



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Charities and Religious Buildings: Energy

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [47595] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential impact of the increase in energy costs on (a) charities and (b) places of worship.

Nigel Huddleston: As households and communities face rising energy prices, charities are seeing increased demand for their services while contending with the same price increases themselves. Places of worship are facing similar price pressures and increased running costs.

With government support, charities have shown significant resilience over the past two years, and will again be crucial in supporting communities and households over the winter.

That is why the government will support all charities, public sector organisations and businesses with their energy costs this winter, offering an energy price guarantee for six months, equivalent to the protection offered to British households. Further details will be announced in due course.

Through engagement with key stakeholders, government officials are continuously monitoring the impact of energy costs on the charity sector and other civil society organisations, such as places of worship.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-05/47595>

Civil Society: Energy

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [47587] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps is he taking to help support (a) charities and (b) faith-based organisations with rising energy costs.

Graham Stuart: The Government has announced a new six-month scheme – the Energy Price Guarantee for Businesses (EPGB) – to protect all businesses and other non-domestic energy users from soaring energy costs. It will offer comparable support to that being provided for consumers and we expect the scheme to be

available in the autumn. After this initial six-month scheme the Government will provide focused support for vulnerable sectors, targeted to make sure those most in need get support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-05/47587>

Information about the Energy Price Guarantee for Businesses can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-energy-price-guarantee-for-families-and-businesses-while-urgently-taking-action-to-reform-broken-energy-market>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Schools: Collective Worship

Beth Winter (Labour) [45217] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to conduct a review of the statutory requirements for daily collective worship in schools.

Religion: Education

Beth Winter (Labour) [45370] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies on (a) the teaching arrangements for religious education and (b) collective worship in primary schools of the judgment of Mr Justice Colton of the Northern Ireland High Court handed down on 5 July 2022 relating to Christian-focused education in primary schools in Northern Ireland.

Jonathan Gullis: Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The Department has read and considered the legislative framework for teaching religious education in Northern Ireland and is of the view that it is not authoritative on the teaching of religious education or delivery of collective worship in England. The Department currently has no plans to amend or repeal the legal duty on schools to provide a daily act of collective worship. The Government believes that the law in England is both inclusive and flexible in allowing all schools to tailor their provision to suit their pupils' needs and it provides a unique opportunity for schools to develop and celebrate their ethos and values. Collective worship also allows schools the opportunity to promote the moral and social development of their pupils in a way that best suits the needs of the community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-02/45217>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-02/45370>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/nie/cases/NIHC/QB/2022/53.html>

Information about the Religious Education framework in Northern Ireland can be read at

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/statutory-curriculum>

and

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/religious-education-core-syllabus-english-version.pdf>

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Israel

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1104504/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-09-20.pdf

TUC

Consistent support for human rights includes Palestinian rights

The theme of the 2022 UN International Day of Peace is End Racism. Build Peace. The situation in Palestine shows clearly how racism and conflict are fundamentally interrelated. Today, we are publishing a new briefing setting out evidence of the extent of oppression linked to the occupation - in Palestine. This builds on Justice for Palestine: promoting decent work and Palestinian rights, published by the TUC in 2020.

After decades of illegal occupation, the situation faced by ordinary Palestinians continues to deteriorate. The violence of the occupation has intensified, resulting in ever increasing Israeli control of Palestinian workers, movement, and access to services.

Illegal seizures of Palestinian land by the Israeli state are also accelerating. ...

Because the West Bank is largely under military occupation and the economy of Gaza is effectively blockaded, Palestinian freedom to develop their natural resources is denied. ...

Around 80,000 Palestinian workers from the OPT work in Israel with permits. The 2021 ITUC report, [Workers' Rights in Crisis](#), documented the exploitation of Palestinian workers in the West Bank and Israel ...

At the checkpoints, where workers cross into Israel, it found that Palestinians are subjected to humiliating treatment and harassment ...

Workers' ability to defend themselves is further limited by restrictions on the activity of Palestinian trade unions to operate in territory controlled by Israel. ...

... the TUC General Council has noted that the crime of apartheid is increasingly discussed in respect of its definition under international law. [A 2020 TUC motion](#) considered the term apartheid, and significant human rights organisations, including B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch, now use the term.

Since we published this, other important human rights organisations like the United Nations and Amnesty International have also adopted the term. ...

The occupation is maintained and enforced by violence. ...

In May 2021 the International Criminal Court declared its intention to [open an investigation](#) into crimes committed on Palestinian territory since 2014. ...

In October that year, six Palestinian human rights organisations were unilaterally [declared terrorist organisations](#) by the Israeli government. ...

In May 2022 the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was murdered in the West Bank. Israeli authorities immediately denied responsibility, blaming the Palestinians themselves. Shortly afterwards, [a UN investigation refuted these claims](#), finding that the shots that killed Abu Akleh came from Israel Security Forces. The UN urged Israel to open a criminal investigation themselves, which they failed to do. ...

That's why the TUC rejects a trade deal with Israel until fundamental rights are respected ...

... the economy of Israel is inseparable from the illegal activity taking place in the Occupied Palestinian Territories because Israel is in a customs union with the OPT. ...

To help end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, and promote respect for Palestinian rights and decent work, the TUC is calling on the UK government to:

- recognise the State of Palestine
- ban the UK's trade in goods with the illegal settlements, supported by mandatory, robust and transparent labelling
- not sign a trade deal with Israel, Brazil, the Gulf States, India and Turkey – which are systematically abusing human rights.

- end arms trading with Israel and military collaboration
- support a just, comprehensive and lasting peace that is consistent with international law and based on a two-state solution, which promotes equality and respect for human and labour rights.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/consistent-support-human-rights-includes-palestinian-rights-0>

Justice for Palestine briefing

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/Justice%20for%20Palestine%20briefing%20September%202022%20final.pdf>

Justice for Palestine Report (2020)

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/PalestineReport.pdf>

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Other Relevant Information

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

PACE committee calls for action to counter 'dramatic spike' of Islamophobia in Europe

PACE's Equality and Non-Discrimination Committee has expressed its deep concern at the steady increase in manifestations of Islamophobia in Europe, "which has reached a dramatic spike in recent years". ... stereotyping based on depicting Muslims as alien to, and incompatible with, European culture and values leads to further stigmatisation and exclusion.

The unanimously adopted draft resolution ... says that Council of Europe member states should work to build an open and inclusive society and address the root causes of anti-Muslim racism and discrimination, "including stereotyping, prejudice, stigmatisation and scapegoating of individuals and groups perceived as different from the majority of the population" ... [and] calls on Council of Europe member states to "adopt action plans on preventing and combating Islamophobia" or to ensure that action plans against racism and discrimination "refer to and address Islamophobia specifically". ...

Awareness-raising and information campaigns and activities aimed at the general public should convey the message that "preventing and combating Islamophobia, like any other form of racism, is the responsibility of all members of society".

To read the full press release see

<https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8810/pace-committee-calls-for-action-to-counter-dramatic-spike-of-islamophobia-in-europe>

The resolution referred to above is not yet available online but will be debated in Plenary in October.

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

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

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in two days**

Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25 (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

Increasing the use of mediation in the civil justice system (closing date 4 October 2022)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/dispute-resolution/increasing-the-use-of-mediation/>

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