



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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**Briefing: The Accession of King Charles III**

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9621/CBP-9621.pdf>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Trade Agreements: Israel

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [41989] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department has made towards negotiating a bilateral free trade agreement with Israel.

**James Duddridge:** On 20<sup>th</sup> July, we launched negotiations between the United Kingdom and Israel for an upgraded, innovation-focused Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with services at its heart.

The first round of negotiations with Israel were completed in September.

An upgraded FTA with Israel will cement our relationship with a rapidly growing economy, taking our trading relationship to the next level.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/41989>

#### Trade Agreements

**Ruth Cadbury (Labour)** [48390] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has a target for 80 per cent of the UK's trade to be covered by Free Trade Agreements by the end of 2022.

**James Duddridge:** The UK Government has secured trade agreements with 71 countries plus the EU. These partners accounted for 63% (£808bn) of UK bilateral trade in 2021. This includes agreements with Australia and New Zealand as well

as the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which goes beyond continuity. The Department for International Trade's comprehensive Free Trade Agreement programme continues at unprecedented pace, with trade negotiations currently live with seven markets – India, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), India and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Canada, Mexico, Israel and Greenland.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-06/48390>

#### **Trade Agreements: Israel**

**Ruth Cadbury (Labour) [48392]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many officials in her Department are working on the trade negotiations with Israel.

**Conor Burns:** The Department for International Trade (DIT) operates a flexible resourcing model to maximise efficiency across our Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations. The Department is currently delivering seven FTA negotiations and the number of staff working on these at any point in time will change depending on the stage and scale of the deal. Staff also often work across multiple negotiations so it is not possible to quantify the number for each negotiation.

As of August 2022, DIT had approximately 460 staff working in the Trade Negotiations Group. This figure does not include other staff in DIT who also contribute to trade negotiations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-06/48392>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Trade Agreements: Israel**

**Anum Qaisar (SNP) [53570]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has sought advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on how a UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement could safeguard the UK's human rights commitments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Anum Qaisar (SNP) [53571]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what advice her Department has received from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on how a UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement could impact human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**James Duddridge:** The Department for International Trade and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office discuss the interlinkages between the UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement, and the wider UK-Israel foreign policy relationship on a regular basis. This joined-up approach has informed the published strategic approach to the UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement, including the Government's approach to these issues.

The UK is a leading advocate for human rights around the world and we remain committed to the promotion of universal human rights.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-21/53570>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-21/53571>

#### **Trade Agreements: Israel**

**Anum Qaisar (SNP) [53574]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the intended contents of the UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement include provisions for arms trade.

**James Duddridge:** No. Defence matters are outside the scope of all UK Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

The Government takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and aims to operate one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. An FTA

with Israel will not impact on export controls in relation to arms exports.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-21/53574>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Trade Agreements: Israel**

**Anum Qaisar (SNP) [53575]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether provisions will be in place within any free trade deal between the UK and Israel on ensuring that preferential treatment does not cover trade with illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Anum Qaisar (SNP) [53576]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether provisions will be in place within any free trade deal between the UK and Israel on ensuring explicit exclusion of preferential trading terms for (a) goods and services exports produced in or (b) investment in illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**James Duddridge:** Under the current UK-Israel agreement, goods imported from illegal settlements are not entitled to the benefits from trade preferences. Palestinian goods imported from the Occupied Palestinian Territories benefit from the trade preferences in the bilateral agreement negotiated between the UK and the Palestinian Authority.

The UK does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories as part of Israel, including illegal settlements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-21/53575>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-21/53576>

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## **Foreign Affairs**

### **House of Lords Written Answers**

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief**

**Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench) [HL2184]** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any working group was set up at the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in July to address cultural practices that stigmatise other faiths and beliefs.

**Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench) [HL2185]** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any working group comprising members of different faiths was established at the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in July to highlight important commonalities between different faiths and eradicate the myth of irreconcilable differences.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting FoRB, we hosted an International Ministerial Conference on FoRB on 5-6 July 2022.

No specific working groups were set up during the Conference, however, we worked closely with our international and domestic partners in the run up to the Conference and set up a Conference Advisory Committee with representatives from a range of religion or belief communities, academia and human rights groups. We successfully brought together over 800 faith and belief leaders, human rights actors, civil society

and 100 government delegations to agree and work towards joint action on promoting FoRB for all. As outlined in our Written Ministerial Statement following the Conference

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-07-15/hlws204>

we will continue to build coalitions of government and civil society actors focussed on key themes from the Conference, drawing on the convening power of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance to promote FoRB for all.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-05/hl2184>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-05/hl2185>

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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>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/47164/documents/2266>

#### **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

**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