



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance consultation: Government response

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance/outcome/domestic-abuse-act-2021-statutory-guidance-consultation-government-response-accessible>

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Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answers

The following four questions all received the same answer

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL6911] To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) area in square metres, and (2) proportion, of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole will be occupied by the intended UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, including (a) the entrance pavilion, (b) courtyard and ramp into the Learning Centre, (c) associated hard standing, (d) service access, (e) new access paths, (f) the parts of the mound not accessible to the public, and (g) areas to be enclosed to ensure the security of the Centre.

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL6912] To ask His Majesty's Government what is the size in square metres of (1) the current playground in Victoria Tower Gardens, (2) the intended new playground, (3) the intended new café, and (4) the part of the current playground to be occupied by UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre ticketing and associated works.

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL6913] To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) area in square metres, and (2) proportion of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole, will be

enclosed to guarantee security around the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in addition to the area occupied by the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre itself. **Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL6914] To ask His Majesty's Government what is the floor area in square metres of the proposed underground construction of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and what percentage of this underground area will be used for exhibitions and public space as part of the Learning Centre.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Extensive information about the design of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre was considered at the Planning Inquiry in October 2020 and remains publicly available on Westminster City Council's website. The additional detail requested is set out in the table below and to provide further assistance and to illustrate the answers I am placing the three source documents in the Library:

- *Gross Internal Area (GIA) & Building Area Breakdown Schedule* which shows the area in square metres of every internal space within the proposed Learning Centre, the Entrance Pavilion and the Café/Kiosk.
- *Park Area Diagram rev 2* which shows both the size of Victoria Tower Gardens and the area taken by the Holocaust Memorial above ground within the park.
- *Playground Area Adjustment* which shows the boundaries and areas of the current playground and proposed reconfigured playground. It also shows the area between the Spicer Memorial in its proposed new location and the Holocaust Memorial's entrance pavilion. This area would provide circulation space for all park users between the boundary of the reconfigured playground and the Memorial's Entrance Pavilion.

	Question	Answer	Source
1	The floor area in square metres of the proposed underground construction of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.	3258 m2 * (includes 373m2 of unusable spaces such as voids, risers and areas with limited headroom) * all areas are gross internal floor area (GIFA) i.e. excluding external walls.	GIA & Building Area Breakdown Schedule
2	Percentage of the underground area that will be used for exhibitions and public space as part of the Learning Centre.	52.85% Mezzanine Level Lobby (103m2) Learning Centre (349 m2) Basement Level Threshold (314m2) Learning Centre (956 m2) Total = 1722 m2	GIA and Building Area Breakdown Schedule
3	Area in square metres of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole, that will be enclosed to guarantee security around the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in addition to the area occupied by the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre itself.	Zero as an addition to the 1429 m2 occupied by the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2
4	Proportion of (3)	Zero	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2

	Question	Answer	Source
6	Size in sqm of the intended new playground	945 m2	Playground Area Adjustment
7	Size in sqm of the intended new café	15 m2 Café/Kiosk 38 m2 including generator and storage	GIA and Building Area Breakdown Schedule
8	Size in sqm of the part of the current playground to be occupied by UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre ticketing and associated works	23m2 Café/Kiosk generator and storage. Zero occupied by ticketing operations in the Entrance Pavilion. Footfall area 155 m2	GIA and Building Area Breakdown Schedule Playground Area Adjustment
9	Area in square metres of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole that will be occupied by the intended UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, including (a) the entrance pavilion, (b) courtyard and ramp into the Learning Centre, (c) associated hard standing, (d) service access, (e) new access paths, (f) the parts of the mound not accessible to the public, and (g) areas to be enclosed to ensure the security of the Centre.	1429 m2	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2
10	Proportion of (9)	7.58%	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6911>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6912>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6913>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6914>

Information about the planning inquiry referred to above can be read at

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/planning-building-and-environmental-regulations/find-or-comment-planning-application/holocaust-memorial-inquiry-information>

The three documents referred to above as being placed in the Library will be included in Political Affairs Digest when they become available.

United Nations

Saddened by Death of Benjamin B. Ferencz, Secretary-General Stresses Best Tribute for Nazi War Crimes Prosecutor Is Continuing to Ensure Victims' Voices are Heard

... I am saddened by the passing of Mr. Benjamin B. Ferencz.

After seeing the horrors of the Holocaust first hand as a soldier, and investigating and prosecuting Nazi war crimes at the Nuremberg trials as a young lawyer, Mr. Ferencz devoted most of his life to trying to make the world a better place. He was an early and passionate advocate for the establishment of an international criminal court which he described as "the missing link in the world legal order". Mr. Ferencz remained a stalwart defender of the International Criminal Court the rest of his life.

On behalf of the United Nations, I extend my deepest condolences to Mr. Benjamin Ferencz's family, and to all the people around the world whose lives were touched by a remarkable and compassionate champion for justice and human rights.

