



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

Ministry of Justice

Bill of Rights to strengthen freedom of speech and curb bogus human rights claims

The Bill will ensure courts cannot interpret laws in ways that were never intended by Parliament and will empower people to express their views freely.

At the same time, it will help prevent trivial human rights claims from wasting judges' time and taxpayer money. A permission stage in court will be introduced requiring people to show they have suffered a significant disadvantage before their claim can go ahead.

The Bill will also reinforce in law the principle that responsibilities to society are as important as personal rights. ...

The Bill will make clear that the UK Supreme Court is the ultimate judicial decision-maker on human rights issues and that the case law of the European Court of Human Rights does not always need to be followed by UK courts. ...

The Bill of Rights will also:

- Boost freedom of the press and freedom of expression by introducing a stronger test for courts to consider before they can order journalists to disclose their sources.
- Prevent courts from placing new costly obligations on public authorities to actively protect someone's human rights ...
- Confirm that interim measures from the European Court of Human Rights under Rule 39, such as the one issued last week which prevented the removal flight to Rwanda, are not binding on UK courts.

This will be achieved while retaining the UK's fundamental commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bill-of-rights-to-strengthen-freedom-of-speech-and-curb-bogus-human-rights-claims>

Welsh Government

Annual report on implementation of the recommendations from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group report

<https://gov.wales/annual-report-implementation-recommendations-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities-html>

TOP

Israel

Westminster Hall Debate

World Press Freedom Day

col 269WH **Kenny MacAskill (Alba):** ... We are in difficult times, and it is important that we hold power to account so that the truth will out. To do so, we need to ensure that those who seek to expose it—often benevolently, and certainly under difficult circumstances—are protected. That is why ... I would also put on record the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was sadly murdered by Israeli Defence Forces not that long ago. I was glad to see on Al Jazeera at breakfast time this morning that the matter is being pursued by the news organisation at the International Criminal Court.

The comments I want to make relate to our own country because we are not immune—either in the UK or, indeed, in Scotland. We are in a better position with regard to what is happening in Israel with the Palestinians and those who seek to report on that, and we are in a better position, obviously, with regard to what is happening in Ukraine, but we are by no means a paragon of virtue and we must ensure that we uphold the standards here ...

col 277WH **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... We are living in a world that attempts to say, “If I hate your speech, it is hate speech,” ... I strongly uphold and adhere to my point of view, and it is my right to have it. It is also somebody’s right to have a different opinion, but it is not their right to say that I am guilty of hate speech, just as I am not saying they are guilty of hate speech. It is about freedom.

I absolutely refute the principle of “If I hate your speech, it is hate speech”; we must be careful with personal censorship. I must and will defend the right of the press to report as they choose, in so much as it is factual—even if, sometimes, it might be biased. ...

Words can destroy, change the mood of a debate and turn into actions on the streets that we do not want. We must always be incredibly careful about what we say. ...

col 285WH **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Vicky Ford):** ... Unfortunately, as many Members present have noted, these attacks on media freedom are also happening in many other countries. Like the many colleagues who have mentioned it today, we were all appalled to see the recent death of the Palestinian-American al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh while reporting on the west bank and to see those really awful scenes at her funeral. Her death is a tragedy, and the UK has joined calls for an impartial and transparent investigation. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-06-21/debates/72629B84-2C71-418D-8451-A114ABB3EA21/WorldPressFreedomDay>

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Cat Smith (Labour): Last week marked the 15th anniversary of Israel's blockade of Gaza, which has caused a humanitarian crisis in the region. Will the Minister condemn the ongoing blockade and outline what steps the UK is taking to try to bring it to an end? (900614)

Amanda Milling: As it happens, after this session I will be travelling to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which will obviously be a good opportunity to explore a number of different issues and our bilateral relationship with Israel.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-06-21/debates/BEE6E504-F390-42BE-961D-D00BF7577F2C/TopicalQuestions#contribution-A246F3E5-1C00-4DAC-97E9-AE1807015693>

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Palestinians: Discrimination

Carol Monaghan (SNP) [900632] What recent assessment [the Minister] has made of trends in the level of discrimination faced by Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Amy Callaghan (SNP) [900633] What recent assessment [the Minister] has made of trends in the level of discrimination faced by Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Amanda Milling: We are concerned about increased tensions in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and are monitoring the situation closely. We are committed to achieving a negotiated two-state solution, which envisions both Israel and a viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. We have a regular dialogue on human rights with the Government of Israel to encourage them to abide by obligations under international law and to do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-21/900632>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-21/900633>

Israel: Palestinians

Julie Elliott (Labour) [900635] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the ruling of the Israeli supreme court on the situation in Masafer Yatta.

