



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Illegal Migration Bill: Second Reading

col 584 Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op): The UK was one of the instigators of the 1951 refugee convention, because before the war the UK Government failed to allow Jews fleeing the persecution of the Nazis into this country. The Board of Deputies of British Jews this week said:

“Today’s British Jewish community is descended from refugees... We have significant concerns at the potential for newly proposed migration legislation to breach...the Refugee Convention.”

Does my right hon. Friend agree that we could be in breach of the convention if we pass the Bill today—in breach of international law and our own legacy in this area?

col 585 Yvette Cooper (Labour): My hon. Friend is right. Those are damning words that we have heard from the Board of Deputies and many other organisations on the impact this legislation will have. ...

col 606 Apsana Begum (Labour): ... As the daughter of migrants who faced violence and persecution from the far right in east London, I am all too conscious of the consequences of pandering to racists. Whether it is the Bangladeshi community standing up and leading the anti-fascist fightback on Brick Lane following the murder of Altab Ali in 1978, or the Jewish community who came together in the battle of Cable Street in 1936 to stand up to Oswald Mosley, in east London we will never let our communities be divided or targeted. The Government should be saving lives, not salvaging their failing political record. We need an approach that prioritises people’s lives and dignity. We need safe and legal routes to the UK. ...

col 636 Sarah Owen (Labour): ... People of faith often speak about the opposite of fear—hope. And they have spoken out against the Bill. The Board of Deputies has shared its concerns and, earlier today, I met members of the Jain community, whose focus is on compassion for all living things, not on this. Last June, all the bishops in the House of Lords signed a letter raising alarm about the Rwanda policy. Today, the Archbishop of York joined the Muslim Council of Britain and 350 other charities and faith organisations to

condemn the Bill, saying it was “immoral and inept”.

Normally, that level of criticism would make a Government stop and think, but we are not in ordinary times. Instead, we have yet another Prime Minister who is so desperate to stay in power and keep the Conservative party together that he is willing to tear a country apart. That is the base level of the Bill—the Government blaming others and reaching for unworkable, inhumane covers for their own wretched failure. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-13/debates/97D4F67E-2C1B-44CB-B860-DD9024958EEF/IllegalMigrationBill>

House of Commons Written Answers

Jews: Iran

Christian Wakeford (Labour) [161447] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral statement on Security Threat to UK-Based Journalists of 20 February 2023, Official Report columns 49-51, what recent discussions (a) she and (b) her Department have had with representatives of the Community Security Trust on potential threats to the Jewish community.

Tom Tugendhat: The Security Minister recently met with representatives of the Community Security Trust on 27 February, for a very useful discussion on certain security issues affecting the Jewish community. We recognise that the Community Security Trust remains a highly trusted and expert delivery partner of HMG, with considerable experience of providing protective security for the Jewish community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-08/161447>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-20/debates/29A8956F-795C-430F-BBA8-25D93A5A2FCB/SecurityThreatToUK-BasedJournalists>

Jews: Iran

Christian Wakeford (Labour) [161448] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral statement on Security Threat to UK-Based Journalists of 20 February 2023, Official Report columns 49-51, what steps she is taking to help protect the safety of the Jewish community.

Tom Tugendhat: We take any threat to the UK-based Jewish community extremely seriously. As the Security Minister said in this House on 20 February, we are taking significant steps to address the activities of the Iranian regime and its operatives in the UK – whether those activities are threatening the Jewish community or any individuals or organisations in this country. However, the community should be alert but not alarmed.

In April 2022, the then Home Secretary announced continuation of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant for 2022-23 (for £14 million) which provides protective security measures at various Jewish community sites. In November we circulated protective security messaging to charity Community Security Trust to help keep the Jewish community aware of the threat posed by Iran, and signpost towards the government’s online security advice hubs.

More broadly, we take a proactive approach to countering the most acute forms of state-directed physical threats to individuals in the UK. Working through our police forces – both national and regional – as well as the agencies that support them, we seek to identify those communities and individuals who may be most at risk, and to provide them with the right protective security guidance, and other measures where appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-08/161448>

The statement referred to above can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-20/debates/29A8956F-795C-430F-BBA8-25D93A5A2FCB/SecurityThreatToUK-BasedJournalists>

The announcement referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/protective-security-grant-funding-for-jewish-institutions-to-continue>

Covid-19 Inquiry: Equality

Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op) [161404] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Department is taking to ensure that the Covid-19 inquiry hears views from people with protected characteristics including (a) ethnicity, (b) disability and (c) sex.

