



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Hate Crime

Lord Jackson of Peterborough (Conservative) [HL6087] To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Home Office collects data on non-crime hate incidents; and if not, why not.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office does not collect data on non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs). The data collected from the police balances policy needs and the burden on police forces.

This Government recognises concerns surrounding the recording of NCHIs. Accordingly, on 13 March, under provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, the Home Secretary laid the statutory Non-Crime Hate Incidents Draft Code of Practice on the Recording and Retention of Personal Data before Parliament.

The code will be subject to the affirmative procedure and introduces new safeguards to better protect personal data and the right to freedom of expression. Once in effect, the code will ensure that police only record NCHIs when it is absolutely necessary and proportionate to do so, and not simply because someone is offended.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/hl6087>

The Draft Code of Practice referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-crime-hate-incidents-draft-code-of-practice/non-crime-hate-incidents-draft-code-of-practice-on-the-recording-and-retention-of-personal-data-accessible>

Funerals

Lord Birt (Crossbench) [HL6074] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current range of waiting times for funerals; and whether they will investigate the reasons for delays in areas of the UK with the longest wait times.

Lord Bellamy: The Government does not have operational responsibility for the

provision of funeral services and as such does not collate information on waiting times for funerals.

However, we are aware of some areas experiencing longer waiting times for funeral services and we are working with other government departments and the sector to address capacity and resilience issues within the death management system.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/hl6074>

Cabinet Office

Launch of life-saving public emergency alerts

... Working with mobile broadcasting technology, the Emergency Alerts system will transform the UK's warning and informing capability; providing a means to get urgent messages quickly to nearly 90 percent of mobile phones in a defined area; providing clear instructions about how best to respond. ...

A UK-wide alerts test will take place in the early evening of Sunday 23 April which will see people receive a test message on their mobile phones.

The alerts will only ever come from the Government or emergency services, and they will issue a warning, always include the details of the area impacted, and provide instructions about how best to respond - linking to [gov.uk/alerts](https://www.gov.uk/alerts) where people can receive further information.

Emergency Alerts will be used very rarely - only being sent where there is an immediate risk to people's lives - so people may not receive an alert for months, or even years. ... alerts could be used to tell residents of villages being encroached by wildfires, or of severe flooding.

Announcing the launch of the new alerts system, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oliver Dowden MP, said: ... It will revolutionise our ability to warn and inform people who are in immediate danger, and help us keep people safe. ... Emergency Alerts will be used across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland ...

By broadcasting from cell towers in the vicinity of an emergency, the alerts are secure, free to receive, and one-way. They do not reveal anyone's location or collect personal data.

Alerts can only be sent by authorised Governmental and Emergency Services users. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/launch-of-life-saving-public-emergency-alerts>

For additional information see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1143765/Frequently_asked_questions_about_Emergency_Alerts.pdf

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Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answer

British Museum: Restitution

Lord Boateng (Labour) [HL6078] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the trustees of the British Museum about the return of artefacts of historic, cultural or religious significance in the Museum's collection to their countries of origin where the legality of their acquisition has...

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Objects in the collection of the British Museum are legally owned by the Trustees of the British Museum, which is operationally

independent of Government. Discussions and decisions relating to the care and management of the museum's collections are therefore a matter for the Trustees of the British Museum.

Some national museums, including the British Museum, are prevented by legislation from deaccessioning objects in their collections unless, broadly, they are duplicates or unfit for retention. The two exceptions to this are when the objects are human remains less than 1,000 years old, and objects spoliated during the Nazi era. The Government has no plans to change these laws.

The British Museum has said that it recognises the significance of the tabots and has held meaningful talks with the Ethiopian Church on this sensitive issue. The Museum's stated ambition is to seek to lend these objects to an Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the UK. The Government fully supports the Museum's Trustees in their approach.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/hl6078>

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Israel

House of Commons

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill, Second Reading

col 1156 **Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat):** ... Last September I went to Israel and parts of the occupied Palestinian territories with Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel, and two months later I went back, focusing on Palestine, with the Council for Arab-British Understanding. ...

My mother comes from an old Greek Orthodox Jerusalem family. We are proud Jerusalemites and proud Palestinians. Her grandfather was called Wassef Jawharriyeh, and he chronicled what life was like in unique diaries that now act as source material for historians. He told of a Jerusalem where Christians, Muslims and Jews lived side by side in friendship and respect. But those relationships faltered through the Nakba and we ended up, like so many, having to flee our beloved city.

