



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Northern Ireland Protocol

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis): It is important that we get progress as quickly as possible, regardless of the pre-election period in Northern Ireland, because every day that we are not seeing that flexibility from the EU is another day when consumers in Northern Ireland cannot access products; when the Jewish community cannot access, technically, under the EU provisions, kosher food; when businesses cannot get access to the products they need; and when more than 200 Great Britain businesses are not supplying Northern Ireland. That affects the economy of both Northern Ireland and the wider UK, and we need to resolve that as quickly as we can. ...

There are multiple examples out there, whether it is the issues for the Jewish community that I just outlined or the individual case [Jeffrey Donaldson] has. Both he and I have heard of cases of other people who are unable to access products and goods, some of which are very important so that they can continue to live their lives in the way that any other UK citizen could. That is not good enough. We need to be clear with the EU that its current lack of flexibility puts at risk the very thing that the protocol was there to protect: the Belfast/Good Friday agreement and peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland. It is right that we keep the pressure on. We will strain every sinew, and I hope the EU will show flexibility and pragmatism to resolve the issue that it now recognises, which is that the protocol is not working and is, I have to say, just not sustainable in its current form. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-09/debates/9F9A6EE4-C7AD-4184-8D84-115488890DF1/NorthernIrelandProtocol#contribution-F92F0A73-E11C-405D-93AA-971E3FF0E1C1>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answer

Business of the House

Bob Blackman (Conservative): Each year we have an emotional debate on Holocaust Memorial Day, and we are indebted to the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for all the work that they do, but that debate commemorates the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Today is the anniversary of the creation of the first concentration camp in Germany by the Nazis in 1933. May we have a debate in Government time on the history of the holocaust? Only by learning the lessons of what happened will we prevent it from happening again.

Mark Spencer: I thank my hon. Friend for raising this important matter. The holocaust is something that we must never forget, and an awareness of its history is vital to ensuring that such horrors never happen again. My hon. Friend may know that the National Holocaust Centre is in the constituency of my right hon. Friend and neighbour the Member for Newark (Robert Jenrick). It is certainly worth a visit, and many schoolchildren are invited and go there.

I know that my hon. Friend is a member of the Backbench Business Committee. As he says, we hold regular debates in the Chamber to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January, which are always well subscribed. I would encourage him to apply for a Westminster Hall or Adjournment debate to raise the matter to which he has referred today.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-03-10/debates/48E1540E-D3D7-4064-A7D4-DB75FB7CFA1A/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-0452CAE4-B41A-4698-9E7A-1BB6D88D5DEA>

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Israel

See also the Commons oral answers “Global Summit: Freedom of Religion or Belief”, included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Preferential Tariffs

Gareth Thomas (Labour) [131045] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the Preference Utilisation Rates are in total for UK trade with (a) Egypt, (b) Faroe Islands, (c) Georgia, (d) Ghana, (e) Israel, (f) Jordan, (g) Kenya, (h) Kosovo, (i) Lebanon and (j) Liechtenstein for each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas (Labour) [131047] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the Preference Utilisation Rates are in total for UK trade with (a) Mexico, (b) Morocco, (c) North Macedonia, (d) Palestinian Authority, (e) Serbia and (f) Singapore for each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Ranil Jayawardena: Data up to the end of January 2020 is publicly available, but no comparable data is available for after this period.

Exports analysis 2017-19: <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/159047.htm>

Imports analysis 2017-19: <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/159046.htm>

Eurostat preference utilisation data for all periods 2000 to end January 2020:

[Easy Comext](#), Adjusted extra-EU imports since 2000 by tariff regime (DS-059281).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131045>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131047>

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Rupa Huq (Labour) [133240] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on reports of forced evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan.