Alex Burghart: The Covid-19 inquiry's terms of reference require it to consider any disparities evident in the impact of the pandemic on different protected characteristics including (a) ethnicity, (b) disability and (c) sex, and to listen to the experiences of those most affected by the pandemic. The inquiry's process and procedure for fulfilling its terms of reference are a matter for its independent chair.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-08/161404>

Information about the inquiry referred to above can be read at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Jews: Iran

Lord Shinkwin (Conservative) [HL5950] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of threat posed by Iran to the Jewish community in the UK.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: There is no secret that Iranian regime has a long history of targeting Jewish and Israeli interests around the world. Their publicly stated animosity towards Jewish and Israeli interests has manifested in a persistent level of threat and, unfortunately, attacks around the world aimed at the representatives, citizens and symbols of Israel and also Jewish communities.

We take any threat to the UK-based Jewish community extremely seriously. The community should be alert but not alarmed. As I said on 20 February, we are taking significant steps to address the activities of the Iranian regime and its operatives in the UK – whether those activities are threatening the Jewish community or any individuals or organisations in this country.

I have instructed the Home Office to lead work on countering Iranian-state threats, making use of the full breadth and expertise of the government and the police, security, and intelligence agencies. Working with a range of partners, the UK government will continue to use all tools at its disposal to protect individuals in the UK against any threats from the Iranian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/hl5950>

The House of Lords statement referred to above can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2023-02-21/debates/83EBE2C5-9B03-40AD-8E2D-91A4EB22D530/SecurityThreatToUK-BasedJournalists>

The statement was previously made in the House of Commons, and can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-20/debates/29A8956F-795C-430F-BBA8-25D93A5A2FCB/SecurityThreatToUK-BasedJournalists>

Antisemitism

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL6030] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to combat antisemitism.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: I refer the noble Lord to the answer given to Question UIN 117512 on 16 January 2023.

[117512] **Lee Rowley:** Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we welcome the recent report from Lord Mann, the Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism. We are already taking a strong lead in antisemitism in all its forms. The Home Office is providing £14 million this year through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant to provide protective security measures at Jewish schools, colleges, nurseries and synagogues; the Department is providing £500,000 to the Holocaust Education Trust from 2020/21 to 2022/23 to deliver their Lessons from Auschwitz project, as an example. We will continue to work together with Lord Mann on this vital issue.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-06/117512>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/hl6030>

Islamophobia

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL6029] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to combat anti-Muslim behaviour and prejudice.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: This Government will not tolerate Anti-Muslim hate crime in any form. We have supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with nearly £5 million between 2016 and 2023 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred and support Muslim victims of hate crime.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/hl6029>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Non-crime Hate Incidents: Personal Data

The Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp) [HCWS626] My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has today laid before Parliament the statutory Non-crime Hate Incidents Draft Code of Practice on the Recording and Retention of Personal Data, which police officers and staff must have regard to. This code is being laid under the provisions of sections 60 and 61 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Government are introducing this code to establish a proportionate and common-sense approach to the recording of non-crime hate incidents. This approach should better protect personal data, emphasise the importance of the right to freedom of expression, and reduce the number of unnecessary non-crime hate incidents that are recorded whilst still ensuring that vulnerable individuals, groups and communities continue to be safeguarded by the police.

This Government fully recognise the sensitivities surrounding the recording of non-crime hate incidents by the police, particularly in relation to concerns that this process infringes on the right to freedom of expression. We know there are concerns that individuals who express lawfully held views are at risk of becoming the subject of a non-crime hate incident report if their views are considered to be offensive, and that in turn, this may result in their personal data being stored on a policing record. This Government are clear that this should never be the case. The code makes it clear that offending someone is not, in and of itself, a criminal offence, nor does it warrant a non-crime hate incident being recorded. This aligns with this Government's stance that everyone in this country, no matter who they are or what their views are, should be able to engage in lawful debate without police

interference.

