



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Scottish Government

**Scottish Animal Welfare Commission – the welfare of animals, as sentient beings:
Scottish Government activity review**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-animal-welfare-commission-review-scottish-government-activity-affecting-welfare-animals-sentient-beings/>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi (Labour) [72381] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 903830 on the Palestinian Authority: ODA recognising the importance of supporting Palestinian institutions, what plans her Department has to restore funding to the salaries of Palestinian health and education professionals in 2021-22.

James Cleverly: Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Annual Report and Accounts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-09/72381>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/A27236D1-D4BC-4754-8B23-F0AD572ABE38/PalestinianAuthorityODA>

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi (Labour) [72382] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to ensure that Palestinian communities have been meaningfully consulted in the development overseas aid initiatives intended to support them.

James Cleverly: Development programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) work to preserve the prospect of a negotiated Two State Solution and to improve the lives of Palestinians throughout the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, in line with the UK's longstanding position. The UK engages with a broad range of stakeholders to understand the impact of UK programming, including in the OPTs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-09/72382>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL3637] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the statement from US state department spokesman Ned Price on 26 October that the government of the USA "strongly opposed the expansion of settlements", and (2) the diplomatic implications of (a) the final approval by an Israeli planning committee for 1,800 housing units, and (b) the preliminary approval by that committee for 1,344 others, in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Minister for Middle East and North Africa made clear on 28 October, we urge the Government of Israel to reverse the decisions on 24 October and 27 October to advance the construction of settlement units in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to avoid actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-02/hl3637>

The statement from the US State Department spokesman referred to above can be read at <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-october-26-2021/>

The statement from the Minister for Middle East and North Africa referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-statement-on-israel-settlement-construction>

Omar Hasan Abu al-Nil

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL3636] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the killing of Omar Abu a-Nil.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of the Israeli security force's adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-02/hl3636>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Tareq Zubeidi

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL3638] To ask Her Majesty's Government what

representations they have made to the government of Israel about the reported kidnap and torture of Tareq Zbeidi by Israeli settlers.

West Bank: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL3697] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Israel about reports of Israeli settlers firing at Palestinians in the West Bank on 26 June.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. The UK regularly raises the issue of settler violence with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 19 October. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to investigate thoroughly every instance to bring those responsible to justice. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-02/hl3638>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-03/hl3697>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL3698] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, if any, to the government of Israel in relation to reports of the use by Israeli forces of (1) tear gas, and (2) sound bombs, against people trying to protect the graves at the Palestinian al-Yusufiyah cemetery in East Jerusalem on 27 June.

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 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/2021-11-03/hl3698>

United Nations

Panellists Stress Need to Revitalize Peace Process, as International Media Seminar on Middle East Peace Begins

... Melissa Fleming [Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications] noted that November marks the thirtieth anniversary of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, one of the most important peace initiatives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. ...

She said that 20 years ago, the late Secretary of State Colin Powell recalled on the tenth anniversary of the Madrid Conference that it was time to look forward, "as we try to capture the spirit of Madrid and create a renewed sense of hope and common purpose for the peoples of the Middle East". It is now 2021, and the world has not succeeded in capturing the spirit of Madrid ...

Yossi Beilin [former Minister and Member of Knesset, Israel] described the Madrid Conference as an important milestone and even a "miracle" ... he said ... the event as a milestone in the sense that it was conducive to other efforts that led to the Oslo process in 1993 and to peace between Israel and Jordan in 1994. The bottom line was that Israelis, Palestinians and other Arab leaders were in the same room, negotiating bilateral peace on the one hand and multilateral talks on the economy, water and refugees on the other ...

