



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Holocaust

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Holocaust: Education

**Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op) [128172]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is he taking to help ensure that the genocide of Roma and Sinti peoples during the Holocaust is taught as part of the national curriculum.

**Robin Walker:** The department is fully committed to Holocaust education. In recognition of its importance, the Holocaust is the only historic event which is compulsory within the national curriculum for history at key stage 3. The curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to decide how to teach the subject and what resources to use to support an understanding of the Holocaust, and the experiences of non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

The department supports school pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for several programmes. This includes £500,000 in the 2021/22 financial year for University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education, which is match funded by the Pears Foundation, and £2.1 million in the 2021/22 financial year for the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project.

As part of Holocaust education, a wide range of resources are available to help teachers explain the Nazi persecution of different groups of people. The Lessons from Auschwitz project and the knowledge and training provided by the Centre for Holocaust Education both include information and resources to support an understanding of the Holocaust, including Nazi persecution of non-Jewish groups.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128172>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### Topical Questions: International Trade

**Scott Benton (Conservative):** Can the Secretary of State update the House on the plans for a UK-Israel innovation summit and free trade agreement, following her recent visit?

**Mike Freer:** Israel is one of our strongest allies and largest partners in global trade. We are working closely with our Israeli counterparts to deliver a successful summit in the next few weeks.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-03/debates/A1AEB72A-C9C0-4324-B295-33C90301C8DF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-F2EBA095-98D0-444C-809D-C2E7A1BCA3F5>

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Fleur Anderson (Labour) [127558]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether discussions she has had with her international counterparts on the administrative detention of Palestinian people by Israel.

**Amanda Milling:** We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees. We do this regularly, both bilaterally and in co-operation with like-minded diplomatic partners.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127558>

### UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

#### High Commissioner for Human Rights notes significant increase in violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

... Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, presenting her report on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice, said that during the reporting period, between 1 November 2020 and 31 October 2021, the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had further deteriorated. This period was marked by a significant increase in violence, including the largest escalation of hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza since 2014. Israeli forces killed 315 Palestinians and injured 17,597 Palestinians – an almost five-fold increase in comparison to the previous reporting period. Fourteen Israelis were killed and 824 others were injured by Palestinians. The High Commissioner said her Office had documented several incidents in which Israeli attacks may have violated international humanitarian law principles of distinction, proportionality and feasible precautions. However, almost 10 months later, her Office was not aware of any criminal investigation of these incidents. ... Ms. Bachelet called on Israeli authorities to conduct prompt, independent, impartial, thorough, effective and transparent investigations into all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including allegations of international crimes, and to ensure effective remedies to victims. Regarding the accountability of Palestinian authorities, she noted that the reporting period was marked by increased violence by Palestinian Security Forces, which may amount to violations of the right to life and to physical integrity.

On 19 October 2021, the Israeli Minister of Defence had designated six Palestinian human

rights and humanitarian organizations as “terrorist organizations” under Israel’s Counter-Terrorism Law, and the Israeli military commander in the West Bank had declared these and one other organization ‘unlawful’. These designation decisions were based on vague and unsubstantiated allegations and her Office remained unaware of any credible evidence to support the accusations. The High Commissioner therefore called upon Israel to revoke the designations ...

Israel was not present in the room ...

State of Palestine, speaking as a country concerned, said the report had a lack of balance, as Israel was the occupying power, and Palestine was the victim of a colonialist occupation. The violence had caused the loss of hundreds of lives, including children, elderly, journalists and medical workers. These were flagrant violations of international law, and there was also medical negligence in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic. There had been the demolition and destruction of houses in East Jerusalem, and barbaric aggressions by settlers against Palestinians, with the settlers taking public and private property. The blockade of the Gaza Strip had continued for more than 14 years, a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. ...

In the debate, speakers said the suffering of the Palestinian people continued, that settlements were illegal, and that there should be accountability. Freedom of expression should be upheld, including in areas under Palestinian control. There could be no legitimacy for a colonising State that continued to violate international human rights law and deny the Palestinian people their inalienable right to self-determination. ...

Israel must be held accountable and responsible for all of its actions, which were tantamount to apartheid. State of Palestine had committed itself to abide by international resolutions, but the other side had not. The occupation had to come to an end in order to end human rights violations of the Palestinian people.

The attacks by Hamas and other terrorist organizations within Israel were condemned by some speakers, saying that both sides needed to respect human rights. ...

Michelle Bachelet ... said it had been 18 months since Israel ceased to renew visas for staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights working in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, gravely impacting their work, as they had been mandated to do by the Council, namely to ensure that all those guilty of violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law were brought to justice and there was redress for all victims, including reparations. ... On the future updating of the database, the High Commissioner had previously flagged the issue of resource requirements ... Any further work in this area could only be discharged consistent with the budgetary process. With regard to the issue of settlers’ violence, lack of accountability by the Israeli security forces remained pervasive, despite the repeated announcements by the authorities that investigations had begun. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28207&LangID=E>

**Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice (A/HRC/49/25)**

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session49/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_49\\_25\\_AdvanceEditedVersion.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session49/Documents/A_HRC_49_25_AdvanceEditedVersion.docx)

**In Dialogue with Israel, Experts of the Human Rights Committee Raise Issues Concerning the Applicability of the Covenant and Ask about Administrative Detention**

... **Meirav Eilon Shahr, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva** and co-head of the delegation, welcomed the opportunity to discuss

Israel's efforts to implement its obligations under the Convention ... A vibrant democracy, Israel strived to foster an open and democratic society, where every person was free to enjoy human rights without discrimination. The country's Basic Laws ensured that the rights of all citizens were upheld. Israel's active and autonomous judiciary ensured equality and democratic rights; under certain conditions, residents of the Palestinian Territories were able to bring claims where there was a concern that basic rights or civil liberties had been infringed upon.

