



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

Afzal Khan (Labour) [38816] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2022 to Question 33002 on Islamophobia, which organisations received funding from the Places of Worship Protective Security Fund in financial year 2021-22.

Stephen McPartland: The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme 2021/22 has, to date, provided funding to 82 places of worship including: 24 mosques, 38 churches, 11 Hindu temples, 5 gurdwaras and 4 other faiths.

We are unable to provide the names of organisations who received funding.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-18/38816>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-08/33002>

Information about the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

COVID-19: supporting communities

Anas Sarwar (Labour) [S6W-09786] To ask the Scottish Government what engagement it has had or plans to have with (a) ethnic and religious minority communities, and (b) refugees and asylum seekers, in order to improve how it can support these communities following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Christina McKelvie: The Scottish Government recognises that a number of Scotland's communities have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, and

are committed to engaging effectively with communities to ensure they are supported following the pandemic.

The Covid Recovery Strategy focusses on addressing systemic inequalities that were exacerbated during the pandemic. The strategy was informed by a series of engagement sessions with a range of partners, including the Scottish Refugee Council and Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity.

The Scottish Government continues to engage with minority ethnic communities as part of our ongoing work on race equality and developing anti-racist infrastructure. Furthermore, the Scottish Government funds 14 race equality organisations, who undertake engagement and consultation with communities as part of their work.

We will also continue to engage with refugee and asylum seeking communities as part of our work to support integration from day one. We have committed to work with our partners to develop the next New Scots refugee integration strategy, and will identify opportunities to enable refugees and people seeking asylum to engage in that process and inform the next strategy.

A faith and belief representatives group now meets on a monthly basis to identify areas of common interest and consider input to policy development on a wide range of topics. A new Faith and Belief Engagement Strategy is currently being developed to foster deeper understanding between government and faith and belief communities, which will empower faith and belief communities to be active partners in Covid recovery.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-09786>

The Covid Recovery Strategy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-recovery-strategy-fairer-future/>

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answers

Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Peter Bottomley (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities if he will make a statement on the future of the proposed holocaust memorial and learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens.

The Minister of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Paul Scully): The Government remain committed to the creation of a new national memorial commemorating the victims of the holocaust. The new holocaust memorial will be the national focal point for honouring the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the holocaust, and other victims of Nazi persecution, including the Roma, and gay and disabled people. We must build this new national holocaust memorial and the learning centre, so that future generations can never doubt what happened. That is the only way that we can be certain that it will never happen again.

The commitment to creating a holocaust memorial was first made by the then Prime Minister, with cross-party support, in January 2015. I am pleased that the project has continued to enjoy support across a very broad range of people from all political

parties, different faith communities, and all parts of society. The current Prime Minister is also very keen on and supportive of the project.

Following an extensive search for suitable sites, in which around 50 possible locations were considered, Victoria Tower Gardens was chosen as the best possible location for the memorial. Constructing the memorial next to Parliament, at the heart of our democracy, provides a powerful signal of the importance we attach to remembering the holocaust and seeking to learn its lessons. Following a lengthy public inquiry, planning consent for the memorial and learning centre was granted in July 2021. Sadly, though, a challenge was brought by the London Historic Parks and Garden Trust, which led to the High Court quashing the consent in April this year.

The loss of that consent was a disappointment, especially to those holocaust survivors who place such high value on sharing their testimony and who want to be confident that their message will continue to be heard. It was a further disappointment that the Court of Appeal decided yesterday that an appeal against the High Court decision would not be heard.

We will of course study those decisions carefully as we consider our next steps, but in addition to the Prime Minister's personal support, our commitment to holocaust survivors remains strong. The lessons of the holocaust must be remembered and told with honesty and clarity. As the number of survivors sadly dwindles, we face an urgent task to ensure that their work in sharing those lessons continues.

Peter Bottomley: ... Joshua Rozenberg observed today: "If the government had chosen in 2015 to build the memorial and learning centre at the Imperial War Museum, it would have been open by now" alongside the powerful Holocaust Galleries. I mention that because the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation's research and education has led my family to learn that over 100 of my grandfather's cousins died in the death camps and concentration camps.