Amanda Milling: During my first visit to the OPTs this week, I hope to meet with the Palestinians affected by the ongoing demolition and eviction orders at Masafer Yatta and raise our concerns on the impact with the relevant authorities. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Our opposition to the demolition of Palestinian property and the evictions of Palestinians from their homes is long-standing. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-21/900635>

Israel: Palestinians

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [17095] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the British Counsel General has made representations on protecting (a) Jewish activists and (b) local residents from attacks and illegal roadblocks from settlers at unauthorized outposts near Masafer Yatta.

Amanda Milling: We are monitoring developments at Masafer Yatta closely given the increased risk of the forced transfer of over 1000 Palestinians, and the demolition of their homes.

We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers. We urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice. The UK continues to engage frequently with the Israeli authorities on restrictions on movement and access and stress the impact of these measures on ordinary Palestinians who rely on these fundamental rights.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-13/17095>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Israel: Palestinians

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [17094] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the British Consul General has made representations to the Israeli Government on halting proposals for mass evictions at Masafer Yatta.

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [17096] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to raise the matter of forced transfers of Palestinian citizens in the South Hebron Hills at (a) the UN and (b) other international forums.

Amanda Milling: The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. The UK made this clear in our statement to the UN Security Council Middle East Peace Process session on 26 May.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-13/17094>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-13/17096>

Palestinians: Health Hazards

Caroline Lucas (Green) [17911] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the risks to the life and health presented by unexploded ordnance in Gaza for (a) civilians and (b) children.

Amanda Milling: We do not collect this information. The UK will continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-14/17911>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Liz Truss: Great speaking with @yairlapid about continued efforts to support Ukraine, the need to prevent aggressors gaining nuclear weapons, and the strength of our relationship.
<https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1539544891411365889>

Amanda Milling: Delighted to be visiting Israel, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Jordan this week as the @FCDOGovUK Minister for the Middle East. My visit will focus

on: Bilateral Relations, Science & Tech Partnerships, Promoting Human Rights, Trade & Investment, Humanitarian Support

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1539464155136241665>

Amanda Milling: My first stop in Israel: Great to learn how the @PeresCenter is promoting community tolerance & peace in Israel through science & innovation. Pleased UK-Israel cooperation on science & tech is thriving. And our ambitious Free Trade Agreement will increase collaboration further!

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1539529833075593217>

Amanda Milling: Fascinating tour of the old city of Lod, Israel's mixed Jewish-Arab city with @SFCG_Met inspiring people involved in a funded project which promotes peace across religious divides. The UK supports: Tolerance & Dialogue, Inter-religious Understanding, Co-existence

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1539598672224215040>

Amanda Milling: [Israeli flag] is one of our closest partners. Enjoyed meeting Deputy Foreign Minister @idanroll today to discuss: Our strategic partnership, Trade & investment, A two state solution, Middle East peace & security , Regional issues

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1539579410185162757>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** Bill of Rights Bill**

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

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0117/220117.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0117/en/220117en.pdf>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0117/BillofRightsDelegatedPowersMemo.pdf>

Human Rights Memorandum

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0117/HRmemo.pdf>

Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights Consultation Response

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0117/consultationresponse.pdf>

Impact Assessment

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0117/ANNEXC.pdf>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

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

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Public Bill Committee

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-06-21/debates/3e5a3d2b-c639-4689-9b15-cf28ee8f69c0/OnlineSafetyBill\(ThirteenthSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-06-21/debates/3e5a3d2b-c639-4689-9b15-cf28ee8f69c0/OnlineSafetyBill(ThirteenthSitting))

**** Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

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

First Reading, House of Commons (col 588)

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-06-20/debates/864AD673-96C4-4925-B672-14DCFC0A5E19/PointsOfOrder>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

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

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>

Evidence session, Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/EHRCJ-21-06-2022?meeting=13837&iob=125452>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

Independent Review of Social Cohesion and Resilience (closing date 23 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>

**** closes in 8 days**

Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament (closing date 30 June 2022)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cppp/participation-2022/>

TOP

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