



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Religion: Education

Catherine West (Labour) [174390] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help ensure that recruitment targets for religious education teachers are met.

Nick Gibb: As at the last school workforce census (November 2021, published in June 2022), the number of teachers remains high, with over 465,500 full time equivalent teachers working in state funded schools across the country.

In the 2020/21 academic year the Department exceeded the postgraduate initial teacher training target for religious education (RE). 129% of the target was achieved (660 new entrants recruited), whilst in the 2021/22 academic year performance against the target fell to 94% (442 new entrants recruited) and in 2022/23, 76% of the target was achieved (341 new trainees) in RE.

The Department is concentrating funding in attracting the best teachers where they are needed the most, through its teaching marketing campaign, support services for prospective trainees, and competitive starting salary.

To make it easier for people to become teachers, the Department has launched its new digital service, 'Apply for teacher training', enabling a more streamlined, user-friendly application route.

The Teaching marketing campaign provides inspiration and support to explore a career in teaching and directs people to the 'Get Into Teaching' service. Through a new website, prospective trainees can access support and advice through expert one to one Teacher Training Advisers, a contact centre and a national programme of events.

The Department has recently raised starting salaries outside London by 8.9% to £28,000 and remains committed to the Government's ambition of delivering £30,000 starting salaries to attract people to teaching.

The Department is delivering 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by the end of 2024, giving all teachers and headteachers access to world-class, evidence-based training and professional development at every stage of their career.

The Department's reforms are aimed at increasing teacher recruitment and at ensuring teachers across England stay and thrive in the profession in all subjects, including RE.

To support retention in the first few years of teaching, the Department has rolled out the Early Career Framework nationally, providing the foundations for a successful career in teaching. This is backed by over £130 million a year in funding. The Department has also launched a new and updated suite of National Professional Qualifications for teachers and headteachers at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high quality teaching practice to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

The Department has published a range of resources to help address staff workload and wellbeing. This includes the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which the Department is encouraging schools to sign up to as a shared commitment to promote staff wellbeing. The Department has also published the workload reduction toolkit, developed alongside headteachers to help reduce workload, and resources to support schools to implement effective flexible working practices.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-27/174390>

A summary of the school workforce census data referred to above can be read at

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

The National Professional Qualifications publications referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>

The charter referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1034032/DfE_Education_Workforce_Welbeing_Charter_Nov21.pdf

Downing Street

UK Prime Minister Chag Pesach Sameach to Jewish communities here in the UK and around the world celebrating Passover.

<https://twitter.com/10DowningStreet/status/1643626229747032064>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon Today marks the beginning of Passover, a joyful time of coming together with family to celebrate liberty and freedom. I would like to wish all those celebrating a peaceful and happy holiday. Chag Pesach Sameach!

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1643637663201652738>

FCDOGovUK Chag Sameach to all who celebrate #Passover

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1643660583504314377>

Scottish Government

First Minister's Pesach Message (video)

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1643652233597276160>

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House of Lords Written Answers

Vegetables: Imports

The Lord Bishop of St Albans [HL6871] To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage of (1) tomatoes, (2) peas, (3) onions, and (4) carrots, consumed in England that were imported; and for each of those types of produce, what were the countries of origin of those imports.

Lord Benyon: For the UK in 2021, imports accounted for 83% of domestic consumption of fresh tomatoes, 8% of peas, 43% of onions, and 6% of carrots. Figures for England are not available as statistics on overseas trade cover the UK as a whole.

For UK imports of tomatoes, the top three trading countries by volume were the Netherlands, Morocco, and Spain, out of 20 countries in total. For peas it was Guatemala, Peru and Kenya, out of 39 countries in total. For onions it was the Netherlands, Spain and Egypt out of 43 countries. For carrots Spain, the Netherlands, and Israel were the top three out of 28 countries in total.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-27/hl6871>

Israel: Diplomatic Service

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL6671] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the actions of British diplomats stationed in Jerusalem who participated in the Palestine Marathon on 10 March, started by a Fatah official who was under investigation by FIFA for glorifying terrorism; and whether they have assessed the conduct of those diplomats in respect of Articles 13–15 of the Diplomatic Service Code.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: British diplomats are respected around the world because of the high standards to which they hold themselves, of which the Diplomatic Service Code is a key part. Those who participated in the marathon did so privately but we do remind staff to be mindful of their responsibilities as diplomats. The UK's position in relation to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is long-standing: we wish to see a viable two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace, prosperity and security. The Foreign Secretary and I [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon] were pleased to welcome Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen on 21 March to sign the 2030 UK-Israel Roadmap, which outlines how the UK and Israel intend to work together to strengthen our partnership and to strengthen economic security for Palestinians.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-21/hl6671>

