost pressures on local authorities. The decision on the level of funding for the CSSB each year is then taken by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-12/31532>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-12/31533>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-12/31534>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-04/10631>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Religious Practice: Islam

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL1825] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 April (HL15173), what is their estimate of the number of mosques in the UK; and how many have they assessed for evidence of radicalisation through their (1) support, or (2) justification, of violence towards non-Muslims.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We assess all evidence of those that radicalise others through their support for or justification of violence and will not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives. We cannot discuss individual cases and we have made no assessment of the number of mosques in the UK.

We continue to work with law enforcement agencies and multi-agency partners to increase our understanding of new and emerging radicalising threats to society. Any violent threat is assessed and managed by the police and security services based on the threat that it is deemed to pose.

Our work to counter radicalisation through Prevent works best when it is delivered in partnership with communities and civil society, including faith institutions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-07/hl1825>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15173>

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## House of Commons Oral Answers

### Israel and Palestine

**Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op):** When he plans to make a decision on whether the UK will support the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. (902999)

**Andy Slaughter (Labour):** Whether his Department's guidance advising against trade with illegal settlements in the West Bank extends to public bodies. (903010)

**The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly):** The UK Government share the objectives of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. UK officials remain in close contact with the US Government regarding the international fund. The US is at the early stages in its planning and, once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration. The UK's overseas business risk guidance is intended to provide guidance for UK businesses to identify and mitigate security and political risks when trading overseas. The guidance is not aimed at public bodies or Her Majesty's Government. The UK's position on settlements is clear, and we have articulated it regularly. We regard them as illegal under international law, and they are therefore a risk to the economic and financial activities in settlements. We do not encourage or offer support for such activity.

**Alex Sobel:** The UK consulate in Jerusalem has given vocal support to oppose the illegal evictions in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah. What practical action can the UK Government take to ensure that those evictions end? They run contrary to the intentions of the international fund for peace and, as the Minister has just stated, we are opposed to illegal occupations.

**James Cleverly:** The UK enjoys a close and important relationship with Israel, and because we have that close relationship, we are able directly to bring up sensitive issues. I and my ministerial colleagues have brought up with the Israeli Government our opposition to those demolitions.

**Andy Slaughter:** Given that the Minister has just said that his Department's policy is not to encourage or support economic and financial activity in settlements, will he at least say that, where public bodies decide that they do not wish to invest in settlements, following his Government's advice, he will not stand in their way in doing so?

**James Cleverly:** Procurement by public bodies is governed by various public procurement regulations. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 require contracting authorities to treat all economic operators equally and without discrimination. In addition, the Local Government Act 1988 requires local authorities to exercise their functions in relation to public supply or works contracts without regard to non-commercial matters, which includes the location in any country or territory.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-07-20/debates/8454EECE-530A-4AD2-803E-D68B9A9D84E2/IsraelAndPalestine>

### Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Catherine McKinnell (Labour):** The Minister for Middle East and North Africa indicated earlier that the Government have yet to consider joining the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, because they are awaiting further information. Why are the Government not showing more initiative in working with the US to drive that? Our chief negotiator in Northern Ireland held a similar initiative, the International Fund for Ireland, to be the great unsung hero of the peace process. Does the Minister agree that the middle east need be no different? (903052)

**The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly):** As I said earlier, the UK values and welcomes means for Israelis and Palestinians to work

more closely together, and we call on the leadership of both to do so at Government and Palestinian Authority level. We work closely with our US counterparts, and we will continue working with them as they put more details on that fund. Once they are in a position to engage with us in more detail, we will consider that in due course.

**Mark Eastwood (Conservative):** I have received more than 2,000 emails from constituents raising their concerns about violence towards worshippers at al-Aqsa mosque, and the threatened evictions of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. In response to those concerns, will my right hon. Friend outline what steps he has taken to raise those issues directly with the Israeli Government? (903055)

**James Cleverly:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this very issue with his Israeli counterpart, I have raised it with the Israeli ambassador, and we have consistently called for sensitivity in the security arrangements around the most holy sites in Jerusalem. We continue to call for a permanent ceasefire, and we will continue to work with all parties, both in the west bank and in Israel, to pursue that aim.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-07-20/debates/B6CDAF96-ABC5-4FC0-82A8-2A667A2525AA/TopicalQuestions#contribution-423E0512-0DB4-4DEC-AB55-DC0EB8D65B80>

#### **Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**Rachel Hopkins (Labour):** Eid Mubarak to Muslims celebrating both in Luton South and around the world, but for those living in Palestine, their Eid al-Adha celebrations will not be peaceful or safe. Does the Secretary of State agree that attempts to get a meaningful peace process back up and running are made harder by the building of settlements and the eviction of Palestinians, which entrench division and are illegal under international law? (903065)

**Dominic Raab:** I totally agree with the hon. Lady. I have been out to both Israel and the west bank twice. We are a stalwart supporter of Israel, but we also, not least because of our principled approach to international law, make it clear, whether on the evictions, the demolitions in Jerusalem or the broader question of settlement building, that they are not just contrary to international law but entirely counterproductive to the peace set-up we need to see for a durable two-state solution for both Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-07-20/debates/B6CDAF96-ABC5-4FC0-82A8-2A667A2525AA/TopicalQuestions#contribution-B25AB3B8-A6DA-41D3-AC3E-3081FBE532C0>

## **House of Commons Written Answers**

### **Israel: Arms Trade**

**Emma Lewell-Buck (Labour) [33947]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the terms of any licences issued for the export of arms to Israel have been varied as a result of the violence in that country and the neighbouring Palestinian Territory in May 2021.

