



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Hate Crime

Adam Afriye (Conservative) [153861] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many non-crime hate incidents the police have recorded in 2022.

Rachel Maclean: The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information is not collected on non-hate crime incidents.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-14/153861>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Emergency Services: Ministers of Religion

Lord Moylan (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to put in place a multi-professional strategy for the emergency services concerning the attendance of ministers of religion at the scene of situations involving serious injury.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, a working group bringing together representatives from policing and the Catholic Church has now concluded its exploration on the issue of access to crime scenes for religious ministers. Decisions regarding access in such situations remain an operational matter. However, the College of Policing has now published revised guidance on managing investigations, reflecting those discussions and wider input. As a result of those changes, we do not have any plans to pursue a multiprofessional strategy.

Lord Moylan: My Lords, I congratulate my noble friend and the Government on taking action on this delicate matter, which came to prominent attention at the time of the tragic murder of Sir David Amess. I welcome the new guidance. It recognises explicitly the convention rights of both the dying and their families in these emergency crime scenes. But it remains, as my noble friend says, entirely an operational decision for the police. What mechanism is my noble friend going to put in place to ensure that the revised guidance leads to a change in practice?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: ... I totally agree with him. It might seem like a small step, but it is a huge step for many families who might have found themselves in the same position as Sir David Amess. Guidance is being distributed to forces, and I know that forces were keen to have clarity on what to do in such situations. Coming back to my first point, it is of course an operational matter. ...

Baroness Masham of Ilton (Crossbench): My Lords, would the Minister agree that communication is vital? Will there be a list of priests in each area, with telephone numbers, who could be available if a priest were needed to give the last rites in serious injury cases?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I think that is a very interesting question. Obviously, it might not be entirely predictable where priests might be in the case of a serious incident, but it is certainly true that, in circulating the guidance, police will now be far better informed about how to go about these requests should they arise. ...

Baroness Harris of Richmond (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I declare an interest as the former president of the National Association of Chaplains to the Police, which I helped to establish over 30 years ago. There were then only two or three chaplains in the whole country; now there are almost 500, most of whom are volunteers, who do a superb job helping and supporting the police service. Will the Minister ensure that Police Chaplaincy UK is fully supported by the Government and is soon, I hope, enshrined into the police covenant?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I do not think there is any doubt that the police chaplaincy service is fully supported by the Government. It provides a vital service at critical times to people in need. I cannot say further than that, but what I will say to the noble Baroness—and I congratulate her on the work she does—is that the Government fully support the service.

The Lord Bishop of St Albans: My Lords, this is a delicate area, especially when we are dealing with crime scenes or potential crime scenes. Nevertheless, do Her Majesty's Government have any plans to ensure how this information will be rolled out in training people who are going to be in charge of these scenes? Is there going to be any monitoring to ensure that this is available? The sacrament of the last rites is a fundamental religious principle for many people. Can we have some assurance that this is going to be monitored?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am sure it will be monitored, for the very reason that we need to be very clear that the police should be able to do the job that they have to do at the scenes of what might be quite critical incidents. They need to have the freedom to make those judgments but also be mindful of the wishes of people who might want to have a priest or religious leader with them at the time of critical illness or nearing death. I say to the right reverend Prelate that there is certainly further learning to be done on this, but I think this is a very welcome step forward.

Lord Cormack (Conservative): My Lords, has thought been given to arranging for all of us to carry something similar to a kidney donor card in this context? One of the saddest aspects of the appalling murder of Sir David was that he was denied the last rites. He was a devout Roman Catholic; he would have expected to have them. If we could have a degree of co-ordination, so that all of us, if we wished, could carry such a card, perhaps that could be of some help.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I will certainly take that suggestion back.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, last month, as the Minister said, the College of Policing updated its guidelines to allow for the attendance of ministers of religion at the scene of a crime where appropriate, following a collaborative effort led by the Metropolitan Police and the Archbishop of Southwark. What steps will the Government be taking to review this decision and ensure that there are no unintended consequences of this welcome step? I note that a number of other questions from noble Lords have been about reviewing this decision and monitoring it to ensure that it is properly implemented.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord and other Members of the House are absolutely right. We do not want any unintended consequences from this guidance—which has been developed very quickly, I might say—such as contamination of a scene, which might impede a criminal investigation. As with all things that we do, we will review this, and I am very happy to come back to the House in future months and see how it is working.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-04-26/debates/88680502-2195-48AF-B0C3-8622CE7D3503/EmergencyServicesMinistersOfReligion>

Ministry of Justice

New drive to tackle terrorism in prisons

More dangerous and influential terrorists will be separated in specialist units to thwart the spread of their poisonous ideology, the Deputy Prime Minister has announced ...