The Diplomatic Service Code, referred to above, can be read at

https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/03a_diplomatic.pdf

The Roadmap referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2030-roadmap-for-uk-israel-bilateral-relations/2030-roadmap-for-uk-israel-bilateral-relations>

Israel: Palestinians

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL6803] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made any representations to the government of Israel following the remarks on 19 March by the Finance Minister of Israel, Bezalel Smotrich, concerning Palestinian history and culture; and whether they have made any assessment of the potential impact resulting from the Minister's remarks on peace and stability in the region.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemned the Israeli Finance Minister's

comments calling for the Palestinian village of Huwara to be "wiped out" and his recent comments that deny the existence of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and their history and culture. Such rhetoric serves no purpose other than to stoke tensions further.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-23/hl6803>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Calls for de-escalation at Jerusalem's holy sites: Foreign Secretary statement

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said: The UK condemns the indiscriminate rocket attacks from southern Lebanon and Gaza and recognises Israel's right to self-defence. Now is the time for all parties across the region to de-escalate tensions.

At the convergence of Passover, Ramadan and Easter, the UK calls for all parties to respect the historic Status Quo arrangements at Jerusalem's holy sites and cease all provocative action.

The UK is a strong supporter of freedom of religion or belief and calls for places of worship to be respected. We value Jordan's important role as custodian of the holy sites in Jerusalem and condemns the Israeli police violence at the Al Aqsa Mosque. When Israeli security forces conduct operations, they must ensure they are proportionate and in accordance with international law. Israel and the Palestinian Authority must take steps to honour the commitments agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh and Aqaba.

Peace will only be sustainable if both Israelis and Palestinians recommit themselves to a negotiated settlement, leading to a two-state solution of a secure Israel side by side with a viable Palestinian State.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/calls-for-de-escalation-at-jerusalem-holy-sites-foreign-secretary-statement>

James Cleverly I spoke with Foreign Minister @elicoh1 this morning after the appalling attacks in Israel & the West Bank, which took the lives of two British-Israeli citizens and left other British nationals injured. @FCDOGovUK has offered support to all those affected. Anyone worried about friends or relatives in Israel should contact the @FCDOGovUK. The team is available 24/7.

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1644720463619260416>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon Shocked to awake to the disturbing scenes of Israeli Security forces' raid on the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem injuring many worshippers during Ramadan. Violence only fuels more violence. The sanctity & status of the Holy sites must be respected & protected.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1643500448270389249>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon As feared the violence and attacks spiral and spread – the indiscriminate firing of rockets on Israel from Gaza and air strikes in response escalates the situation and spreads fear amongst civilians - there must be de-escalation immediately.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1643507020073451522>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon I condemn yesterday's attacks in the West Bank, killing two British-Israeli nationals and injuring one other, and in Tel Aviv where an Italian national was killed and British nationals were injured. My thoughts and prayers are with all those impacted.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1644666008932696065>

Updated travel advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated travel advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Sarah Boyack (Labour) [S6M-08486] Hadeel Shop 20th Anniversary – That the Parliament celebrates the 20th anniversary of Hadeel, the Palestinian crafts, non-profit Fairtrade shop located in Edinburgh; understands that Hadeel Shop is run by the UK charity, Placrafts, with the aim is to provide a sustainable source of income and support for Palestinian craftspeople and artisans in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Galilee, Negev and Palestinian communities within Lebanon and Israel; acknowledges the difference Hadeel makes for the lives of Palestinian farmers, by importing olive oil, dates, condiments and olive oil products such as Nablus olive oil soap; considers the positive impact of the wider Fairtrade movement on more ethical consumption, and invites everyone to join the Hadeel team in its celebrations, by attending a fundraising concert by Ayman Jarjour, the celebrated Syrian guitarist, at St Andrew's and St George's West Church on 15 April or by visiting the shop on 22 April 2023.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-08486>

United Nations

Bureau Condemns Israel Forces' Intrusion, Violence against Palestinian Worshipers in Jerusalem's Holy Sites

... The Bureau of the United Nations General Assembly's Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People condemns the raid by Israeli Forces inside the Aqsa Mosque Compound/Al-Haram al-Sharif on 4 April, which resulted in hundreds of Palestinian worshippers beaten, injured and detained while also causing damage to the building of Al-Qibli mosque. This violence is particularly egregious during a time of heightened religious sensitivity with the observance of Ramadan, Passover and Easter. Israel's illegal policies and practices have continued to entrench its illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territory it has occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, with the Gaza Strip additionally severely isolated under a nearly 16-year blockade. Since the start of 2023, Israel has increased its military operations inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, resulting in the killing of at least 95 Palestinians, including 17 children. The Bureau calls for accountability for all of these violations.