The Minister knows that Jewish opinion is divided. Will he take this opportunity to read the National Audit Office report of two weeks ago? Will he also read the Holocaust Memorial Foundation's September 2015 specification, which said that most of the money should be spent on education, rather than on construction? All the money spent over the past seven years has gone on proposals for construction, with nothing for education, which matters most.

Will he also look at the page suggesting possible central London locations, which include the whole of Regent's Park, most of Hyde Park, and the Imperial War Museum?

Will he say to fellow Ministers that, as well coming to answer questions here, it is time to look again at how to fulfil the aims of the Holocaust Commission and the specifications of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation and actually to talk to those of us who have been trying to say to the Government for quite some time that Victoria Tower Gardens—I played there and have studied, lived and worked nearby for two thirds of my life—is not the place to put a mound and a hole in the ground? The area is insecure and of doubtful value in meeting the purposes, as well as being only one third of the size specified by the foundation only seven years ago.

Paul Scully: ... Victoria Tower Gardens was identified as a site uniquely capable of meeting the Government's aspirations for the national memorial. There cannot be a more powerful symbol of our commitment than to place the memorial in the gardens next to the centre of our democracy in Parliament. The learning centre exhibition serves a different, although complementary, purpose from the Imperial War Museum's new Holocaust Galleries, which are now largely completed, making it far more difficult to place the memorial there.

On terrorism, it would clearly be absolutely unacceptable to build a memorial in a less prominent location simply because of the risk of terrorism, because that would be to allow terrorists to dictate how we commemorate the holocaust. However, we

will clearly work with security experts, Government agencies and the Metropolitan police to ensure that the site has the necessary level of security.

My hon. Friend also mentioned the NAO report and, as I am new in post, I will get into it in some more detail, but I am reassured that the investigation confirms our assessment of the risks and challenges associated with such an important, complex project. It recognised the challenges we face in managing the cost pressures in the context of inflation across the construction sector and the delays arising from opposition to the planning application. He said that money should be spent on education rather than on building, but many of the costs have related to the consultations and legal challenges that we have faced. We want to get on and build the memorial while holocaust survivors are still here to look at it. ...

Alex Norris (Labour Co-op): This is an issue that has generated a range of very strong views, but there should be a common sadness that such an important memorial is set back yet again. Remembering the holocaust and what it says about humanity's past, present and future is an intergenerational necessity— 6 million Jewish people, Roma and Gypsy people, Slavic people, LGBT people, disabled people all savagely murdered. Antisemitism remains a scourge today that we all must fight together.

I am proud that Nottinghamshire is home to the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, and I urge right hon. and hon. Members and anyone watching proceedings today to visit it. They would not accept credit readily, but the work of the Smith family is a model of how memorials can be very thoughtfully done by bringing people together. We lost Marina Smith last month and I know that all colleagues will want to pass on their best wishes to the Smiths.

We are now faced with the question of what to do next. The Leader of the Opposition made very clear last week our commitment to a national memorial and his very strong belief that it should be sited next to Parliament. Does the Minister intend to bring forward legislation to make sure that this memorial happens? Will he commit to a cross-party, all-community effort to revitalise the project? I know that he is by instinct a consensus builder, and I suggest that he leans on that now, because this is a project of huge national importance and it is a source of sadness that we cannot make something of such universal significance happen. We now must come together to ensure that it does.

Paul Scully: ... Yes, indeed, we will continue to work. I think that the fact that the commission is chaired by Ed Balls and Lord Pickles shows the cross-party nature of the approach. We all want to have the best sign—the best memorial—to remember, and to teach and bring in a whole other generation of witnesses, as described by one holocaust survivor. In terms of legislation, it will clearly be for the next Prime Minister to direct that, but we will look at the court case and consider all options available to us.

Stephen Crabb (Conservative): ... I am encouraged by the continuing strong measure of cross-party consensus on the importance of delivering the holocaust memorial and learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens.