The code emphasises the importance of free speech with case studies that are designed to assist the police in considering how the right to freedom of expression should be taken into consideration. The code clarifies that debate, humour, satire and personally held views which are lawfully expressed are not, by themselves, grounds for the recording of a non-crime hate incident. Furthermore, the code sets out that a non-crime hate incident should not be recorded if the report is deemed by the police to be trivial, irrational, malicious, or if there is no basis to conclude that it was motivated by intentional hostility.

The code provides new personal data-related safeguards, setting out that the personal data of some who is the subject of an NCHI report should only be included in a record if the incident poses a real risk (a) of significant harm to individuals or groups with a protected characteristic, or (b) that a future criminal offence may be committed against individuals or groups with a protected characteristic. For the purposes of the code, protected characteristics are considered to be race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. If this new threshold is not met, personal data should not be recorded, and any personal data previously noted by the police in relation to the incident—for instance, personal information recorded by the initial call taker—should be deleted. This code therefore ensures that non-crime hate incidents, and relevant personal data, will only be recorded when absolutely necessary. We believe this will increase transparency and public trust in this process.

The Government fully recognise the importance of ensuring that vulnerable individuals, groups and communities continue to be protected by the police; indeed, this is the purpose of non-crime hate incident recording. We are confident that the code does precisely this. We are grateful for the advice provided by the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing and senior police officers during the process of drafting this code. This has allowed us to publish a code that strikes the right balance between respecting the operational importance of this type of recording for the police, while improving safeguards for free speech. If someone is targeted because of hostility or prejudice towards their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity, and the criteria in the code are met, the incident can and should be recorded as a non-crime hate incident. This approach will enable the police to intervene as appropriate in order to prevent significant harm or future criminal offences from materialising, while ensuring the right to freedom of expression is protected. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-13/debates/2303134000004/Non-CrimeHateIncidentsPersonalData>

Home Office

Non-Crime Hate Incidents Draft Code of Practice on the Recording and Retention of Personal Data

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141888/E02871502_Non-Crime_Hate_Incidents_Web_Accessible.pdf

Updated: Domestic Abuse: statutory guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021/domestic-abuse-statutory-guidance-accessible-version>

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)

Former security guard from Glasgow jailed for terrorism charge

A former security guard's communications with Neo-Nazi extremists were uncovered after

an online chat group was infiltrated by an undercover counter-terrorism officer. Within days of joining the group, James Farrell shared a video with detailed instructions on how to construct a 3D-printed, homemade, automatic weapon. Farrell, 32, of Priesthill, Glasgow, was ... sentenced to two years eight months imprisonment at the High Court in Glasgow. He had pled guilty to a breach of the 2006 Terrorism Act at the High Court in Glasgow on February 9. ... On October 21, 2021, Scottish police, acting on intelligence from English colleagues, arrested Farrell following a search of his house which unearthed the haul of anti-Semitic and extreme right-wing books. ... Laura Buchan, Procurator Fiscal for Specialist Casework, welcomed the sentence and said it highlighted the importance of multi-agency support in helping to achieve a successful prosecution. She said: "... The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) has a duty to keep the people of Scotland safe from harm and, working with police, government and other agencies, we are committed to ensuring that those involved in committing offences under terrorism legislation are brought to justice." The court ... sifted through messages in which father-of-three Farrell declared his support for white supremacist Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 people at the two mosques in Christchurch. He also praised neo-Nazi Anders Breivik, who murdered 77 people during a gun rampage in Norway in 2012, and Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh. Members of the closed group frequently posted anti-Semitic propaganda in support of Adolf Hitler. ... Four people from the group have already been convicted of offences in England under the Terrorism Act and during their trial and it was heard they exchanged terror manuals, shared racist ideology and posted videos of atrocities.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.copfs.gov.uk/about-copfs/news/man-shared-instructions-on-building-3d-printed-firearms/>

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Israel and Palestine

Steven Bonnar (SNP) [904049] What recent assessment has [the Minister] made of the implications for his policies of the security and human rights situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Helen Hayes (Labour) [904059] What assessment has [the Minister] made of the implications for his policies of recent violence in Israel and Palestine.

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [904062] Whether [the Minister's] Department is taking steps to support the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

Andy McDonald (Labour) [904063] What assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of recent violence in Israel and Palestine.