The step is part of a comprehensive and bolstered approach to clamping down on terrorist activity in jails in England and Wales, following the publication of a landmark review carried out by Jonathan Hall QC ...

As part of these measures, a new £1.2 million team will quickly identify and target the most influential and charismatic terrorists, so they can be moved to one of the Prison Service's three 'Separation Centres' - completely apart from the main prison population.

In line with Jonathan Hall's recommendation, the process for referring prisoners to the centres will also be strengthened against potential legal challenge. At the same time, the Government's new Bill of Rights will limit terrorists' ability to bring trivial claims against their treatment under the Human Rights Act. ...

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab said:

The threat from terrorism is evolving, so our response must adapt.

We are going to take a more decisive approach in our prisons, not allowing cultural and religious sensitivities to deter us from nipping in the bud early signs of terrorist risk. We will isolate more of the most radical terrorists in separation centres, and our Bill of Rights will prevent terrorists using the Human Rights Act to claim a 'right to socialise' in prison. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-drive-to-tackle-terrorism-in-prisons>

Terrorism in Prisons

Report from the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1071318/terrorism-in-prisons.pdf

Government Response

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1071324/terrorism-in-prisons-review-response.pdf

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Mary Glendon (Labour) [906605] What diplomatic steps [the Minister] is taking to ensure that the UK has a role in the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Wayne David (Labour) [906607] What diplomatic steps [the Minister] is taking to ensure that the UK has a role in the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. (906607)

The Minister for Asia and the Middle East (Amanda Milling): We welcome the US's Middle East Partnership for Peace Act and the proposals for increased international funding for Israeli-Palestinian peace. We share the objective of advancing economic, social and political connections, and peaceful co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians. We stand ready to co-ordinate and collaborate further.

Mary Glendon: The recent attacks in Israel and the violence in Jerusalem and Gaza are a reminder of how urgent it is to support projects that bring Israelis and Palestinians together. Can the Minister now confirm to the House when the UK will join the board of the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace?

Amanda Milling: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her question. UK officials remain in close contact with the US Government about how our existing peace-building projects and funding can better support the goals of the Act. We stand ready to co-ordinate and collaborate further, including regarding the advisory board, as additional information about their plans and priorities become available.

Wayne David: Recent violence in the west bank and in Israel itself underlines the need for an international fund for Israeli and Palestinian peace, but such a fund will not just happen. It actually requires positive support from Governments around the world, including and especially this Government, yet the truth is that our Government are paying only lip service to it. When will the Government remember the success of the International Fund for Ireland and learn the lessons of that success?

Amanda Milling: As I say, what we all want to see is a safe and secure Israel, and we want to have a two-state solution that enables us to do that and also delivers Palestinian self-determination. We are working with the US Government on these projects and the funding that can support the Act, and as and when we have more information about the plans and the priorities, we will co-ordinate with them. ...

David Lammy (Labour): The last few weeks have seen spiralling tension and violence in Israel and Palestine, with a dozen Israelis killed in a spate of horrific terrorist attacks and more than 20 Palestinians killed in response, including the senseless killing of a teenager and a human rights lawyer. We remain resolutely committed to the goal of a two-state solution, but it feels a very distant prize at present. Can I ask the Minister what she is doing to try to remove the barriers to peace, including ensuring respect of holy sites such as the al-Aqsa mosque, preventing Hamas rocket attacks, ending the expansion of illegal settlements and finally recognising Palestine as a state?