Does my hon. Friend agree that the story of the holocaust is, in part, a British story, too, with the taking in of Kindertransport refugees, the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen camp and the taking in of child camp survivors? It is important that we tell that story from the heart of Government here in Westminster, and delivering the memorial and learning centre would be a powerful way of doing that. Will he consider strongly the suggestion of the need to legislate in order to get through and break the deadlock?

Paul Scully: I agree with my right hon. Friend on all those points. It is, indeed, a British, international and global story, and we need to reflect Britain's place in the global response and make sure that it can never happen again. We will look at what happened in the court case, but also at what measures we now need to take. As I have said, it will be for the next Prime Minister to take those final decisions, but we will certainly be considering it in the weeks to come.

John Cryer (Labour): As the Minister indicated earlier, the holocaust is now slipping from memory into history. I am convinced that that at least partly explains the rise in antisemitism and holocaust denial that we have seen across Britain and Europe. Is it not even more important now that the holocaust memorial centre should, as a number of hon. Members and the Minister have indicated, be right by the epicentre of democracy? I find it absolutely extraordinary that the argument is being advanced that we should not have it in Victoria Tower Gardens because it would become a target. On that basis, why do we not close this place down, because this place is a target? Will the Minister give a commitment, as the right hon. Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire (Stephen Crabb) asked, to bring forward legislation in September to enable the construction of the centre?

Paul Scully: I agree that we need a response and a sign and memorial right at the heart of our democracy. I cannot personally commit to legislation, but certainly we will look at that. It will be a decision for the next Prime Minister, but we will have a robust response as best we can.

Robert Jenrick (Conservative): The building of the national holocaust memorial was a manifesto commitment by this Government. It has cross-party support and it also has the support of every living Prime Minister and all the faith leaders of this country. It is a cause of great sadness to me that a small number of individuals, many of whom are local residents, are causing this great national project to be delayed. They will not succeed. All they will succeed in doing is ensuring that fewer survivors of the holocaust live to see the memorial open, and that is a national disgrace. Will the Minister bring forward the simple three-clause Bill that is now required? If he will not, I put him on notice that I will amend the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to do just that, and I am sure that colleagues across this House will support me in ensuring that this project proceeds.

Paul Scully: ... As I have said, any legislation will be the decision for the next Prime Minister. It remains a manifesto commitment to build the holocaust memorial so that we remember. On the location, 90% of the gardens will remain unchanged and open. Less than 10% will be used by the memorial, which will be open to the public. That is why Government believe that it fitted within the existing legislation. That is also why we will be reviewing the court case to see what it says, and our response will be in place accordingly.

Mr Speaker: The proof is in the pudding.

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op): May I say to the Minister that this is not a party political matter—it goes across the parties? We want this centre to be built and we want it to be built sooner rather than later. My father fought in the last war and was one of the Royal Engineers who went to Germany for the clear-up. He never recovered from what he saw there at the end of the war. I have this plea to the Minister. People will be disturbed by this. I was sorry to see that, under the contract that had been let, all the materials will be brought in and the waste taken away by road, but it would be much better for the residents and for the people in London if it were all carried on the river. Will the Minister consider that?

Paul Scully: As Minister for London, I will happily look at that last request, because we are significantly underusing our river. I agree with the hon. Gentleman when he talks about the cross-party nature of this project. We do need to get on and build this memorial, for this generation of holocaust survivors and for future generations.

Bob Blackman (Conservative): I declare my interest as co-chairman of the all-party group for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. It is absolutely crucial that we get the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre alongside Parliament as quickly as possible. I know that, in answering this urgent question, my hon. Friend cannot bind the hands of his successor, but can he not do the sensible thing and, having got the support of the current Prime Minister, consult both candidates, one of whom will be Prime Minister in September? If they both agree that we should bring forward the legislation, will the Minister bring it forward to us on 5 September?

Paul Scully: I will be speaking to both candidates about a number of things,

including this matter. I was supposed to be getting a briefing on this from my team today, as I am new in post. Clearly, there is a lot to bring to this issue, and we need to make sure that our candidates understand the feeling of the House.