Carol Monaghan (SNP) [904072] What recent assessment [the Minister] has made of the implications for his policies of the security and human rights situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly): The security situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories remains fragile. Last week I spoke with my Israeli and Palestinian

counterparts, and urged both sides to take steps to de-escalate and avoid a cycle of violence. We welcome the United States' Middle East Partnership for Peace Act and the proposals for increased international funding for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Steven Bonnar: Let me begin by condemning the recent spike in violence and bloodshed in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and on behalf of us all I pay respect to all Palestinian and Israeli victims of conflict. The Secretary of State's Department has acknowledged that there is a culture of impunity when it comes to crimes committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, and the SNP wholeheartedly agrees. What are the Government doing to encourage Israel to end the widespread and systematic discrimination against Palestinian populations? Will he outline any of the concrete steps that have been taken to deter land seizures, home demolitions, and the forced evictions of Palestinian people and their communities?

James Cleverly: The UK enjoys a strong bilateral relationship with Israel, which allows us to raise issues where we disagree. We have disagreed with settlement expansion, which we have raised directly, and we also disagree with the demolition of Palestinian homes. Our position on that is long standing and consistent. In my most recent conversations with the Israeli Foreign Minister, I raised our concerns about the speculation of settlement building on the E1 territories in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I am pleased that there has now been a moratorium on such expansions, because to do so would be damaging to the prospects of a sustainable two-state solution.

Helen Hayes: In February I visited Masafer Yatta in the south Hebron hills, where the Israeli Government are planning to evict more than 1,000 Palestinians from their homes. That sits alongside Prime Minister Netanyahu's election pledge to annex west bank settlements, amounting to 30% of the territory, while Finance Minister Smotrich recently said that the village of Huwara should be "wiped out". Has the Foreign Secretary raised those matters with his Israeli counterpart, and how does he intend to ensure that the new Israeli Government abide by their obligations under international law?

James Cleverly: We raise issues of settlement expansion with the Government of Israel, and I have raised with my Israeli counterpart the need for a careful use of language. I have raised with both my Palestinian and Israeli counterparts the need for all of us to try to find ways of de-escalating the tensions. At this stage, that must rightly be the priority for us all, while we continue to work with the Israeli Government on ensuring that we keep a sustainable two-state solution alive.

Andrew Gwynne: Five years ago, the British Government became the first in the world to endorse a concept of an international fund for Israeli and Palestinian peace. Since then, warm words have followed, but very little action. Given the desperate need for that fund right now, with the deterioration of the situation in Israel and Palestine, will the UK Government commit again to leading on that fund? Will the Foreign Secretary use the opportunity of the G7 summit in May to get other international partners lined up as well?

James Cleverly: People-to-people links between Israelis and Palestinians are incredibly important, and we fund projects to build co-operation, whether at Government-to-Government level, or people to people. We remain in close contact with our US counterparts about the international fund for peace. We want to ensure that it is the most effective use of funding allocated towards people-to-people links, and we will always look favourably at projects to build greater peace and co-operation. We want to ensure that anything we subscribe to, or any funding we commit, is allocated to the most effective way of bringing about that reconciliation.

Andy McDonald: In the west bank town of Huwara, over 400 settlers, backed by Israeli soldiers, torched Palestinian homes, businesses and vehicles, and killed 37-year-old Sameh Aqtash, in what senior Israel Defense Forces commanders have called a pogrom. Israel's Finance Minister Smotrich, who describes himself as a fascist homophobe, openly said Huwara should be wiped out. Such extremism is given licence by a lack of

international accountability, so will the Foreign Secretary, if he agrees with the rule of international law, commit to banning all goods sourced from Israeli settlements illegally built on occupied Palestinian land?

James Cleverly: As I have said in answer to other questions, we have made it clear that the language used with regard to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories needs to be de-escalatory. It needs to be carefully thought through. Inflammatory language, as we have seen, is unacceptable. The behaviour of those settlers is unacceptable. That has been recognised by the Israeli authorities and we want to make sure that those people are held to account for the actions they have taken. We will always seek to reinforce the viability of a future Palestinian state as part of a sustainable two-state solution. The decision with regard to settlement goods is long standing and we do not speculate about any changes to those positions.

