



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Hospitals: Meat

Andrea Jenkyns (Conservative) [36694] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that patients at hospitals can access information as to how the meat they are served in hospital meals is slaughtered.

Edward Argar: This is a matter for local National Health Service trusts. The NHS is required to meet the requirements of the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services which require all food served to meet United Kingdom legislative standards for animal welfare or equivalent standards.

The Independent Hospital Food Review, published in October 2020, made recommendations for improving hospital food for patients and an expert panel is now in place to implement these recommendations. This includes how food is best provided to patients given their medical conditions, personal or cultural preferences and religious requirements. This sub-group will include representatives from religious organisations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36694>

The Review referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929234/independent-review-of-nhs-hospital-food-report.pdf

The following two questions both received the same answer

University of Bristol: Contracts

Andrew Murrison (Conservative) [36583] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take into account the conduct of Professor David Miller in the future letting of contracts to Bristol University.

David Miller

Andrew Murrison (Conservative) [36584] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Professor David Miller's research at Bristol University on that university's ratings under the Research Excellence Framework.

Amanda Solloway: The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses the quality of research from the submissions of UK higher education institutions, not individuals. The primary outcome of the REF is an overall quality profile for each submission, which will show the proportions of research activity judged to meet each of four starred quality levels. Alongside the quality profile, the funding bodies will publish the output, impact and environment sub-profiles that were combined to produce the overall quality profile for each submission. The HE funding bodies do not publish the scores for individual outputs or impact case studies. REF results inform future Quality-related (QR) research funding allocations from HE funding bodies, which are, also awarded at institutional level by the HE funding bodies, and not to individual researchers.

HE providers are independent and autonomous organisations, responsible for the management of their own affairs and for meeting their duties under the law, including those relating to freedom of expression and equalities. All HE providers should discharge their responsibilities fully and have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, to investigate and swiftly address hate crime, including any antisemitic incidents that are reported.

Grant funding provided by HE Funding bodies, UK Research & Innovation and Office for Students is all subject to terms and conditions of funding set by the funder with which providers must comply. If a provider does not meet these, funding can be withdrawn or reclaimed by the relevant funder. For research grant funding this includes expectations concerning academic rigour, research integrity, open research, etc.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36583>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36584>

House of Lords Written Answer

Islam: Curriculum

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL2235] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, subject to a parental right to withdraw children from particular lessons, to require depictions of the Prophet Mohammed to be shown to pupils and discussed as part of Religious Studies in the school curriculum; and if they have no such plans, why not.

Baroness Berridge: The department does not specify what a religious education (RE) curriculum should consist of, or how lessons on particular religions or non-religious beliefs should be taught. This is a matter for the school and the local authority's Agreed Syllabus Conference, depending on whether a school is maintained or an academy, and whether the school has a religious designation or not. The details of these arrangements can be found in department guidance found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools>

There are therefore no plans for the department to require the depictions of the Prophet Mohammed to be shown to pupils and discussed as part of RE.

Schools are free to include a full range of issues, ideas, and materials in their curriculum, including where they are challenging or controversial, subject to their obligations to ensure political balance. They must balance this with the need to

promote respect and tolerance between people of different faiths and beliefs, including in deciding which materials to use in the classroom.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/hl2235>

Scottish Parliament Motions

Sandesh Gulhane (Conservative) [S6M-00763] Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre – That the Parliament congratulates The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, Garnethill Synagogue Preservation Trust and the Garnethill Hebrew Congregation on the creation of the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre, which is based in the Garnethill Synagogue; recognises that the new centre has interpretative displays, a Scottish Holocaust-era Study Centre, a reference library, digital research resources and new volunteer-led facilities to welcome school parties and visitors; commends the investment of almost £530,000 in building restoration works to improve public access and create the new facilities, which has been funded through grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, The Association of Jewish Refugees, The Wolfson Family Charitable Trust, The Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany (Edinburgh), the Community Security Trust and the Architectural Heritage Fund - William Grant Foundation, and wishes everyone involved in the project good luck in promoting the new facility and encouraging a wider understanding of Jewish history in the City of Glasgow and in Scotland, as well as an appreciation of the Category A-listed Garnethill Synagogue.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-00763>

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Labour) [S6M-00767] Launch of the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre in Garnethill – That the Parliament celebrates the launch of the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre within the Garnethill Synagogue; understands that the centre is seeking to share the history of the synagogue building and the experiences of Jewish people in Scotland over the last 200 years; thanks everyone involved in the project, which will help increase the visibility of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre's collections and expand access to the Category A-listed synagogue building through regular tours, and believes that this is an important step in recognising the impact of Jewish immigration on the development of Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-00767>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Steve McCabe (Labour) [36520] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2021 to Question 22012 on Israel: Palestinians, whether the Constituencies for Peace and Support for Israeli NGOs peacebuilding projects conduct cross-border work between Israelis and Palestinians.