Jeff Smith (Labour): A report from the Community Security Trust was released last week on antisemitism in the pandemic. It outlined a very disturbing case in Manchester, my home town, of Jewish people being targeted for spreading covid. Fortunately, the perpetrator was arrested and jailed for six months, but does that not just demonstrate that this does not go away and that there is always an excuse? That is why it is absolutely crucial that we have the national centre to educate future generations on this issue.

Paul Scully: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. The reason that we are talking about Victoria Tower Gardens is that it is next to Parliament. This is not a London memorial. We are talking about a national memorial, sitting next to the centre of our democracy. He is absolutely right: antisemitism does not start and stop within the M25.

Edward Leigh (Conservative): Of course we should have a holocaust memorial and of course we should have a proper holocaust museum. It is not surprising that Westminster City Council turned this application down, or, indeed, that the Government have lost the case in the High Court and then in the Court of Appeal. Based on questions that I and others asked, the Act of Parliament dating from the beginning of the 20th century is very clear that the park was laid down as a park. May I suggest a compromise? Given that the debate is carrying on and on, the obvious solution is to have a holocaust memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens, next to Parliament as everybody wants, and similar to the other memorials such as the Buxton and Pankhurst memorials. It could be a potent symbol, it could blend in with the park and the surroundings and there would be no controversy about it.

The controversy has been about the underground learning centre and all the disruption it would cause. The difficulty with the underground learning centre in that very constrained site is that it would be nothing like the proper memorials and museums in Washington and Berlin. Have the memorial in the gardens and a proper museum at the Imperial War museum.

Paul Scully: As I have said, the education centre would be complementary to the Imperial War Museum. We believe that the plans are consistent with the provisions of the London County Council (Improvements) Act 1900, and that is why we are disappointed by the result of the court case. The design is sensitive to the existing gardens and would allow residents and visitors alike to continue to benefit from the green space, but we will clearly reflect on the court decision.

Chris Bryant (Labour): The memorial has to be near Parliament. At a time when antisemitism was commonplace, in the 1930s in British society, Victor Cazalet MP was the first person in the House to warn of the coming holocaust. Jack Macnamara MP visited Dachau and when he came back he said that we had to fight Hitler. Rob Bernays MP was called "a filthy Jew" by Hitler's friends in Germany. All three of them lost their lives and have shields on the walls of the Chamber. This is intimately about Parliament, democracy and antisemitism, and we have to put those things together.

Paul Scully: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his usual erudite approach. There is not a lot I can add, but he is right about the need to site the memorial next to the centre of our democracy.

Nicola Richards (Conservative): One hundred and seventeen holocaust survivors were interviewed about the memorial, and it is upsetting that, because of the delays, many will not have the opportunity to see the opening. The holocaust is a part of British history, from the Kindertransport and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen to welcoming survivors. It is not always a good story, so the memorial has to be built beside Parliament to remind every future Government of the history. Can the Minister confirm that the Government will do all they can to build the memorial as soon as possible?

Paul Scully: The memorial for the holocaust remains a manifesto commitment of the Government and we will clearly look at the court decision and work out where to go next. It will be a decision for the next Prime Minister, but my hon. Friend has fought for this and spoken out about the holocaust on several occasions, and I know that she will continue to do so.

Jim Shannon (DUP): I get the impression that the Minister greatly understands the concerns of everybody in the Chamber, but can he outline what discussions have taken place with members of the Jewish community to underline the fact that this discouraging news will not deter the Government from taking appropriate steps to facilitate a central permanent holocaust memorial centre to show that this great nation—the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland—is united in ensuring that future generations understand the importance of remembering the holocaust as a horrifically sad and bloody lesson for everyone?

Paul Scully: I always commend the hon. Gentleman for his work on religious freedom and tackling religious hatred, including antisemitism. With the court's decision being so fresh, it is early to have had those conversations with the Jewish community, but this is the first signal of our intention to stick to our manifesto commitment of building a holocaust memorial. As the newly installed Minister for faith, I will have talks with the Jewish community across the summer.