Carol Monaghan: I welcomed the recent joint commitment by the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to reduce the surge in violence, and the Israeli Government's pledge to halt new settlement constructions, but on the very day that commitment was signed, Prime Minister Netanyahu tweeted: "Contrary to tweets, construction and regulation in Judea and Samaria"—the west bank—"will continue according to the original planning and construction schedule, without any changes. There is and will not be any freeze."

That is an indication of further violations of international law. Does the Foreign Secretary accept that whatever his diplomatic approach is at the moment, it simply is not working?

James Cleverly: The United Kingdom has a like-minded position alongside a number of our international friends and allies. We seek to protect the viability of a sustainable two-state solution. We raised with the Israeli Government our concerns about activities that might put that future at risk. That is not something the UK does alone; it is something we do in close co-ordination with a number of our international friends and allies. That will continue to be our diplomatic stance.

Tom Randall (Conservative): Last Thursday, a Hamas terrorist shot three Israelis in the heart of Tel Aviv, just a few streets away from the British embassy. Shooting and bombing attacks have rocked Israel for over a year now and this wave appears to be intensifying. Will my right hon. Friend join me in condemning those attacks? What meaningful steps can he take to counter the resurgence in terrorist activity?

James Cleverly: The UK Government condemn terrorism in all its forms. Whatever criticism Palestinians may have of the Israeli Government, there is no justification for terrorist action. We always encourage dialogue, we always encourage co-operation and we always encourage actions that de-escalate. That will continue to be our posture with regard to Israel and the OPTs.

Flick Drummond (Conservative): The only way to permanently end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is to deliver Palestinian self-determination and preserve Israel's Jewish and democratic identity through a peaceful two-state solution. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that his Department remains committed to achieving that solution based on 1967 borders and the recognition of Palestine as a state?

James Cleverly: Our position on a sustainable two-state solution is long standing. We will always encourage Israel to take actions that support that and we have the same conversations with representatives of the Palestinian Authority. We encourage dialogue, we encourage negotiation, we encourage co-operation and we encourage de-escalation.

Bob Blackman (Conservative): The emergence of Lions' Den, a new terrorist group to go alongside Hamas, Hezbollah and many other Islamic terrorist groups, is clearly a threat to Israel's security, and indeed that of the Palestinians. What assessment has my right hon. Friend made of Lions' Den and what co-operation is he pursuing with the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government to combat this new form of terrorism?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an important point. We will address terrorism in close co-operation with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, neither of whom have an incentive or desire to allow terrorism to flourish. We will continue our close co-operation with the security services in Israel to try to ensure that Palestinians, Israelis and Brits in the region are all kept safe.

Desmond Swayne (Conservative): When I raised these issues, the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and chief negotiator simply stormed out of the meeting. Does there come a time when simply raising issues is not enough?

James Cleverly: It is better than not raising them, I would suggest. ...

Fabian Hamilton (Labour): As we have already heard, on 26 February, following the appalling murder of two Israelis, a violent mob of 400 settlers attacked the Palestinian town of Huwara, killing one, injuring hundreds, and burning buildings and cars. As my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Andy McDonald) said, a far-right Minister in the Israeli Government called for Huwara to be wiped out. That shocking incident is part of the deteriorating situation in the occupied west bank and the wider problem of settler violence, for which too often no one is held to account. Again, will the Government press the Israeli authorities to condemn and crack down on these shocking incidents of settler violence?

James Cleverly: There has been condemnation of those actions within the Israeli system. We are always clear that where there is lawbreaking, authorities should take action. Within the Israeli system there has been recognition of the action being illegal and provocative, and therefore we will continue to work with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to find ways of de-escalating the situation and striving for peace, and for what ultimately is in the best interests of Palestinians, Israelis and the region: a peaceful and sustainable two-state solution. ...

Drew Hendry (SNP): In February we welcomed the moratorium on new construction in settlement areas, as the Foreign Secretary has described. As we heard, that was followed by an immediate and blatant breach of trust by the Israeli Prime Minister. The Foreign Secretary says that it is better to raise issues than not, but how does he measure success in raising them, because we see absolutely no evidence of success?