It was Israel's principled position that the Covenant was not applicable beyond a State's national territory. Correspondingly, it did not apply with respect to the West Bank. This was also the case regarding the Gaza Strip, a territory over which Israel did not exert effective control since its disengagement in 2005. Israel remained fully committed to achieving a solution that would ensure durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians. At the same time, Israel was confronted with ongoing security challenges, witnessing devastating terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens, originating from Gaza and the West Bank. Israel had made efforts at finding the delicate and proper balance between its commitments to human rights, and its obligation to defend its citizens against terrorism. As a result, Israel often found itself at the forefront of emerging legal dilemmas. Israel tackled those dilemmas understanding that the country must impose restraints on its own actions, in conformity with applicable international law, including international human rights law. ...

**Gil Limon, Deputy Attorney General for Public and Administrative Law at the Israeli Ministry of Justice** and co-head of the delegation, said the State of Israel respected human rights and ensured their realisation by different legal mechanisms. ...

Mr. Limon noted that the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, had legislated many new laws anchoring human rights protected by the Convention. In January 2022, the Ministry of Justice had published a draft bill of a new constitutional law: Basic Law on Rights in Investigations and Criminal Justice. That Basic Law aimed to anchor the rights of persons involved in criminal proceedings, noting the crucial importance of the right to a fair trial, the right to representation, the presumption of innocence and more. The Law also referred to the rights of crime victims, minors, persons with disabilities and persons with language barriers. ... Another important legislative measure was Amendment No. 137 to the penal law, which defined a motive of racism or hostility toward the public as an aggravated circumstance in a murder offence. ...

In order to strengthen the Arab population in Israel, the Israeli Government had approved a resolution establishing a new five-year plan for the Arab population in Israel. Another plan aimed at raising the personal security and safety, in particular of Arab-Israeli citizens, and increasing the trust of the Arab population in the law enforcement authorities. ...

A Committee Expert ... noted that in certain contexts, the Covenant could be considered to have extraterritorial scope and application. The longer an occupation period lasted, the more obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law were incumbent vis-à-vis the occupied population, including the obligation to re-establish normal enjoyment of key freedoms. Did the State party plan to review that legal position? Could the State party explain how its fundamental law of 1992 protected equality and non-discrimination between Jewish and non-Jewish people? ...

Turning to the right to life, in the context of the use of force during military operations, the Expert asked what the rules were governing the use of weapons during military operations ...

Turning to the issue of the state of emergency and counter-terrorism measures, could the delegation explain what further measures Israel intended to take to ensure that the definition of terrorism was precise and limited to the countering or terrorism, in full conformity with the Covenant? On the right to life, contrary to the reply by the State party that "No death penalties were imposed or executed during the reporting period", the Committee had received reports indicating that 11 death sentences had been handed down, seven of which by military courts. ...

Another Committee Expert asked what measures the State party was taking to cease the construction and expansion of settlements in the occupied territory ... The delegation was also asked to provide information on the measures taken to prevent giving any legal legitimacy on housing units and unauthorised outposts and structures in settlements? What measures had the State party taken, or would take, to reroute the Wall in accordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and to cease the construction of the wall, and ensure that Palestinians had full access to their lands and livelihood? ...

The delegation explained that ... revocation of citizenship ... was also regulated by the citizenship law which had strict conditions. Citizenship could be revoked only by court decision, at the request of the Ministry of the Interior with the agreement of the Attorney-General. ...

In response to questions about the applicability of human rights law outside the territory of the State and during hostilities, there was no change in the position of the State of Israel. Israel believed that the human rights conventions which were territorially bound did not apply, nor were they intended to apply, to areas beyond the State's national territory. ... Regarding Arab representation in the Civil Service, the delegation explained that a steady increase was seen in the rates of Arab, Druze and Circassian employees in the Civil Service. ...

The delegation addressed the Gaza border events of 2018 and 2019. The violent riots and hostile activity gave rise to real and imminent danger to human life and bodily integrity of the citizens of Israel and members of its armed forces deployed in the area. Israel had a duty to protect its citizens and property from threats emanating outside its borders, whether military or civilian. ...

In response to questions about the security fence, the delegation said that over the years, Palestinian terrorism had taken the lives of thousands of Israelis in brutal terrorist attacks. In order to secure the lives of its citizens, Israel had built a temporary, defensive, and non-violent security fence. The route of the fence had been determined solely on the basis of security considerations and topographical considerations, as well as civil considerations. ...