Peter Bottomley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. In case anyone thinks that I did not declare that I have studied here in Westminster, worked here and lived here for two thirds of my life, I repeat that. I also say that it is not a minority who have blocked the proposal: it is two judges. We should not refer to a High Court judge and an Appeal Court judge as “a small minority” when they are actually getting the Government to obey the law.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-07-21/debates/4BBEA252-9557-45D3-9DCF-E4A62CCBE2FF/HolocaustMemorialAndLearningCentre>

The National Audit Office report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Investigation-into-the-management-of-the-Holocaust-Memorial-and-Learning-Centre.pdf>

The CST report referred to above can be read at

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/0/9/Antisemitism%20in%20the%20Covid%20Conspiracy%20Movement.pdf>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: International Trade

Bob Blackman (Conservative): Recently, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced enhanced free trade deal negotiations with our close allies and friends in the state of Israel. Will she set out for the benefit of the House the aims of those negotiations and what the benefits to the UK will be?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Trade (Ranil Jayawardena): I thank my hon. Friend for his diligence in championing the opportunities from free trade with Israel and many other countries around the world, including India. As two like-minded partners with expertise in areas such as tech and innovation, we are very confident that we can agree an ambitious deal that will complement both economies and showcase our leading businesses, growing our

trade even further than we already have today.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-07-21/debates/BD7CF569-7DC3-420B-A1CC-4B13649C7363/TopicalQuestions#contribution-2E2CA17F-DEFF-4928-9B2B-5508AB1C49B1>

House of Commons Written Answers

Overseas Trade

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [35925] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that British businesses are able to trade overseas in the context of the UK no longer being part of EU trade agreements.

Ranil Jayawardena: To date, we have agreed trade deals with 71 countries plus the EU, covering trade worth £808 billion of our bilateral trade in 2021.

We are just getting started. Negotiations to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership are continuing. In addition, we have launched negotiations with India, Canada, Mexico, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, plus we are preparing to begin negotiations on new trade deals with Israel and Switzerland.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-13/35925>

Israel: Palestinians

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [38812] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the joint statement issued on 12 July 2022 by the foreign ministries of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden on the Israeli government's designation of Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist organisations.

Amanda Milling: The evidence which forms the basis for this decision is a matter for the Government of Israel. The UK maintains its own criteria for designation. We continue engagement with a number of these organisations on human rights issues and respect the role that NGOs and civil society organisations play in upholding human rights and democracy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-18/38812>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.government.nl/documents/diplomatic-statements/2022/07/12/joint-statement-on-the-israeli-designation-of-palestinian-civil-society-organisations-as-terrorist-organisations>

House of Lords Written Answers

UN Convention Against Torture

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL1586] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the joint submission by Human Rights Watch and Lawyers for Justice on the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to the UN Committee Against Torture at its 74th Session, 12–29 July; and what discussions they have had with the Palestinian Authority as a signatory of the Convention Against Torture.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the joint submission and will review the findings. We take allegations or concerns of torture and mistreatment very seriously and will follow up with action, as appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-07/hl1586>

The submission referred to above can be read at

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/30/joint-submission-human-rights-watch-and-lawyers-justice-committee-against-torture>

UNRWA

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL1554] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Henry Jackson Society UNRWA's Future Reconsidered, published on 23 February 2020, which referred to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) as a significant road block to peace and a Two State solution, whether they will review the \$92m annual funding they provide to the Agency.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain longstanding supporters of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and their work to support Palestinian refugees across the region including Gaza. Minister Milling had the opportunity to see the UNRWA supported refugee camp in Jerusalem during her recent visit to the region in June 2022 and saw first-hand the challenges refugees face along with the impact of valuable UK support. At the UNRWA pledging conference in New York in June, we announced a new multi-year funding programme with the agency providing £15 million in 2022, which helps UNRWA provide education to over 533,000 children a year (half of them girls), and access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-07/hl1554>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HJS-UNRWA-Report-web.pdf>

Shireen Abu Akleh

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL1564] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the US State Department statement on 4 July that a detailed forensic analysis "could not reach a definitive conclusion regarding the origin of the bullet that killed Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh", despite multiple eyewitness reports that it was fired by an Israel Defense Forces soldier.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain in close contact with the US and other partners on the tragic case of Shireen Abu Akleh. We continue to call for justice, accountability, and urgent steps to be taken to de-escalate tensions, and for restraint in the use of force. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-07/hl1564>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.state.gov/on-the-killing-of-shireen-abu-akleh/>

Amnesty International UK

UK: new trade deal with Israel must not be a betrayal of Palestinians' human rights

Amnesty International has said that a new [UK trade deal with Israel](#) "must not be a betrayal of Palestinians' human rights" ...