**James Cleverly:** HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We consider all export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. If extant licences are found to be no longer consistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, those licences will be revoked.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/33947>

## Palestinians: Coronavirus

**Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat)** [34005] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Israeli Government on that Government's obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention to provide vaccines for the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**James Cleverly:** We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene, to the fullest extent of the means available to it, including in relation to combating the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). We also recognise the Palestinian Authority's responsibilities for vaccinations under the Oslo Accords (under Article 17). Cooperation is key to tackling Covid-19: the British Embassy Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General Jerusalem are in regular contact with both parties and continue to urge them to coordinate on vaccine access.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/34005>

## Downing Street

### PM call with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi: 20 July 2021

The Prime Minister ... welcomed Egypt's role in brokering a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, and they discussed the importance of making further progress on the Middle East Peace Process. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-egyptian-president-abdel-fattah-al-sisi-20-july-2021>

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## Other Relevant Information

### European Court of Human Rights

#### Judgement: Polat v Austria

1. The application concerns the applicant's objection on religious grounds to the post-mortem examination of her prematurely born and subsequently deceased son, which she alleged had violated her rights under Articles 8 and 9 of the Convention. Moreover, under Article 8 of the Convention, she complained that she had not been informed of the extent of the post-mortem or the removal of her son's organs for preservation purposes. In addition, she complained under Article 13, read in conjunction with Articles 8 and 9, that she had not had any legal remedy available to challenge *ex ante* the carrying-out of the post-mortem. ...

5. The prenatal examination ... indicated that the foetus ... would likely be born with a disability. ...

7. Apart from that preliminary diagnosis, the applicant did not have enough amniotic fluid in the womb. She was informed that her child would most likely not survive. The attending physician at the hospital ... spoke with the applicant concerning a possible need for a post-mortem examination of the body of her as yet unborn child, to clarify the exact cause of death but also to assess whether such a malformation could occur in another child (in particular the offspring of siblings already born). The applicant and her husband refused to agree to a post-mortem examination for religious reasons. They explained that, in

accordance with their Muslim beliefs, they wished to ritually wash the corpse prior to the funeral. For that purpose, the corpse had to remain as unscathed as possible. ...

8. The applicant gave birth to her son, Y.M., ... It was a premature birth, which took place in the twenty-fifth week of the pregnancy. The child weighed less than 900 grams at that time. Y.M. received intensive medical care but died two days later on 5 April 2007 from a cerebral haemorrhage.

9. After Y.M.'s death, the applicant and her husband were asked again whether they would agree to a post-mortem examination. The doctors explained to her that that was necessary in order to determine the exact cause of death. Moreover, as the disease could possibly be genetic, it was in the interests of the [children] already born and future siblings ... The applicant and her husband refused to give their consent. The primary physician Dr S. told them that it would be carried out nonetheless, in order to clarify the diagnosis. ...

12. During the post-mortem examination, practically all the internal organs were removed from the child's body and preserved at the hospital for a comprehensive assessment. ...

13. The applicant was informed that a post-mortem examination had taken place. She was upset, and on 8 April 2007, 5.10 h, she went to the police and reported that the hospital had examined her son's body without her consent. ...

14. The hospital handed over their son's corpse to the applicant and her spouse ... They were not informed about the extent of the post-mortem. The applicant was under the impression that only a "small cut" ... had been made. The corpse was completely dressed and was wearing a cap at the time. ...

16. During the funeral ceremony, which took place ... in the applicant's home village in Turkey ... The body of the child was undressed by the wife of the *Hodja* (Turkish for "learned man" – the religious person performing the ceremony) and the applicant herself. During that procedure, the two women noticed that the deceased child had undergone a full body post-mortem – that is to say the whole body and head had been cut open and sewn back together. It was noticeable that the internal organs of the child had been removed, as the body was stuffed with cotton wool. The genitals were not recognisable ...

17. At the sight of the state of the child's body, both women were left in a state of shock and the applicant fainted. She then started to scream and cry and was inconsolable. ... Since the genitals of the deceased child were no longer identifiable, the ritual washing could not take place (because there are different washing rituals for male and female deceased), and the funeral had to be cancelled. ...

18. The deceased child then had to be buried in another community, without the ritual washing and the ceremony required by the applicant's Muslim faith. ...

*[Following several domestic court judgements:]*

32. The Supreme Court ... rejected the applicant's extraordinary appeal on points of law ... It noted that according to the clear wording of section 25(1) of the Hospital Act and section 12(3) of the Funeral Act, the case's lack of diagnostic clarity constituted an example of the kind of public and scientific interest that justified a post-mortem examination – even without the consent of the deceased's relatives. ...

*[The European Court of Human Rights judgement:]*

... Holds, unanimously, that there has been a violation of Articles 8 and 9 of the Convention in respect of the failure to conduct a balancing exercise between the applicant's interests and the public interest in relation to the carrying-out of the post-mortem examination on her son's body;

Holds, unanimously, that there has been a violation of Article 8 of the Convention in respect of the authorities' failure to disclose information to the applicant about her son's post-mortem examination ...

**To read the full judgement see**

<https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-211365%22%5D%7D>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **\*\* Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill**

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

Committee Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-07-20/debates/98AD89E5-DFBD-46DF-B48A-743480D7B5EB/AnimalWelfare\(Sentience\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-07-20/debates/98AD89E5-DFBD-46DF-B48A-743480D7B5EB/AnimalWelfare(Sentience)Bill(HL))

#### **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>

#### **Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

#### **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>

Second Reading, House of Commons (continued)

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-07-20/debates/D6FA6055-BA80-4980-AE15-910876BB1E19/NationalityAndBordersBill>

#### **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/>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Animal welfare [EU legislation]** (closing date 3 August 2021)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation_en)

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