



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Israel

### UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

#### Israel Trade Negotiation

**The Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan)** [HCWS247] On Wednesday 20 July 2022, the Department for International Trade launched negotiations for a new, upgraded free trade agreement with Israel.

In line with our commitments to scrutiny and transparency, the Department for International Trade has published, and placed in the Libraries of both Houses, more information on these negotiations. This includes:

The United Kingdom's strategic case for a UK-Israel free trade agreement (FTA)

Our objectives for the negotiations

A summary of the United Kingdom's public consultation on trade with Israel

A scoping assessment, providing a preliminary economic assessment of the impact of the agreement.

The United Kingdom's negotiating objectives for the upgraded agreement, published today, were informed by our call for input, which requested views from consumers, businesses, and other interested stakeholders across the United Kingdom on their priorities for enhancing our existing trading relationship with Israel.

These negotiations follow our signing of the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement on 18 February 2019.

A new and enhanced trade agreement with Israel is a key part of the United Kingdom's strategy to secure advanced modern agreements with new international partners, and upgrade existing continuity agreements in order to better suit the UK economy.

Israel is an important trading partner for the United Kingdom, with trade worth £5 billion in 2021 despite the disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic to global trade. As two of the most innovative and dynamic economies in the world—both in the top 15 of the global innovation index—we know that the opportunities of the future will come from sectors in which we both excel, such as technology, research and development, digital and data.

Our existing agreement, which forms the basis of our current trading relationship, is outdated and not designed for a digital age. Originally signed in 1995 between Israel and the EU, it was developed before smartphones, artificial intelligence and the internet transformed our economies. While it allows tariff-free trade on 99% of UK goods exports by value, it currently contains scant provision for the United Kingdom's thriving services

sector. We intend to change this by putting services at the heart of a modern new agreement, which better benefits the UK economy. Upgrading our trade deal with Israel will help unlock a stronger, more advanced partnership. A new agreement could make it cheaper and easier for innovative UK services and tech companies to trade with Israel, benefiting sectors including finance, accountancy and legal. The new deal will play to our strengths, reflecting the realities of trading in the 21st century and allowing us to take advantage of future innovations.

Around 6,600 businesses from all four corners of the United Kingdom exported their goods to Israel in 2020. Of these firms, 5,600 were small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The United Kingdom's SMEs could be amongst the biggest winners from a new agreement with Israel, as we seek to make it easier to do business and focus on trade barriers that may have deterred them from previously entering this exciting marketplace.

The Government are determined that any agreement must work for consumers, producers, investors, and businesses alike. We remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, public health, food safety and animal welfare standards, alongside protecting the national health service.

The Government will continue to update and engage with key stakeholders, including Parliament and the devolved Administrations, throughout our negotiations with Israel.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-07-20/debates/22072031000011/IsraelTradeNegotiation>

## Welsh Government Ministerial Statement

### Trade Negotiations with the State of Israel

**Vaughan Gething, Minister for Economy:** On 20 July 2022 the UK government announced its intention to launch trade negotiations with the State of Israel.

These negotiations will build upon the existing UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement (TPA), a continuity agreement that came into force on 1 January 2021. The TPA brings together three main existing agreements the UK was part of while a member of the European Union.

In 2021, goods trade between Wales and Israel reached nearly £90m, of which imports and exports were worth around £22.2m and £65.6m respectively.

We will engage with a wide range of stakeholders to understand the impacts of this trade deal on sectors in Wales. Once concluded, the free trade agreement will be considered through the lens of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015.

The Welsh Government recognises the sensitive political climate within which these talks will be undertaken.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-trade-negotiations-state-israel>

*The Act referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Experts of the Committee against Torture Praise the State of Palestine for Supporting Female Victims of Violence, Ask about Conditions in Detention Centres and Torture Legislation**

The Committee against Torture today concluded its consideration of the initial report of the

State of Palestine, with Committee Experts praising the State of Palestine's support for female victims of violence and raising questions about conditions in detention centres and the lack of legislation defining and prohibiting torture.

Naoko Maeda, Committee Expert and Country Co-Rapporteur, said that a special unit and support network had been established to provide support services and shelter for female victims of violence. These were commendable developments. Ms. Maeda noted, however, that gender-based violence and discrimination remained prevalent. ...

Sébastien Touze, Country Co-Rapporteur for the State of Palestine and Committee Expert, said that conditions of detention for detainees were of grave concern. Up to 12 persons were housed in small cells; there were concerns related to ventilation and hygiene in cells; and there was a lack of medical care provided for persons with serious illnesses. ...

Mr. Touze also noted that torture was not specifically defined within national legislation and called for torture to be generally criminalised. Definitions of torture within legislation were varied and too narrow, he said. ...

... the delegation explained that the State had earmarked resources to create a new detention facility in Hebron to address prison overcrowding in the region, with the support of funding from the United States. Funding, however, had been stopped by the United States in 2017. Another high security detention facility had been constructed in Jericho that met with the highest international standards, with the support of funding from the International Committee of the Red Cross. There were toilets in each cell of this facility, appropriate sunlight, and high-quality food and medical services. ...

A draft law had been created that defined and banned torture even when ordered by a superior. There were plans to revise national legislation to reflect the recommendations of treaty bodies. ...

Mr. Heller expressed hope that the State of Palestine would submit its second report in more favourable domestic circumstances. ...

In his concluding remarks, Ziyad M. M. Habalreeh, Minister of Interior of the State of Palestine and head of the delegation, said that the State of Palestine abhorred torture and would not allow it to happen. The State was in an exceptional position, living under occupation by Israel. The Israeli occupation interfered with every aspect of life in the State. However, the State party took responsibility for protecting the rights of its citizens. The State party, he assured, would work hard to implement the Committee's recommendations. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/experts-committee-against-torture-praise-state-palestine-supporting-female>

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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 tomorrow**

**Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament** (closing date 22 July 2022)

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

**Standards for ethnicity data** (closing date 30 August 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

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

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

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