The UK has recently conducted a consultation over plans to negotiate a new UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement this year which will "upgrade" an existing [Trade and Partnership Deal](#) with Israel.

Amnesty is warning that a poorly-drafted deal could allow the Israeli authorities to consolidate unfounded claims to occupied Palestinian land, expand illegal settlements, and perpetuate the system of apartheid associated with this.

Peter Frankental, Amnesty International UK's Economic Affairs Director, said: "A new trade deal with Israel must not be a betrayal of Palestinians' human rights and must uphold the UK's obligations under international law.

"In their haste to agree a shiny new trade deal with Israel, there's a distinct danger that UK negotiators will fail to ensure absolute clarity over the precise origins of goods destined for

the UK market. ...

“The bottom line here is that UK-Israel trade should not incentivise Israel’s system of apartheid against the Palestinians.” ...

Amnesty has sent a 19-page briefing to the Department of Trade setting out how the agreement should be framed to ensure it doesn’t reinforce Israel’s breaches of international law and is consistent with the UK’s current non-recognition of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. ...

In line with international law, the UK government currently does not recognise as a legitimate part of Israel the territories that Israel has militarily occupied since June 1967 - a stance that is supported by the overwhelming majority of the international community and is reflected in numerous UN resolutions.

However, Amnesty is concerned that a lack of clarity in the terms of a new trade deal could nevertheless see the UK treating goods and services sourced from Israeli settlements built on stolen Palestinian land as legitimate items of trade, thus tacitly supporting Israel’s wider occupation, settlement and annexation project. ...

While Israel settlement goods must not be designated as “Israeli”, said Amnesty, it is also important that Palestinian products are in no way prejudiced by the Israel trade agreement. ...

Earlier this year, Amnesty published a [major report](#) showing how the Israeli authorities enforce a system of oppression and domination against the Palestinian people amounting to the crime of apartheid. This system relies on large-scale seizures of Palestinian land and property, a long history of unlawful killings, the forcible transfer of Palestinian people from their land, and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/uk-new-trade-deal-israel-must-not-be-betrayal-palestinians-human-rights>

UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement – responding to human rights concerns in keeping with UK’s obligations and policies

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2022-05/Briefing%20to%20DIT%20on%20UK-Israel%20FTA.pdf?VersionId=RLHFEKXZoeZR8Li9kzuPM2q3yItgwXH>

United Nations

Economic and Social Council Grants 209 Non-Governmental Organizations Consultative Status, Adopts Seven Resolutions, Six Decisions, as Management Segment Resumes

... A draft resolution on the list of non-governmental organization receiving consultative status with the Council, presented by the United States’ delegate, caused a brief stir. Sponsored by a total of 36 countries, the text — which recommended six additional non-governmental organizations to the list proposed by the Committee — was adopted by 23 votes in favour to 7 against ... with 18 abstentions. The Council thus decided to grant special consultative status to Diakonia; Inimöiguste Instituut; National Human Rights Civic Association “Belarusian Helsinki Committee”; Non C’è Pace Senza Giustizia; Syrian American Medical Society Foundation; and Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. ...

Supporters of the amended resolution defended the right of the six organizations to make their voices heard at the United Nations. Still others pointed to those organizations having political or, as stated by Israel’s delegate, even terrorist affiliations. ...