Amanda Milling: In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. On 19 January, Minister James Cleverly urged the Government of Israel to stop these practices. The UK raises these issues with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 20 January and Ministry of Justice on 27 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-02/133240>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/jamescleverly/status/1483866915613388810>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Travel Advice: Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Amanda Milling: Great to meet with Ambassador @TzipiHotovelev. We discussed: How we can support Ukraine UK-Israel collaboration on trade, science & innovation Importance of progress of regional peace and security challenges

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1501987082809585669>

Amanda Milling: Good first meeting with Dr @hzomlot, Head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK. I heard about the challenges facing the Palestinian people and stressed the UK's enduring commitment to a two-state solution that delivers peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1501996311213707271>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Peace Institute

Mercedes Villalba (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making towards the establishment of a peace institute by the end of 2022, as set out in its 2021-22 programme for government. (S6O-00844)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (Angus Robertson): Following an open tender process in January, we have contracted a consortium of expert researchers to help inform our thinking on Scotland's future peace offer, which will report back to us in the summer. There has never been a more pertinent time to discuss Scotland's approach to peace and reconciliation.

Mercedes Villalba: The Scottish Government has committed to establishing a peace institute, with a focus on human rights, by the end of this year. Amnesty International recently published a report into Israel's apartheid against Palestinians. It includes a "call on states to immediately suspend the direct and indirect supply, sale or transfer" of arms to Israel. Given the human rights abuses that Palestinians face, will the Scottish Government's peace institute have the scope to review the almost £10 million given by Scottish Enterprise in grants to arms companies that sell weapons to Israel?

Angus Robertson: I welcome the input of members from all parties on particular issues or causes, or about areas in which Scotland's peace institute could play a meaningful role. I commend the member—and anyone else who is involved—for becoming involved in that process as we consider the form that a peace institute might take. I encourage the member to get in touch about any issues that she, or colleagues, feel should be considered as we make preparations to stand up the planned peace institute.

Gillian Martin (SNP): Does the cabinet secretary agree that the example set by our northern European neighbours, such as Norway, illustrates the positive diplomatic influence that nations of Scotland's size and character can have in promoting peace on the world stage?

Angus Robertson: Norway is home to the Peace Research Institute Oslo, which explores peaceful relations between states, groups and peoples. Our research will consider the Norwegian approach and those of other nations to help us to determine Scotland's distinct peace offer.

Like other nations of its size, Scotland has a wealth of soft power resources—in other words, assets that make us an attractive and trustworthy partner. The Scottish Government recognises that a good international reputation is produced by the country as a whole, and we will continue to collaborate with others to promote Scotland and our values on the international stage.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13628&i=123737#ScotParlOR>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MDE1551412022ENGLISH.pdf>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answers

Global Summit: Freedom of Religion or Belief

Caroline Ansell (Conservative): What role the Church of England has in supporting the global summit to promote freedom of religion or belief, to be hosted by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in July 2022. (905957)

The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Andrew Selous): The Church is making every effort to support that important summit to promote freedom of religion or belief. A debate was held on the lack of global religious freedom at last month's General Synod and I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Fiona Bruce), in her capacity as the Prime Minister's special envoy for freedom of religion or belief, was able to brief Synod members on the huge cost of following Jesus in many parts of the world.

Caroline Ansell: Has my hon. Friend seen the 2021 research report, "Defeating Minority Exclusion and Unlocking Potential: Christianity in the Holy Land", which reflects the

significance of that community's contribution to public value and welfare but also the vulnerability of its position? Does he agree that the forthcoming ministerial summit presents an excellent opportunity to discuss and debate its findings and recommendations?

Andrew Selous: I have seen the report and I share my hon. Friend's concerns about its findings, which show the political and economic instability and the social intimidation that people are facing. The international ministerial meeting in July will provide an opportunity for that research to be widely shared and for the report's concerns to be addressed.

Jim Shannon (DUP): At the summit coming up this year, it will be really important to have individual stories from the countries where persecution is rife, whether that is China, India, Pakistan, Iran or other parts of the world. Will that be part of the conference?

Andrew Selous: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who takes a very serious interest in these matters. He is absolutely right. The Archbishop of Canterbury has just been in Pakistan, including Peshawar, where Pastor William Siraj was horrendously murdered on 30 January this year. Those stories must be heard, and he is absolutely right.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-10/debates/967230BA-5F76-455E-8C1E-885DD4B45D39/GlobalSummitFreedomOfReligionOrBelief>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61546290b1fcf4242de2e9e9/t/61792427ca61e06fe48624a5/1635329073928/ICOHS_full_digital_research_report.pdf

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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>

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

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