Amanda Milling: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his question, and we are deeply concerned about the very fragile security situation. We are working actively with key partners, including members of the UN Security Council, and both parties to encourage de-escalation of tensions. As he says, there have been some horrific attacks, and we do want to see the situation de-escalated. We are having those conversations to ensure that we play our part in preventing further escalation. ...

Chris Law (SNP): The UK's funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees was cut by more than 50% last year. UNRWA provides essential services to Palestinian refugees in the west bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, but it has been described as "close to collapse" due to funding shortfalls. Can we truly say, as Ambassador Allen stated to the UN Security Council in 2018, that "the United Kingdom strongly supports peace" between Israelis and Palestinians when it simultaneously sells arms to one side and cuts humanitarian aid to the other?

Amanda Milling: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question. As I have said, we are committed to a two-state solution as the best way to deliver Palestinian self-determination and a safe and secure Israel. My right hon. Friend the Minister for

Europe and North America announced last year that we are providing £27 million to support UNRWA, including £4.9 million for its flash appeal following the Gaza conflicts in May.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-04-26/debates/762C81A4-5DF4-41BC-B431-AF5E96562AAC/InternationalFundForIsraeli-PalestinianPeace>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Topical Questions

Alan Brown (SNP): When words are not enough, sometimes actions are required to bring about change. When is the UK going to ban the import of goods that are produced in the Israeli settlements that they deem to be illegal under international law? (906599)

Amanda Milling: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question. We are clear on our position on the settlements: they are illegal under international law and we urge Israel to end settlement expansion. This is something that we raise with our counterparts.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-04-26/debates/7454E121-3138-4E13-B313-FFDB2BDA09C7/TopicalQuestions#contribution-395C4943-4D24-41D0-8553-A4467E05BD05>

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza: Armed Conflict

David Lammy (Labour) [156355] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts following recent missile strikes in Gaza.

Amanda Milling: We condemn in the strongest terms the firing of rockets by militants in Gaza into Israel over the past week and the threat such attacks pose. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-20/156355>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Israel: Occupied Territories

David Lammy (Labour) [156356] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of tensions in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

David Lammy (Labour) [156357] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help prevent an escalation of violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Israel: Terrorism

David Lammy (Labour) [156361] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the recent terrorist attacks in Israel.

Amanda Milling: We are appalled at the recent terror attacks in Israel and unequivocally condemn rocket attacks against Israel by militants in Gaza. We are also concerned by ongoing tensions across the West Bank and recent violence on Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount.

We urge all parties to work to de-escalate the situation, avoid provocative acts and respect the historic Status Quo, which provides the most appropriate means of managing access to holy sites. All religious sites must be treated with utmost respect. Officials in our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem have been engaging with the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to

support them in restoring calm. We expressed our concerns and reiterated our call for calm at a UN Security Council emergency meeting on 19 April.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-20/156356>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-20/156357>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-20/156361>

Israel was not discussed at the UN Security Council emergency meeting on 19 April – that meeting concerned only the situation in Ukraine. The above answer may have intended to refer to the Security Council meeting of 25 April. To read the United Kingdom contribution to this meeting see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/calling-on-all-parties-to-take-urgent-steps-to-reduce-tensions-and-avoid-further-escalation-in-jerusalem-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

David Lammy (Labour) [156362] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations the Government has made to international counterparts on the protection of and respect for Holy places in Jerusalem.

Amanda Milling: The UK is committed to working with all parties across the Holy Land to ensure the safety and security of the holy sites and all who worship there. We discussed this issue with our likeminded partners at a UNSC emergency meeting on 19 April. Officials from the British Embassy Tel Aviv and British Consulate General in Jerusalem have made it clear the need to protect holy sites with local authorities.