James Cleverly: I do not think it is news to anyone in the House that the situation in Israel and the OPTs is complicated and long standing. We are not the only country in the world that raises these important issues, and we can continue to do so because we have a strong working relationship with both the Government of Israel and the leadership of the Palestinian Authority—as I said, I had conversations with both very recently. We will continue to work at what we think is in everyone's interests: a sustainable two-state solution. We will not be fatalistic about it. We will not give up just because it is difficult. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that we should walk away just because it is a long-standing challenge, that is up to him. We will not abandon the Israelis or the Palestinian people. We will continue working for a sustainable two-state solution.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-14/debates/F1ED8FC0-8A54-4AF2-9ED1-4C70AB716251/IsraelAndPalestine>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Kim Leadbeater (Labour): I recently visited the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and what I saw made a deep and lasting impression on me. Does the Minister agree with me and with former Israeli ambassador Ilan Baruch, whom I met yesterday, that the UK and others must stop giving Israel impunity for its illegal actions under international law and again become serious and active players for peace?

James Cleverly: I assure the hon. Lady that we want nothing more than peace in that region. I have visited the OPTs and have met representatives of the Palestinian Authority and Israelis. Of course, it is in everybody's interest that we have peace in

the region: it is in the interests both of Israelis and Palestinians and of the wider region. That will continue to be at the heart of UK foreign policy in the region. ...

Hilary Benn (Labour): The Foreign Secretary will be well aware of the huge demonstrations in Israel opposing the Government's plans to control the judiciary, which will undermine the rule of law—a situation described by the President of Israel yesterday as “very serious”. Does the Foreign Secretary share President Herzog's concerns?

James Cleverly: Ultimately, of course, the Government of Israel need to understand that they have a responsibility to the people of Israel. We always suggest that, when there are protests, Governments listen to why those protests are happening, and of course, we want to see Israel abide by the rule of law.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-14/debates/B0BD18B8-24D1-4CAA-804A-E5FB6E6C41A9/TopicalQuestions#contribution-F273AA82-7919-4D08-908F-57141A73CFB1>

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Caroline Lucas (Green) [158883] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (s) levels and (b) impact of settler and military violence against Palestinians in the West Bank; and if he will make a statement.

David Rutley: We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. The Foreign Secretary also made clear the UK's concerns regarding the escalation of violence in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories in phone calls with both Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen and Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Malki on 7 March.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-06/158883>

Israel: West Bank

Caroline Lucas (Green) [158884] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the transfer of authority of Israel's Civil Administration in the occupied West Bank.

David Rutley: It has long been the Government's view that Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is governed by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which Israel is a state party. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and Lord Ahmad has a regular dialogue with Israeli counterparts on these issues. The Civil Administration is a key component of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), which the UK engages regularly on issues relating to the occupation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-06/158884>

Israel: Palestinians

Rupa Huq (Labour) [159018] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the administrative detention of Palestinian citizens in Israel.

David Rutley: Israel's use of administrative detention, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary. We ask

the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in Israel. We have made clear our objections about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. We also raise the continued transfer of Palestinian detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Geneva convention.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-06/159018>

Israel: Palestinians

Dan Carden (Labour) [160372] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is taking diplomatic steps to support the creation of mechanisms for (a) reporting and (b) addressing alleged violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Leo Docherty: We continue to closely monitor the security situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The UK continues to provide the Palestinian Authority (PA) with professional support in helping develop its security institutions. This provision includes training and other technical assistance to the PA Ministry of Interior and PA security forces, to support the development of capable, responsible security forces that respect human rights and are accountable to the Palestinian people. The Foreign Secretary has made clear that the UK wants to see a de-escalation of tensions in Israel and the OPTs in his phone calls with both the Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen and Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Malki on 7 March, and we continue to encourage all sides to take action which delivers this.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-07/160372>

West Bank: Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation

Dan Carden (Labour) [160373] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) humanitarian and (b) human rights situation in the occupied West Bank.

Leo Docherty: Human Rights are a crucial element underpinning the UK's foreign policy. The UK continues to engage with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on human rights issues where they exist. We call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. It is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law and avoid civilian casualties. The Foreign Secretary has made this clear to Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen during a phone call on 7 March.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-07/160373>

Israel: Palestinians

Munira Wilson (Liberal Democrat) [161429] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has held discussions with his Israeli counterparts on opening an investigation into the deaths of Palestinians; and whether his Department is aware of any ongoing investigations into those deaths.

David Rutley: We frequently 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. The Foreign Secretary has made this clear to

Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen during a phone call on 7 March.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-08/161429>

British Consulate General Jerusalem

Diplomatic missions visit Palestinian families under imminent threat of forced eviction in East Jerusalem

Representatives from Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom call on Israeli authorities to reverse the decisions on the intended evictions.