Israel’s delegate shared the concerns of other Member States about the challenges faced by the six non-governmental organizations in obtaining consultative status with the Council. However, he stressed that not all non-governmental organizations deserve such status, citing the example of those that support terrorist organizations. In such cases, Israel

will always oppose granting consultative status, he said, citing Diakonia among the six non-governmental organizations referred to in the draft decision, as it crosses a red line in partnership with a designated Palestinian terror group. ...

The United Kingdom's representative welcomed the decision presented by the United States to the Council, as it presents six legitimate non-governmental organizations. ...

The representative of Israel, speaking after action, said that his delegation supported the accreditation of five out of the six organizations, but, as stated prior, disassociated from Diakonia's accreditation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/ecosoc7102.doc.htm>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Religious Freedom

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1548] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief, they will (1) introduce a Religious Freedom Bill guaranteeing the provisions of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and (2) make the appointment of a Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief a statutory requirement.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1551] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the policy of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office concerning Freedom of Religion or Belief and the mandate of the Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief is restricted to the provisions of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and whether it can be used to promote other substantive issues.

Greater London: Religious Freedom

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1549] To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the outcomes and recommendations of the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief, held in London between 5 and 7 July.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) hosted by the UK brought together governments, faith and belief leaders and civil society for discussions to address challenges to the right to FoRB. The Conference gave a platform to those persecuted for their religion or belief. Forty-seven governments, international organisations and other entities pledged action in support of FoRB. Thirty countries joined the UK in signing up to a set of statements. My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss), outlined FCDO progress in implementing recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's report and noted the breadth of religion and belief groups that suffer from persecution. I [Lord Ahmad] announced new UK funding for support for defenders of FoRB, as well as funding and expertise for countries prepared to make legislative changes to protect FoRB.

FCDO policy on FoRB, and the work of the FoRB Special Envoy, is grounded in international human rights law and standards and recognises the interdependence of all human rights, and the importance of respect for the promotion of democracy, rule of law and stability around the world. The role of FoRB Special Envoy is an appointment made by the Prime Minister and currently held by Fiona Bruce MP. We work closely together to promote FoRB around the world. The Human Rights

Act contains protections for the ECHR Article 9 right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the new Bill of Rights will continue this protection.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-07/hl1548>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-07/hl1551>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-07/hl1549>

The statements referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/international-ministerial-conference-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-2022-conference-statements>

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Other Relevant Information

Community Security Trust (CST)

CST launches new UK terrorism databases

CST has launched two terrorism databases tracking terror attacks and foiled plots in the UK, from 2013 to the present. These are a unique public-facing resource for researchers, practitioners and members of the public to keep track of terrorist incidents and trends.

Studying terrorist attacks and foiled plots is essential to forming an accurate picture of the security landscape. UK authorities regularly provide figures on foiled attack plots, but they cannot publish detailed lists of the plots that make up those statistics.

The absence of such a record makes it difficult to keep track of these incidents and assess underlying trends in contemporary terrorism. Especially challenging is keeping a record of foiled plots, since many cases may not be obvious or easy to classify. ...

CST's new databases are designed to be operationally and analytically relevant. They offer a resource for timely summaries about thwarted plots and attacks in the UK.

The databases are intended to be of interest and utility to journalists, researchers and practitioners; at the same time, they are suited for security-minded users requiring bottom-line information necessary for front-line protection. ...

... CST's databases focus on incidents relating to jihadist extremism, right-wing extremism, single-issue extremism; they do not include Northern Ireland related terrorism ...

Analysing terrorist methodologies has been part of CST's core work since its inception.

Protecting British Jews from terrorist attacks drives much of CST's security work. The level of anti-Jewish threat, and the amount of security needed from CST, largely depends on the overall threat of terrorism against the UK. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2022/07/21/cst-launches-new-uk-terrorism-databases>

Database: UK Terror Attacks

<https://cst.org.uk/research/terrorism-hate-crime-databases/uk-terror-attacks>

Database: UK Foiled Terror Plots

<https://cst.org.uk/research/terrorism-hate-crime-databases/uk-foiled-terror-plots>

UK Terrorism Databases Explainer

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/9/c/CST%20Terrorism%20Databases%20Explainer.pdf>

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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 today**

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>

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