My grandfather George would tell tales of how when he was a boy, after the bombing of the King David Hotel in 1948, the family sought sanctuary at the Mount of the Temptation in Jericho and lived there for six months. ... Above all, my mother would describe the physical and mental suffering and what it was like to be a dispossessed refugee. Those feelings have never left her, nor her brothers nor her sisters. I take it upon myself, as the next generation, to carry Jerusalem in my heart and do whatever I can to safeguard Palestine's future.

This Bill does what it says on the tin: it asks the British Government to recognise the state of Palestine, but to do so without any preconditions. ...

We must remember that it was Britain that produced the 1917 Balfour declaration; you will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, that while Balfour spoke of a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine, he also spoke about safeguarding the "civil and religious rights of...non-Jewish communities".

He was, however, silent on the question of Palestinian political rights. As such, the declaration was an historic aberration, one that—whether we like it or not—altered reality in the region and played a significant part in this story, where peace has never seemed more elusive. ...

col 1157 **Andy Slaughter (Labour):** ... Given that the House has voted for recognition and the Government have said that they support recognition, although not when, there

must be recognition without preconditions ... It cannot form part of the negotiations, otherwise Israel and Palestine will be on different bases. We can define the borders of Israel only by defining the borders of Palestine, and we must recognise both countries equally.

Layla Moran: ... I simply ask: if not now, when? What are we waiting for?

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office (Andrew Mitchell): ... we are clear that we want to see the creation of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian state that lives in peace and security, side by side with Israel. In our view, now is not the time to take that step, but recognising a Palestinian state is a powerful diplomatic tool that we will deploy when it best serves the objectives of peace.

Layla Moran: ... This Israeli Government are different from the others. The others would sit by and allow the settlements to happen—illegal settlements that should not be happening—but it is now the Israeli Government's policy to expand those settlements. I ask the Minister to look at what happened two weeks ago in Huwara, where violent settler groups ransacking the village were egged on by Cabinet Ministers in Israel. That cannot be allowed to continue. ...

Palestinian people, especially young people, are increasingly despondent and desperate. Settlement proliferation acts like a woodworm that riddles the foundations of any peace process or viable Palestinian state. ...

col 1158 ... many people ask what the point of the Bill is if we do not yet have negotiated borders. First, I say that that applies equally to Israel, because the borders are also Israel's, but that has not stopped us from recognising the state of Israel. More importantly, however, the Bill offers that most precious thing—hope. ... I also think about the life I might have had living under occupation, as many of my mother's relations are living. I should say that I found little support for the Palestinian Authority there. All people have an issue with their Government, as do the Palestinians and the Israelis who are out protesting, but that is different from statehood.

The settlements are eating up what used to be the treasured jewels in the Palestinian crown, such as Hebron. ... It used to be a bustling market town and just a few years ago people had to wear headgear because there are settlement houses all along the market and people would throw metal objects down. Instead, a grate was installed, so now people are sheltered by an oppressive grate. The settlers got wind of this and so instead of throwing metal objects they now throw faeces and occasionally acid.

In the same town, there are metal gates that stop Palestinians walking from one street to the next. I think back to the 1940s and look at the pictures now and it reminds me of a kind of dystopian, impoverished country. Just on the other side is Tel Aviv, which is prospering mightily. I do not begrudge Israel its success ... I am a daughter of Palestine but I am also a friend of Israel. ... The Bill ... would also say to Netanyahu, Ben-Gvir, Smotrich and all those who might believe that Israeli aggression is justified that we do not accept their flagrant flouting of international law. ...

The Bill is simple. It would confer full diplomatic status on the Palestinian ambassador in the UK and makes reference to the 1967 borders as defined by the UN resolutions. ... I am not naive. This is not going to fix the problem. ... I would also ask why we are allowing illegal settlement goods into this country, when we know the effect that the illegal settlements are having on the future of a viable Palestinian state. ...

