



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Islamophobia

Ruth Jones (Labour) [74906] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to mark Islamophobia Awareness Week 2022.

Ruth Jones (Labour) [74907] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with Ministers in the devolved Administrations on tackling Islamophobia on an all-nations basis.

Lee Rowley: The United Kingdom is an open, tolerant and welcoming country where people of all faiths practice in freedom. We have a proud tradition of religious tolerance, within the law. The Government remains committed to creating a strong and integrated society in which hatred and prejudice are not tolerated towards the Muslim, or any other, community. We recognise the huge contribution that people of all faiths, beliefs and none, bring to communities and public life, and we are committed to acknowledging and celebrating this.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-31/74906>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-31/74907>

House of Lords Written Answers

Marriage: Families

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) [HL2958] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 27 April (HL7850) and the Law Commission report, Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law, published on 19 July, what plans they have for assessing the case for more comprehensive and enduring reform to marriage law once the Law Commission has completed its fundamental review.

Marriage: Ceremonies

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) [HL2958] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the publication of the Law Commission report, Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law,

published on 19 July, what assessment they have made of the Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill relating to the criminalisation of purporting to solemnise marriages that are not legally registered; and what plans they have to ensure that the Bill is scheduled for a second reading.

Lord Bellamy: Now that the Law Commission has completed its review, we must take the time to consider the recommendations fully. We know that marriage ceremonies occur outside the legal framework for weddings in England and Wales. The Law Commission has carefully considered this in its report. We will set out our position on this issue, and wider marriage reform, within the formal Government response in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/hl2957>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/hl2958>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-04-22/hl7850>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2022/07/A-new-weddings-law-LC-report.pdf>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

British Embassy Relocation: Jerusalem

Kim Leadbeater (Labour): What assessment [the Minister] has made of the potential effect of relocating the British embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. (902110) ...

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (David Rutley): There are no plans to move the UK embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv. Israel is a close friend and a key strategic partner, built on decades of co-operation. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with Israel through our embassy in Tel Aviv.

Kim Leadbeater: I am very pleased to hear that, as I know my constituents will be. However, why was that move ever under consideration, given that last month at the United Nations, 143 countries, including Israel and the UK, voted to reaffirm that any unilateral annexation of territory by another state is a violation of international law? Navi Pillay, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has observed that unless that principle is applied equally to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, it would become meaningless. Is this not just another example of the Conservative party's chaotic approach to international relations that has so badly undermined the UK's reputation on the global stage?

David Rutley: The Government have looked at this issue. There are no plans to move the British embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv. We will continue to work to ensure that we are in the best position possible to continue promoting peace and stability in the region and supporting a two-state solution.

Richard Graham (Conservative): I welcome the Minister's update. Will he reaffirm that that is the long-standing position of our country; that it is the right position internationally; that the work done by our consulate-general in Jerusalem is extremely valued and complements what is happening in our embassy in Tel Aviv; and that that will continue to be the case?

David Rutley: My hon. Friend has real expertise on the issue. Yes, I completely agree with him.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-08/debates/5C659601-7B33-4AEB-B0AA-829692684CA6/BritishEmbassyRelocationJerusalem>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Bob Blackman (Conservative): Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating Benjamin Netanyahu on his recent election victory in Israel and in wishing for Bibi to form a broad-based coalition across Israel, so that there is a proper stable Government for our key ally?

David Rutley: We congratulate Benjamin Netanyahu on his election victory. As one of Israel's closest partners, the UK looks forward to working with Israel to ensure that our relationship continues to flourish.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-08/debates/DE2C682B-465A-4AF2-B4BC-BE5C062E56DF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-78AF854D-5E65-4584-882B-4B32A4DB72BA>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Andy Slaughter (Labour): What assessment have the Government made of the role of far-right parties in Israel's new Government, as they are Netanyahu's principal coalition partner? Will UK Ministers be meeting representatives of those far-right parties?

David Rutley: As I have already highlighted, Israel is one of our closest partners and we will continue to have a close working relationship with the new Government. It would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage, ahead of the Government's formation.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-08/debates/DE2C682B-465A-4AF2-B4BC-BE5C062E56DF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-5F04DCC0-1E3B-48B9-BC0C-20A92FD6F284>

House of Commons Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Israel: Embassies

Rupa Huq (Labour) [59284] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of the UK Embassy in Israel remaining in Tel Aviv.

Rupa Huq (Labour) [59931] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities on the potential move of the UK's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

David Jones (Conservative) [66925] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy on location of the British embassy in Israel of the recent decision of the Australian Government to reverse its decision to recognise West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

David Rutley: There are no plans to move the UK embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv. Israel is a close friend and key strategic partner, built on decades of cooperation. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with Israel through our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/59284>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/59931>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-19/66925>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Israel: Palestinians

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [77461] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of children killed by Israeli forces using live ammunition in the West Bank in (a) October 2022 and (b) since 1 January 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [77462] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of incidents in which schools in the West Bank were raided during school hours by (a) Israeli forces and (b) Israeli settlers in 2022.

David Rutley: We regularly raise the issue of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities. We encourage them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We will 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/2022-11-02/77461>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-02/77462>

Department for International Trade

Updated UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-israel-trade-and-partnership-agreement>

9 November 2022: Decision No1/2022 of the UK-Israel Joint Committee

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-israel-committee-documents/9-november-2022-decision-no12022-of-the-uk-israel-joint-committee>

Notice of fulfilment under the UK/Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement to apply cumulation of origin with mutual trading partners

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-of-fulfilment-under-the-ukisrael-trade-and-partnership-agreement/notice-of-fulfilment-under-the-ukisrael-trade-and-partnership-agreement-to-apply-cumulation-of-origin-with-mutual-trading-partners>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Written Answer

International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench) [HL2182] To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost of hosting the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in July; and whether any binding commitments were made by participating countries to prohibit discrimination against minority faiths and beliefs.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We anticipate that the total budget for the Conference will be in the region of £3.3million. The Conference explored the many facets of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) through seventeen themed panel sessions and gave a platform to those persecuted for their religion or belief. Forty-seven

governments, international organisations and other entities made pledges to take action in support of FoRB. Thirty-four countries joined the UK in signing up to one or more of a set of non-legally binding statements protecting and promoting FoRB for all. The statements and co-signatories are available here:

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-05/hl2182>

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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>

Notice of amendments

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill/stage-2/daily-list-8-november-2022.pdf>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill/stage-2/daily-list-9-november.pdf>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 5 days**

Mapping Exercise - Youth Workers supporting young people facing racism & antisemitism in Scotland (closing date 14 November 2022)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z5YX2C7>

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