



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### House of Lords Written Answers

*The following four questions all received the same answer*

#### **Coroners: Standards**

**Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative)** [HL2019] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a backlog for holding inquests as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and if so, how this varies across the regions of the country.

**Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative)** [HL2020] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a backlog for inquests in the Isle of Wight; and if so, what steps they are taking to clear that backlog.

**Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative)** [HL2021] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average time it takes from death to holding an inquest, where necessary.

**Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative)** [HL2022] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the experience of families waiting for an inquest to take place; and what bereavement support they are providing to these individuals.

**Lord Bellamy:** The [Coroner Statistics 2021: England and Wales](#), published on 12 May 2022, indicate that, on average in 2021, the time between the report of a death to the coroner and the completion of an inquest increased to 31 weeks (up from 27 weeks in 2020), although almost a third of coroner areas completed inquests within 24 weeks. Figures are also published by coroner area: for the Isle of Wight coroner area, the average time for completion of an inquest was 56 weeks (from 40 weeks in 2020).

Coroner services are locally based and funded and administered by the relevant local authorities. The Government recognises that local authorities have experienced a number of pressures as a result of the pandemic. During 2021, coroners dealt with both the impacts of the early stages of the pandemic and the ongoing effect of Covid, including a second lockdown and continued social distancing measures which, in particular, affected the ability to hold jury and other large and complex inquests.

We have provided £6.15 billion in unringfenced grant funding to local authorities in England to support the cost of pandemic pressures which could include additional costs incurred in the administration of coroner services. Funding for local authorities in Wales is a devolved matter. The Chief Coroner has issued guidance to coroners on how their services can best recover from the pandemic, including engagement with local authorities on any additional resources required. He is also undertaking a tour of all coroner areas to engage with them on their post-pandemic recovery plans.

In addition, we included a package of measures in the Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 to streamline coroners' court processes and support the coronial system with post pandemic recovery plans.

The Government's priority is to ensure that the bereaved remain at the heart of the coroner system. In January 2020, we published a revised Guide to Coroner Services for Bereaved People which provides support and information for the bereaved about what they should expect from coroners' investigations and inquests, and includes information on sources of bereavement support. The Guide is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-coroner-services-and-coroner-investigations-a-short-guide>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/hl2019>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/hl2020>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/hl2021>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/hl2022>

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## Israel

### United Nations

#### **Nuclear-Weapon States Have Special Responsibility to Advance Non-Proliferation, Disarmament, Speakers Stress on Day Three of Review Conference**

**Abdulaziz Mohammed O. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia)** ... underlined his country's support for all international efforts that seek to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons or threatening the region or the world. The responsibility to create a zone free from nuclear weapons in the Middle East is a collective responsibility on the international level. ... Another grave obstacle to nuclear disarmament is Israel's continued refusal to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, he said, noting that the aim of the Treaty is for non-nuclear-States to be able to enjoy security guarantees with respect to recourse to and use of atomic energy. Israel is refusing to accept international resolutions on this and is ignoring all recommendations and decisions from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. ...

**Bassam Sabbagh (Syria)** [said that] ... While all countries in the region are ready to take steps to create that zone, Israel is defying the international community, and refusing to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and submit its nuclear installations to the IAEA safeguards system. Israel is refusing to cooperate because it is supported by the United States and Western allies, he added, noting that for decades the United States and other Western countries have given Israel modern nuclear technology, allowing it to build its nuclear military capacity. ...

**Marwan Ali Noman Al-Dobhany (Yemen)** ... said the Middle East lacks stability and a sense of security due to a power imbalance and nuclear activities not subject to the non-proliferation regime. While all Arab countries have joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty and are working to establish a zone free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, Israel continues to defy the international community by refusing to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and submit its nuclear facilities to the IAEA's safeguards regime. Also, Iran continues to develop its nuclear capacities and not abide by the IAEA's safeguards regime, leading to increased tensions in the region. ...

**Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine** ... underscored, therefore, that there is also no justification for "Israeli exceptionalism in our region", whereby that State would be the only one entitled to hold nuclear weapons. "Our region should be free of nuclear weapons, full stop," he stressed, calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. ...

**Majid Takht Ravanchi (Iran)** ... went on to state that due to the application of double standards in enforcing non-proliferation provisions, "the Zionist regime's" nuclear weapons, developed with the United States' support, continue to pose a serious threat to the security of Middle East States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That terrorist regime has assassinated several innocent nuclear scientists and has threatened to attack his country's safeguarded peaceful nuclear facilities, he added, urging the Review Conference to promptly address the threat posed by the Israeli regime. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/dc3847.doc.htm>

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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

### **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>

### **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