Grace Wermenbol [Non-Resident Scholar at the Middle East Institute] said that the three-day Madrid Conference represented a diplomatic breakthrough in relations between

Israel and the Arab world. ... The conference's principal success was that it created a framework for future bilateral and multilateral peace negotiations, including the 1993 and 1994 Oslo Accords and talks between Israel and Arab countries, the effects of which continue to this day ... However, it is evident that Madrid and the ensuing peace processes failed to provide a sustainable solution to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel's settlements have eroded any ability to maintain the status quo, and the current landscape in both Palestine and Israel leaves little hope for a near-term peace settlement ...

Riyad Mansour [Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine to the United Nations] said he agrees with those who call on both sides to resume negotiations as long as they are not detached from the rules of international law. Israel insists it will retain control of all borders and will be the sole sovereign "from the river to the sea", thereby negating the 1967 border and undermining the prospect of a sovereign independent State of Palestine, he noted. Moreover, Israel seeks to annex East Jerusalem and has no intention of dismantling its illegal settlements. He said Israeli authorities have detained 1 million Palestinians over the years, including children and women, and many died in prison. ...

Mr. Mansour said that at the time of the Madrid Conference, the two sides were not in a position to talk to each other, but the international community helped pave the way for negotiations. The Oslo process would not have happened were it not for the Madrid Conference, he added. ...

Ms. Fleming then asked Mr Beilin, a co-drafter of the Geneva Initiative — also known as the Geneva Accord, a draft permanent status agreement to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — whether a comprehensive agreement of that nature is still feasible.

Mr Beilin said that a group of people, including former negotiators from both sides, sat down informally, spending two and a half years, and then another two years to compile 500 pages of the annexes. ... Prime Minister Ariel Sharon later said in 2004 that he decided to withdraw from Gaza because the Geneva Initiative was so popular. ... He went on to emphasize that peace does not necessarily mean convincing Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. It can happen at the grass-root level. ...

Mr. Mansour acknowledged the role of civil society in making peace, while pointing out that "at the end of the day", it is ministers and high-level officials who make decisions. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/pal2241.doc.htm>

Praise for Palestine Relief Agency Not Matched by Contributions, Secretary-General Tells Donor Conference, Warning Life-Saving Work Must Be Supported

... UNRWA today is providing more than half a million children with high-quality education; investing in human development; ensuring that Palestine refugees — children, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities — have lifelines of hope and opportunity; managing the impact of shocks on the most vulnerable; and empowering millions, despite the many obstacles and difficult conditions in which they live. ...

We need to protect UNRWA from being used as a political pawn and focus on its ability to carry out its General Assembly mandate and its unrelenting commitment to humanitarian principles and shared United Nations values.

Despite widely recognized achievements, UNRWA is prevented from assisting Palestine refugees in a predictable way. Overwhelming support for UNRWA is not adequately matched by sufficient funding for its operations. ...

I have put forward a proposal to the General Assembly for additional posts from the United Nations regular budget as a step to increase the core capacity of the Agency.

Today, I have two specific requests:

First, we need urgent and decisive support to maintain UNRWA's ability to operate this year. We must bridge the immediate funding gap. ...

Second, I urge Member States to step up longer-term commitments and solidarity and

match the generosity of the countries that host Palestine refugees. ...

Finally, I know you join me in expressing deep admiration for UNRWA's work — day in, day out. The teachers, the doctors and nurses, the sanitation workers, the engineers and so many others — all are working under extreme duress to provide Palestine refugees with access to basic services that all of us take for granted. ...

Let's help them help Palestine refugees. An investment in UNRWA is an investment in peace and hope.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm21025.doc.htm>

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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>

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

Labelling for Animal Welfare (closing date 6 December 2021)

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/>

Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally ill Adults (Scotland) Bill (closing date 22 December 2021)

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/proposals-for-bills/proposed-assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Animal Welfare – revision of EU legislation (Food Safety) (closing date 21 January 2022)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation/public-consultation_en

Marriage Law (Northern Ireland) (closing date 18 February 2022)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-marriage-law>

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2022-2025

(closing date not stated)

<https://nihrc.org/news/detail/we-want-to-hear-from-you-about-our-strategic-planning-2022-2025>

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