This month, six Palestinian families in Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah and the Old City of Jerusalem are facing imminent forced eviction and/or decisive hearings on eviction cases initiated by Israeli settler groups, placing more than 80 individuals under imminent threat of forced displacement.

The abovementioned representatives reiterate their strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy, which is illegal under international law, and actions taken in this context, including evictions, and call on Israeli authorities to reverse the decisions on the intended evictions. Domestic laws do not exempt Israel, as the occupying power, from meeting its obligations to administer the occupied territory in a manner that provides for and protects the local population.

The continuation of Israel's illegal settlement policy fuels tensions. In the context of escalating violence in the West Bank, it is particularly worrying that Israeli authorities plan to continue demolitions in East Jerusalem during the month of Ramadan.

Israel's illegal settlement policy undermines the viability of the two-state solution and the prospect for a lasting peace in the region and seriously jeopardises the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both states.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/diplomatic-missions-visit-palestinian-families-under-imminent-threat-of-forced-eviction-in-east-jerusalem>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, to hold Public Hearings in Geneva from 20 to 24 March

As part of its mandate and its investigations, the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, will hold a second series of public hearings from 20 to 24 March 2023, in Geneva. The Commission of Inquiry held a [first series of public hearings](#) from 7 to 11 November 2022.

The hearings ... will be broadcast live in English on [UN Web TV](#). ...

This new series of hearings will focus on the shrinking space for civil society in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem and in Israel. The Commission will hear from human rights defenders and activists, women human rights defenders, cultural activists, journalists, lawyers and witnesses who have been subjected to or witnessed attacks, restrictions and harassment by authorities and non-State actors.

In May 2021, the Commission of Inquiry was mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/commission-inquiry-occupied-palestinian-territory-including-east-jerusalem>

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Other Relevant Information

Tell Mama

ITV and Tell MAMA launch survey on mosque safety in the UK

Tell MAMA has partnered with ITV News to survey the level of hate crimes targeted at mosques in the UK and to learn more about what they think would increase the safety of their faith institutions. ...

Observing an uptake in reports to our service, the [disproportionate](#) numbers of Muslims in official Home Office data for religiously aggravated hate crimes alongside several [high-profile](#) incidents targeting mosques or, [including allegations](#) of an alleged far-right terror plot against a mosque in the courts this week and [allegations](#) of threats to kill worshippers, we felt it necessary to launch a new survey [that coincided](#) with the first UN International Day to Combat Islamophobia. ...

To read the full press release and access the survey see

<https://tellmamauk.org/itv-and-tell-mama-launch-survey-on-mosque-safety-in-the-uk/>

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Petra Bayr: ‘anti-Muslim racism endangers its direct targets, but also other minority groups and society as a whole’

... On 15 March 2019, 51 Muslim people were killed and 40 injured in mass shootings perpetrated in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, by a white supremacist terrorist. This year, we are marking that date with the first international day of solidarity with the victims of anti-Muslim hatred and intolerance.

In Europe, Muslim people face increasing intolerance and stereotyping and are the targets of misinformation and stigmatisation. This anti-Muslim hatred should never be underestimated and must always be challenged and combated. It leads to marginalisation and discrimination, including in access to education, employment and housing, as well as to hate crime.

Like other forms of prejudice, anti-Muslim racism is often rooted in xenophobic, hate-filled ideologies and disseminated through hate speech, especially online. Far right and populist political forces typically utilise it for cheap electoral gain. It is of the utmost importance for democratic political parties to refrain from falling into the trap of using stigmatising language which target Muslims or other groups in society, and to condemn such language when used by others in the political sphere. For anti-Muslim racism not only endangers its direct targets, but also all other minority groups, and through them society as a whole.

On this international day, I call on all parliaments and other authorities in Council of Europe member States to step up their efforts to protect Muslim people from all forms of discrimination and to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive society for everyone, irrespective of their origin and beliefs.

<https://pace.coe.int/en/news/9010/petra-bayr-anti-muslim-racism-endangers-its-direct-targets-but-also-other-minority-groups-and-society-as-a-whole->

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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>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/49991/documents/3140>

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

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

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0040/220040.pdf>

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

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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