



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Public Worship and Singing in Church

Caroline Ansell (Conservative): What guidance the Church of England is providing on (a) singing in church and (b) public worship following the move to step 4 of the covid-19 road map on 19 July 2021. (903183)

Andrew Selous: The Church has published fresh guidance to help clergy and parochial church councils in their decision making, recognising that the circumstances in each parish may differ for space, age and demographic reasons.

Caroline Ansell: It has been nearly a year since people in churches could lift their voices in song, and this Sunday there will be joy. But for some church leaders, some concern seems to remain, despite the very well established and known physical and mental benefits associated with singing. Does my hon. Friend agree that those benefits should be very much in the hearts and minds of decision makers as they look at how to progress this summer? ...

Andrew Selous: Just like my hon. Friend, I am very much looking forward to being able to sing in church again—and if it stopped raining or being a heatwave, we could even worship outside. Clergy will want to do what is right in their own churches and cathedrals, recognising that we are many members within one body and are called to be responsible to and for one another.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-07-22/debates/09D28229-60A4-402A-9A9C-AE8D277FECBE/PublicWorshipAndSingingInChurch>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [363] Rise in antisemitic hate crime – That this House condemns the appalling rise in antisemitism in the weeks during and after the devastating escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine; notes with concern that the Community Security Trust (CST) recorded 628 antisemitic hate incidents between 8 May and 7 June 2021; regrets that is the highest number of antisemitic hate crimes that the CST has ever

recorded in any month-long period; notes with further concern that this represents roughly four times the normal number expected during that period; believes it is shameful that in the UK, British Jews often suffer when violence flares up in a region thousands of miles away; and resolves to continue to call out all injustices in the Middle East and seek for a peaceful solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58818>

Information about the data referred to above can be read at

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2021/07/15/the-month-of-hate>

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See also the UK Parliament Early Day Motion “Rise in antisemitic hate crime” which is included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Middle East: Peace Negotiations

Daniel Kawczynski (Conservative) [35582] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government plans to take to build on the momentum of the Abraham Accords and help further peace in the Middle East.

Middle East: International Cooperation

Daniel Kawczynski (Conservative) [35583] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the opportunities for the UK through helping to facilitate regional cooperation in the Middle East.

James Cleverly: The UK warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Sudan. These are historic steps which see the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. We also welcome the suspension of plans for Israeli annexation of the West Bank - a move the UK has opposed - as it would have been counterproductive to securing peace in the region. Restoring cooperation is an important and constructive step towards peace, and shows both sides are willing to put the needs and security of both Israelis and Palestinians first. We need to build on this momentum through further dialogue and compromise to move towards a two state solution and a lasting solution to the conflict. The United Kingdom will continue to work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-19/35582>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-19/35583>

Israel: Foreign Relations

Daniel Kawczynski (Conservative) [35584] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits to the UK of strengthening relations with Israel over the next five years.

James Cleverly: We are proud to enjoy an excellent bilateral relationship with Israel. We welcome the formation of a new government, and look forward to working together closely to ensure the relationship goes from strength to strength. We engage frequently with the Government of Israel, and will continue to do so.

Israel: Palestinians

David Jones (Conservative) [35562] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the displacement of Palestinian families from the community of Ras al Tin by Israeli forces on 14 July 2021.

James Cleverly: 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. The UK regularly raises the issue of forced evictions from their homes with the Government of Israel. The Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions, which in all but the most exceptional cases are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-19/35562>

Israel: Palestinians

Stephen Timms (Labour) [33374] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the report of the UN Human Rights Office on business activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories published on 28 February 2020, what steps his Department plans to take in response to the identification of three UK firms involved in the demolition of Palestinian structures in breach of international law.

James Cleverly: The UK Government neither encourages nor offers support to individuals or companies who operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Ultimately, it will be the decision of an individual or a company whether to operate in occupied territories.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-14/33374>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session43/Documents/A_HRC_43_71.docx

Palestinians: Foreign Relations

Steve McCabe (Labour) [33846] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the Palestinian Authority's compliance with the most recent UK-PA Memorandum of Understanding's Partnership Principles; and if he will publish that assessment.

James Cleverly: We do not publish Partnership Principles Assessments. We have an active dialogue with the PA on the issues identified through these channels and we assess that the PA continues to demonstrate a credible commitment to our agreements and the 'partnership principles'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/33846>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Dalal Mughrabi

Steve McCabe (Labour) [33844] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 2019-20 Memorandum of Understanding between his Department and the Palestinian Authority, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the Palestinian Authority on recent reports of official glorification of Dalal Mughrabi, including the naming of a public square in Jenin after her.

Karin Younes and Maher Younes

Steve McCabe (Labour) [33845] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 2019-20 Memorandum of Understanding between his Department and the Palestinian Authority, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the Palestinian Authority on reports of the glorification of Karim and Maher Younes at schools in the Palestinian Authority.

James Cleverly: Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle any language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We have a regular dialogue with the Palestinian Authority in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, any type of action and language that makes it more difficult to achieve a culture of peaceful coexistence and a negotiated solution to the conflict.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/33844>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/33845>

Several Memoranda of Understanding were agreed for the period 2019-20; the MoU referred to above is probably

https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/51855975.odt

The following two questions both received the same answer

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Steve McCabe (Labour) [33847] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason his Department has not published any Memorandums of Understanding related to the Service, Stability and Reform Programme in the Palestinian Territories since October 2019.

Steve McCabe (Labour) [33848] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has signed any memoranda of understanding related to the Service, Stability and Reform Programme in the Palestinian Territories since those signed in October 2019.

James Cleverly: All programming and funding decisions for Financial Year 21/22 are being considered in the context of a temporary overall reduction in Overseas Development Assistance. Allocation decisions have been taken by Ministers in line with the objectives set out in the Integrated Review. We are working with suppliers and partners on what this means for individual programmes. Full budgets and programmes 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/2021-07-15/33847>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/33848>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

President of Human Rights Council appoints Members of Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel

The President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan (Fiji), today announced the appointment of Navi Pillay (South Africa), Miloon Kothari (India) and

Chris Sidoti (Australia) to serve as the three members of the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. Ms Pillay will serve as Chair of the three-person Commission.

Through its [resolution](#) of 27 May 2021, adopted at its emergency special session, the Human Rights Council decided “to urgently establish an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021”.

The three-person Commission was also tasked with investigating “all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity”.

Through the same resolution, the 47-member body mandated the Commission to “establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and abuses and of crimes perpetrated” and “identify, where possible, those responsible, with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations are held accountable”.

The Commissioners, who will serve in their personal capacities, were also requested by the Council to “identify patterns of violations over time by analysing the similarities in the findings and recommendations of all United Nations fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry on the situation”.

The Commission was requested to report on its main activities on an annual basis to the Human Rights Council as from June 2022. It is scheduled to present its first report to the Human Rights Council at its 50th session in June 2022. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27331&LangID=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

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>

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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** 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

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