The Bureau reiterates its calls for respect of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel must comply with its international legal obligations, including in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The Bureau also reiterates its calls for respect of the historical status quo of the Holy Sites, respect for the sanctity of all places of worship, and for a halt of provocations by Israeli forces and incitement by extremist Israeli settlers in and around them. Furthermore, the Bureau calls for respect the freedom of all worshippers to access the religious sites in accordance with established parameters.

Finally, the Bureau calls on leaders to exert influence and ensure de-escalation and calm during religious festivities. The Bureau believes that a just and lasting peace will only be achieved with the end of Israel's occupation, the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees and the achievement of the two-State solution according to international law and past agreements resulting in the independence

of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gapal1451.doc.htm>

Guterres calls for world 'united in peace' as Ramadan, Easter, Passover coincide

Secretary-General António Guterres issued his plea for peace ... during an interview with UN News's Arabic service ... "... Peace is the most precious thing that we can have in the world", Mr. Guterres said. "So, this is the moment to come together and for those that believe in God (in) different ways, with different expressions, to join their voices in a common prayer for peace."

The UN chief began his tradition of paying a solidarity visit during Ramadan, while he was High Commissioner for Refugees ... "The majority of the refugees were Muslim, and the majority of the communities hosting refugees with enormous generosity and solidarity, were Muslim" ... "When I became Secretary-General, I thought that this tradition should be maintained - now, not focused on refugee communities, but focused on the Muslim communities that are suffering" ...

Next week, to mark what is a special time on the spiritual calendar for the Abrahamic faiths - Islam, Christianity and Judaism - representatives from the world's major religions, as well as the non-religious, will gather ... at UN Headquarters in New York, to pray for peace. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/04/1135407>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel: UN expert condemns brutal attacks on Palestinians at Al-Aqsa Mosque

A UN expert ... condemned the violent incursions by Israeli forces into the Haram Al-Sharif compound and the attacks on Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque on Wednesday. "As Palestinian Muslims gathered for Ramadan prayers exercising their right to worship in Al-Aqsa Mosque, Israeli authorities used blatantly excessive and unjustified force against them," said Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Albanese said at least 31 Palestinians were reportedly injured inside and immediately outside the compound, while paramedics were allegedly prevented from providing medical treatment to the wounded. According to initial accounts, Israeli forces violently entered Al-Aqsa Mosque, used stun grenades and tear gas, fired sponge-tipped bullets, and indiscriminately beat Muslim worshippers – including elderly people and women – with batons and rifle butts. At least 450 Palestinian men were reportedly arrested, and some were kicked and slapped by escorting soldiers as they were led out of the Haram Al-Sharif compound in handcuffs.

The expert deplored the "reckless and unlawful" actions of Israeli forces, which reportedly allowed some 165 Jewish Israelis to enter the compound, in violation of the Status Quo Agreement, which Israel is bound to respect. "The well-known desire of Israeli settlers to either destroy the mosque or forcibly convert all or part of the compound into a synagogue, as happened to the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, is a source of deep anxiety among Palestinians," she said. ...

"Over the years, Israel has not ceased its violent attacks against Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque in violation of international law," the expert said, calling on the international community to step up efforts to hold the occupying power accountable for its unacceptable behaviour in the occupied territory before the situation spirals further out of control. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/04/israel-un-expert-condemns-brutal-attacks-palestinians-al-aqsa-mosque>

Human Rights Council Concludes Fifty-second Regular Session after Adopting 43 Resolutions

... In a resolution on the *Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice, the Council demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, end its occupation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem; also demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, and that it immediately cease the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. ...

In a resolution on Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan, the Council determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel that seek to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and have no legal effect; and called upon States Members of the United Nations not to recognize any of the above-mentioned legislative or administrative measures.

In a resolution on *Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination*, the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately end its occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to reverse and redress any impediments to the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Palestine.

In a resolution on *Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan*, the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to end without delay its occupation of the territories occupied since 1967, which may be contrary to international law, to reverse and redress the settlement policy in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, and to stop immediately the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing settlements, including in East Jerusalem. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/04/human-rights-council-concludes-fifty-second-regular-session-after-adopting-43>

Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/HRC/52/L.43)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/L.43>

Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (A/HRC/52/L.32)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/L.32>

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/HRC/52/L.42)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/L.42>

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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>

Memorials to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, complaining of non-compliance with the Standing Orders of both Houses of Parliament

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50678/documents/3268>

and

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50677/documents/3267>

and

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50676/documents/3266>

and

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50675/documents/3265>

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>

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

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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Consultations

** new or updated today

Prospective Scheme of Delegation for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

(closing date 15 May 2023)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-prospective-scheme-delegation-charity-commission-northern-ireland>

Review of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (closing date 18 June 2023)

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-review-race-relations-ni-order-1997>

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