James Cleverly: UK peacebuilding project work contains cross-border elements. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate-General in Jerusalem work closely with all sectors of society, including ultra-Orthodox communities, the National Religious,

Israeli Arabs and Palestinian communities affected by the conflict, to encourage support for and progress towards peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36520>

The question referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/22012>

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Steve McCabe (Labour) [36521] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 22172 on Israel: Palestinians, under what circumstances the UK will collaborate with the United States on the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

James Cleverly: The UK government shares the objective 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 a very early planning stage, and once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36521>

The question referred to above can be read at

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

House of Lords Written Answer

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL1958] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the United Nations Children and Armed Conflict, published on 6 May; and, in particular their finding of "grave violations against 340 Palestinian and 3 Israeli children" in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the assessments made in the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) for 2020. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli and Palestinian security forces providing appropriate protection to the civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. We remain concerned by the number of Palestinians, including children, killed and injured in the West Bank and Gaza.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-13/hl1958>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://undocs.org/A/75/873-S/2021/437>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

James Cleverly: My sympathies to the families of 17 year-olds Mohammed Munir al Tamimi & Yousef Nawaf Mhareb, reportedly killed by live fire in separate confrontations between Palestinians & IDF in the West Bank. Israeli investigations must be comprehensive, holding those responsible to account.

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1420701199129587712>

Prioritizing Gaza Reconstruction Must Not Detract from Broader International Goal of Ending Israeli Occupation, Deputy Special Coordinator Tells Security Council

... **Lynn Hastings, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator**, said the United Nations and its partners are once again providing urgent assistance to those living in the Gaza Strip, in the wake of the recent round of hostilities in May. ...

... the World Bank and the European Union released their Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, which found that damage in Gaza is estimated at between \$290 million and \$380 million. Meanwhile, economic losses more broadly may reach up to \$200 million. ... Electricity is now reaching residents for roughly 14 hours per day. Israeli authorities have also expanded the Gaza fishing zone from 6 to 12 nautical miles, and additional restrictions on the import and export of certain goods were lifted. However, on 25 July the fishing zone was restricted again to six nautical miles, following the launch of incendiary balloons from Gaza. ...

“For any durable stability, movement and access in and out of Gaza must be improved,” she continued. Taking into consideration its legitimate security concerns, Israel should ease restrictions on the movement of goods and people to and from Gaza, in line with Council resolution 1860 (2009), with the goal of ultimately lifting them. Meanwhile, Hamas and other armed groups must stop the launching of incendiary devices, rockets and mortars and end their militant build up. ...

Outlining several instances of violence during the period under review, she said that — while the cessation of hostilities reached between Israel and Hamas in May largely held in Gaza — militants launched 13 incendiary balloons towards Israel, causing fires. In retaliation, the Israel Defence Forces fired 18 missiles against what it said were Hamas targets in Gaza, resulting in damage. In the occupied West Bank, clashes, attacks, search and arrest operations and other incidents resulted in the death of four Palestinians and injured 638 others. Meanwhile, settlers and other Israeli civilians in the occupied West Bank perpetrated 36 attacks against Palestinians, and Palestinians perpetrated 47 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians.

She went on to describe recent protests, calling on the Palestinian Authority to investigate allegations of disproportionate use of force by Palestinian security forces. ...

Touching on developments across the wider region, she noted that the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the occupied Golan has generally held ...

Yudith Oppenheimer, Executive Director of Ir Amim ... recalled her Orthodox Jewish upbringing and life in the city, with a deep understanding of the profound role religion and tradition plays. Highlighting the work of Ir Amim, an Israeli organization that envisions an equitable and sustainable Jerusalem with an agreed political future, she said the name means “City of Peoples”, reflecting a vision of a shared city. Yet, the rights and liberties she enjoys as an Israeli citizen are not afforded to the city’s 350,000 Palestinian residents, who today make up nearly 40 per cent of its population ... Israeli authorities have employed a system of discriminatory policies to weaken the Palestinian hold on the city, from land confiscation and settlement building to the denial of citizenship and political rights. These measures violate the individual and collective rights of Palestinians in Jerusalem, contravene Security Council resolutions and destabilize conditions for an agreed two-State resolution. ...