Respect for the historic status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem is important at all times, especially during religious festivals. We encourage all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the status quo to ensure the safety and the security of the Al Haram Al Sharif / Temple Mount and all who worship there.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-20/156362>

Israel was not discussed at the UN Security Council emergency meeting on 19 April – that meeting concerned only the situation in Ukraine. The above answer may have intended to refer to the Security Council meeting of 25 April. To read the United Kingdom contribution to this meeting see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/calling-on-all-parties-to-take-urgent-steps-to-reduce-tensions-and-avoid-further-escalation-in-jerusalem-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

United Nations

Warning ‘Future Looks Bleak’ for Syrians Living through Twelfth Year of Crisis, Top United Nations Officials Urge More Resources, Focus on Conflict

... **Geir Pedersen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria**, briefed the Council that “Syria is a hot conflict, not a frozen one”. ... He also expressed concern over the fact that five foreign armies operate on different sides of the Syrian conflict, pointing to recent strikes attributed to Israel, drone strikes attributed to Turkey, air strikes attributed to the Russian Federation and reports of rocket fire on United States troops attributed to Iranian-backed groups. Any of these flashpoints could be further exacerbated by heightened geopolitical tensions outside of Syria. ...

Vassily Nebenzia (Russian Federation) ... highlighted the volatility of the situation on the ground, with regular clashes around Turkish zones of operation, terrorists gaining strength east of the Euphrates, fighters being trained by United States forces and arbitrary missile

strikes being conducted by Israel. ...

Bassam Sabbagh (Syria) said that ending the illegal foreign presence of the United States, Turkey and Israel in Syria will help eliminate the terrorist presence, end all forms of displacement, restore Syrian national economic resources and improve the humanitarian and living situation in the country. ...

Majid Takht Ravanchi (Iran) ... Strongly condemning the Israeli regime's repeated violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, he called on the Council to hold Israel accountable for such acts of aggression. The war against terrorism must not be used to undermine Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, he said, stressing that the illegal presence of foreign forces in parts of Syria must end immediately. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14870.doc.htm>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

Church of Scotland

Kirk's Faith Impact Forum to explore wide range of global and societal issues at General Assembly

... Jewish-Christian Glossary:

Commissioners [to the General Assembly] will be asked to approve a new Jewish-Christian glossary, which defines some of the key terms used in both religions and what they mean to people from each tradition. Ministers and rabbis worked together on the project, focussing on:

'terms and words that either directly or implicitly convey beliefs and attitudes to the politics and theology of land. These words and terms were identified because of their prominence and importance with overt theological connections to Israel and Palestine such as 'holy land' and 'Israel'.

'Some were chosen because they were very specifically important to the beliefs of one faith and identity in relation to Israel and Palestine, and would aid understanding by drawing attention to them. These include 'Chosen People', 'Kingdom of God' and 'exile'.' The glossary is intended to benefit its users through learning more about both their own and the other faith, by discovering key similarities and differences between the faiths and by offering a new way to approach 'and express hopes and prayers for peace and justice in Israel in Palestine.' ...

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/articles/kirks-faith-impact-forum-to-explore-wide-range-of-global-and-societal-issues-at-general-assembly>

Report of the Faith Impact Forum

Deliverance 10, Section 5.1 and Appendix 1 all relate to the proposed Jewish-Christian glossary

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/93359/faith-impact-forum.pdf

The Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry

Antisemitism Worldwide Report 2021

<https://cst.tau.ac.il/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Antisemitism-Worldwide-2021.pdf>

TOP

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>

Third Reading, House of Lords; Bill passed

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-04-26/debates/B8CEB3D2-F345-45EF-B53D-1DE2233D8814/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-04-26/debates/B8CEB3D2-F345-45EF-B53D-1DE2233D8814/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill)

**** Nationality and Borders Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Commons Disagreements and Reasons

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/46276/documents/1756>

Ping Pong: Lords consideration of Commons Disagreements and Reasons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-04-26/debates/9D6C7A2C-933D-4E4B-9FB1-09CA151E9BE2/NationalityAndBordersBill>

Lords Non-Insistance and Amendments in Lieu

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0308/210308v2.pdf>

Ping Pong: Commons consideration of Lords Non-Insistance and Amendments in Lieu

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-04-26/debates/6254645E-540D-4C4A-921A-EED42D7517A7/NationalityAndBordersBill>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

Independent Review of Social Cohesion and Resilience (closing date 2 June 2022)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-review-of-social-cohesion-and-resilience-call-for-evidence/independent-review-of-social-cohesion-and-resilience-call-for-evidence>

TOP

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