The Bill would encourage other countries to follow in our stead. It would encourage them to follow the other 138 countries that have recognised Palestine ... and it would also right some of the historic wrong that was done by Balfour 100 years ago.

col 1159 There is also a practical consideration. Recognition is fundamental to Palestine becoming a full UN member state, and as such it would then be allowed to raise its own funds through the IMF and the World Bank, rather than relying on international aid and tax pay-backs from the Israeli authorities, which are often withheld for no good reason. UN

membership needs Security Council backing of course, but let us imagine the effect that recognition of Palestine might have, particularly on America, our closest ally. ...

For years Jews around the world yearned for a state of their own, a place where they could feel safe and secure, and they got that self-determination through the state of Israel. That is not in question, but it is only fair, just and right that the same can happen now for the Palestinians. We do not have a place where we feel secure. We do not have a place of safety. We do not have our own state, and we should. ...

The Bill says that this Parliament believes in a Palestinian state, that we stand by the Palestinian people, that Britain respects its historic obligation to the region and that this Government will do everything they can to help safeguard both states—the state of Israel as well as the state of Palestine. ...

The debate stood adjourned (Standing Order No. 11(2)).

Ordered, That the debate be resumed on Friday 24 March.

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-17/debates/780A1439-3B1F-4A42-A308-E0A0D921BAF3/PalestineStatehood\(Recognition\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-17/debates/780A1439-3B1F-4A42-A308-E0A0D921BAF3/PalestineStatehood(Recognition)Bill)

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

West Bank: Palestinian Islamic Jihad

Nicola Richards (Conservative) [143915] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of reports the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group now controls large parts of the West Bank.

Nicola Richards (Conservative) [143917] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Palestinian Authority counterpart on the security situation in the West Bank following the strengthening of Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Reply from David Rutley: We continue to closely monitor the security situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The UK has proscribed Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) as a terrorist entity since March 2001. PIJ and other terrorist groups must cease all actions that are violent or provocative, or that put civilian lives at risk. 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 Minister for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, reinforced the UK's support for a two-state solution in his meetings with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, and with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh and Foreign Minister Riad Malki, during his visit to Israel and the OPTs on 10-13 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143915>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143917>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL6119] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the proposal to stop recognising the medical degrees granted by Palestinian universities.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has made no such representations to the Government of Israel on this issue specifically. The UK welcomes any effort to cooperate between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, including in the healthcare sector.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/hl6119>

Israel

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL6118] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding a new law allowing those (1) convicted of, or (2) charged with, acts of terrorism to be deprived of (a) citizenship, or (b) residency; and what was the outcome of any such discussions.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and incitement of violence. We have not raised this issue specifically with the Government of Israel, but we regularly make clear that we expect Israel to uphold its obligations as the occupying power under the Geneva convention, including not transferring the protected population from the occupied territory. The Israeli and Palestinian leaders need to work together to find a durable solution to the conflict that prevents terrorism, ends the cycle of violence and delivers a sustainable, and just peace based on a two-state solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/hl6118>

Israel: Palestinians

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL6129] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the statement by Israel's Minister of Finance, Mr Bezalel Smotrich, on 1 March, that the Palestinian village of Hawara "should be wiped out".

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As I set out in my tweet on 26 February, the scenes of abhorrent violence in Huwara were shocking. The UK also stresses the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. Rhetoric about "wiping out" places is harmful and irresponsible. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv has raised these comments with the Government of Israel at senior levels. We condemn Finance Minister Smotrich's incitement to violence. Such rhetoric serves no purpose other than to stoke tensions further.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/hl6129>

The tweet referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1629968228008034305>

Palestinians: Elections

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL6145] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority on calling an election at the earliest possible date and ensuring that any such election is free, fair and subject to international monitoring.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly remind the Palestinian leadership of the need for democratic renewal through free and fair national elections held across the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including East Jerusalem, as set out in the Oslo Accords. The Palestinian people should be allowed to enjoy their democratic rights. I reinforced this message during my visit to Israel and the OPTs on 10-13 January. The Foreign Secretary has also raised this with Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Malki in their phone call on 7 March.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-06/hl6145>

Department for Business and Trade

Updated: Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1142149/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-03-17.pdf

Updated: Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1142208/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-03-17.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>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50373/documents/3159>

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>

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

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

Second Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-17/debates/780A1439-3B1F-4A42-A308-E0A0D921BAF3/PalestineStatehood\(Recognition\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-17/debates/780A1439-3B1F-4A42-A308-E0A0D921BAF3/PalestineStatehood(Recognition)Bill)

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