... she said the main trigger behind recent clashes was the ongoing pressures to undermine Palestinian rights to Jerusalem, exemplified by the continued erosion of the status quo on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, the arbitrary closure of the Damascus Gate plaza during Ramadan and the pending evictions of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. ...

It is essential to hold the Government of Israel accountable and to urge it to prevent the

large-scale displacement of these communities. ...

In this vein, she highlighted recent remarks of Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, who said, "What we need to do now is to make sure that no steps are taken that will prevent the possibility of peace in the future; we need to improve the lives of Palestinians. Whatever is humanitarian, I will be for it." ...

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, said dispossession, displacement and the denial of rights are elements of Palestinians' daily lives — not a chapter in their history or stories of past grievances. "We fear that the future being drawn on the ground aims at making this our perpetual reality," he said ...

Underlining a growing trend "that is becoming more obvious every day", he drew the Council's attention to a situation of apartheid "on both sides of the green line". ...

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel), recalling that the Abraham Accords were signed almost one year ago, said that the times are changing, even without the Security Council's involvement. While his Government and moderate regional States are involved in dialogue, Hamas and Iran are determined to fuel tensions and demonize Israel. Hamas has launched thousands of rockets against Israel in reaction to a Palestinian decision to cancel elections. ... Bringing a political far-left non-governmental organization to brief the Council is absurd and dangerous, he said, adding that the group ignores inconvenient facts, including that Jerusalem's Arab population has increased by 400 per cent and that most of that population wants Israeli citizenship. ... The Human Rights Council investigation is a waste of resources and a travesty of justice. Instead, the Palestinian people in the streets are calling for the removal of the Palestinian Authority, he said. Demonizing Israel instead of helping Palestinians is reflected in the Palestinian Authority's refusal to accept 1 million COVID-19 doses. ...

Israel is a leader in water management and is willing to help other nations, as it did with Jordan, but some countries are not interested in building a better future.

... when the Security Council fails to take strong action against countries like Iran and Syria, it is no wonder that companies like Ben & Jerry's and Unilever impose anti-Semitic boycotts on the world's only Jewish State. Such efforts "melt to nothing, like ice cream in the summer sun", he said. ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States) underlined her country's commitment to a two-State solution, as well as its rejection of efforts to single out Israel in United Nations forums. Urging both parties to exercise restraint and refrain from provocative actions — including home demolitions, evictions, incitement to violence and the compensation of individuals imprisoned for acts of violence — she said that, as the recent spate of violence recedes, "we must make good on our commitments to provide humanitarian assistance and support recovery efforts in Gaza". ...

Dmitry A. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) said priorities right now should be to strengthen the ceasefire and provide urgent humanitarian assistance to all those in need. ... Warning that the international community "should not rest easy" amid the current ceasefire, he said it must not lose sight of, or postpone to a more favourable moment, the need to relaunch direct Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on all final status issues. To that end, he advocated for a consolidation of international efforts with the Middle East Quartet playing a key role. ...

Brian Flynn (Ireland) ... stressed that the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be addressed. Emphasizing that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by the conflict and must be an intrinsic part of efforts to secure peace, he condemned the recent demolitions and seizures in Area C of the occupied West Bank. The increased rate of demolitions, including of donor-funded structures, across the West Bank is also concerning. ... Israel should also halt all settlement activity in occupied territory, including in East Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law. ...

Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom) echoed other speakers in calling for the parties to avoid exacerbating tensions in order to prevent a further escalation. She condemned

unequivocally Hamas's inflammatory action and indiscriminate attacks against Israel, including the use of incendiary devices, and called upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their rocket fire against Israel. Reiterating that Israel's settlement activity presents a barrier to peace and that demolitions are illegal, she remained concerned about the high number of Palestinian households in East Jerusalem with pending eviction and demolition cases, including in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. "The United Kingdom remains strongly opposed to Israel's proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar, and we call again on Israel to reconsider its plans," she said. ... She urged steps to end ongoing tensions on the Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount in Jerusalem. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14588.doc.htm>

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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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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 5 days**

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

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill (closing date not stated, but no later than 23 September 2021)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2021/july/have-your-say-on-the-higher-education-freedom-of-speech-bill/>

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