In response to questions about the death penalty and 11 verdicts allegedly given, the delegation said that no such thing existed, such a verdict had not been given. ...

Another Committee Expert said it was quite clear that international humanitarian law was applicable to the West Bank and other occupied territory, and also it was clear from various United Nations documents that there were many instances of violence by the State party's defence forces against Palestinian people, which constituted violation of international humanitarian law. ...

The delegation explained that Arab citizens were very active participants in all spheres of life in Israel, there were two Ministers in the current Government for example. In further response to questions about the death penalty, the delegation explained that it had been used twice in the history of the State party. In 1948, an officer accused of treason had been tried by a military field court. The second time the death penalty had been used was in 1962, in the case of Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust against the Jewish people. With those exceptions, the death penalty was neither requested nor issued by the State of Israel, which maintained its moratorium in that regard. ...

A Committee Expert asked about the detention and interrogation of Palestinians. Could the State party provide information about the existence of mechanisms aimed at preventing the violation of the law regarding the rights of detainees, adults and children? ... Regarding freedom of expression, the State party had failed to provide the Committee with the requested information on the measures in place to ensure the safety of journalists in the course of their work and in their exercise of their freedom of expression. ...

Another Committee Expert asked the State party to provide information about measures

taken to prevent violence perpetrated by settlers against the Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory? ...

Another Committee Expert asked about issues around refugees and asylum seekers, noting that information before the Committee indicated that there were no coherent and transparent rules and criteria for refugee status determination. ...

Another Committee Expert asked ... the delegation [to] explain how and when the State party intended to revoke the application of the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) in practice and therefore protect the right to family life and the rights of children thus affected? ... Could the delegation explain what measures had been taken to facilitate family reunification of Israeli citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity, status or background, with Palestinian spouses living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza Strip, or with spouses living in several States classified by the State party as “enemy States”? ...

In response to questions about the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, the delegation said the roots of the case went to the nineteenth century with the purchase of private property by Jewish owners. Over the years, several of the cases had been litigated in the Israeli judicial system, and though successive instances had held the right of the original owners in many cases, the courts also had been aware of the delicate humanitarian aspects of the matter. Political pressure from Palestinian extremists had frustrated the resolution of the issue.

In response to questions about administrative detention, the delegation explained that it was a lawful security measure allowing the deprivation of a person’s liberty for a limited time. It was a preventive measure against person posing grave threats to the security of the West Bank and the State of Israel. ...

In response to questions about freedom of movement, the delegation stated that the Israeli Army had no intention of hurting anyone who crossed the fence. Recently, the quotas of permits granted to merchants and senior businessmen living in the Gaza Strip had been significantly increased, to help rehabilitate the Gaza Strip. The policy regarding movement between Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank by land was decided based specifically on security considerations. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28198&LangID=E>

**Fifth periodic report submitted by Israel under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2019 (CCPR/C/ISR/5)**

<https://tinyurl.com/3vcwdank>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Council of the European Union

#### **Council adopts conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism**

... In these conclusions, the Council deplores the alarming rise in racist and antisemitic incidents in EU member states. It invites member states to develop action plans and strategies by the end of 2022, implementing the 2020 EU anti-racism action plan and the 2021 EU strategy on combating antisemitism.

The Council highlights the importance of education and training, calling on member states to raise awareness among their population of the fight against racism and antisemitism and uphold their duty to remember the victims of racist and antisemitic violence. It also

calls on member states to promote research and education on Jewish life, antisemitism and the Holocaust, and racism and slavery.

The conclusions invite member states to urge media, social networks, and technology and communications sectors to apply codes of conduct agreed at European level and adopt solutions to rapidly detect, assess and remove illegal online hate speech. Member states should also strengthen their ability to prosecute illegal online hate crime and hate speech ...

... the conclusions also call on member states to encourage victims and witnesses of racist and antisemitic incidents to report those incidents, to ensure such reports are investigated and to offer assistance, including psychological, social and material support where necessary. ...

The conclusions call on member states to ensure national coordinators, public bodies, social partners and civil society organisations work closely together to develop preventive measures and evaluate their effectiveness. ...

According to surveys by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 45% of respondents with a North African background, 39% of those with a Sub-Saharan African background and 41% of Roma respondents had felt discriminated against in the previous five years. 39% of Jewish respondents had experienced some form of antisemitic harassment. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/council-adopts-conclusions-on-combating-racism-and-antisemitism/>

**Conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism**

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6406-2022-REV-1/en/pdf>

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

### **UK Parliament**

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

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

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0219/amend/sentience\\_rm\\_rep\\_0303.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0219/amend/sentience_rm_rep_0303.pdf)

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

#### **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>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45534/documents/1540>

## **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 2 days**

**Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights** (closing date 8 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

**Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland** (closing date 28 March 2022)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-hate-crime-legislation-northern-ireland>

**Trade with Israel** (closing date 30 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-israel-call-for-input>

**CPS: Public interest guidance for suicide pact and 'mercy killing' type cases**

(closing date 9 April 2022)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/consultation-public-interest-guidance-suicide-pact-and-mercy-killing-type-cases-0>

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