Our best tribute to Mr. Ferencz is to continue his essential work to promote accountability for atrocity crimes and ensure that the voices of victims are heard.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21758.doc.htm>

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Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

Palestinians: Foreign Relations

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL6951] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their state of relations with the Palestinian Authority following the recall of the Head of Mission of the Palestinian Authority to the UK in response to the 2030 roadmap for UK-Israel bilateral relations, signed on 21 March.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Palestinian Head of Mission Zomlot and I (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) met on 31 March to discuss this issue, and I reaffirmed the UK's long-standing commitment to a two-state solution based on 1967 lines. The UK is a friend of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian people. We support Palestinians in realising self-determination through an independent sovereign, and unified Palestinian state, in the West Bank and Gaza.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6951>

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>

al-Aqsa Mosque

Lord McInnes of Kilwinning (Conservative) [HL6866] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of (1) Israel, and (2) Jordan, regarding access to the Al-Aqsa mosque for Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank during Ramadan.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK recognises that Jerusalem's holy sites hold particular significance for all Christians, Jews and Muslims around the world. The UK is committed to working with all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the status quo to ensure the safety and the security of the Al Aqsa Mosque and all who worship there. I [Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon] emphasised the

UK's unwavering support for Jordanian custodianship of the holy sites in East Jerusalem during my visit to the Al Aqsa Mosque on 12 January. The Foreign Secretary and I reaffirmed this in our meetings with Jordanian Foreign Minister Safadi on 22 March. British Embassy Tel Aviv also raises the matter of permits for Palestinians regularly as we approach Ramadan and Easter.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-27/hl6866>

Israel: Palestinians

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL6950] To ask His Majesty's Government what response they have received from the government of Israel regarding the joint call that they and diplomatic representatives from 16 other countries made on the 13 March to reverse the eviction of six Palestinian families from Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, and the Old City of Jerusalem.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: No such response was received, and I [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon] have raised this matter with the Israeli ambassador separately. Demolitions and evictions from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, demolitions by an occupying power are contrary to international humanitarian law. Officials from our embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our apprehensions about demolitions with Israeli ministers and senior officials and we continue to support Palestinians through UK funding to legal aid programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Foreign Secretary has reinforced this message on 7 April when he called for de-escalation and made clear the need to avoid actions which escalate tensions and violence.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6950>

The joint statement referred to above can be read at

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

The Foreign Secretary's statement referred to above can be read at

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

Israel: Bedouin

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL6952] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the diplomatic visit on 30 January to the Palestinian community of Khan Al Ahmar regarding the threat of demolition facing that village, what was the outcome of their meeting in London with the Israeli Foreign Minister about the future of Khan Al Ahmar.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary and I (Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon) met Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in London on 21 March and emphasised the need to de-escalate the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories as we approach the convergence of several religious festivals. That included asking the Israeli Government to refrain from unilateral actions, such as demolitions, that make achieving this de-escalation more difficult. I know that the Prime Minister also echoed this message of de-escalation in his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 24 March. We oppose the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar, and we continue to urge Israel to cease evictions and demolitions of Palestinian property in Area C, which cause unnecessary suffering and in all, but the most exceptional circumstances are illegal under international law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-28/hl6952>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon Following the killing of Maia and Rina Dee on Friday, deeply saddened to hear the tragic news that their mother Leah Dee, has also died of her injuries following the attack on the family in the West Bank. Our thoughts & prayers are with Rabbi Dee & his family.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1645424172200280065>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel: UN experts urge international community to end forced displacement and annexation of occupied territory

... “The world's attention has been focused on Israel's recklessness in Al-Aqsa, rockets fired from Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, with deadly attacks against Israeli and international civilians making headlines. All the while, tenfold Palestinian deaths were not making similar headlines,” ...

“There has been an ongoing and unchecked tragedy: the forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes,” [the experts] said.

“Despite efforts of international organisations and activists, Palestinians under Israeli occupation continue to be forced out of their homes and dispossessed of their land and properties on the basis of discriminatory laws,” the experts said. They said these laws were designed to consolidate Jewish ownership in Jerusalem, irredeemably altering its demographic composition and status.

“Israel's transfer of its own population into the occupied territory confirms a deliberate intention to colonise the territory it occupies – a practice strictly prohibited by international humanitarian law,” they said, reiterating their [past statement](#). “It amounts to a *prima facie* war crime.”

An estimated 150 Palestinian families in the Old City of Jerusalem adjacent neighbourhoods such as Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah are at risk of forced eviction and displacement by Israeli authorities and settler organisations. Over the past decades, hundreds of Palestinian properties in occupied East Jerusalem have been taken over by settlers, in part due to a law that claims to allow the transfer of pre-1948 Jewish property to the ‘original Jewish owners’ or their ‘heirs’. ...

“This is lawfare in action. The law is discriminatory and acquisitive by design, and no such right to restitution exists for the over 1 million Palestinians and their descendants who were displaced and dispossessed from Jerusalem, Israel, and the rest of the West Bank and Gaza as of 1947 and in 1967. ...

“For the Palestinians, the enjoyment of human rights is a far-off hope as the suppression of these rights is part of the very architecture of the Israeli occupation,” they said. “The almost 56-year long occupation and the way it is allowed to conduct itself with general impunity and without consequences, makes a farce of international law and the credibility of the system mandated to enforce it. The occupation must end with all deliberate speed and until that day, Israel must comply fully with international humanitarian law and international human rights law obligations.”

The experts have repeatedly raised these issues with the Government of Israel without any response to date. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/04/israel-un-experts-urge-international-community-end-forced-displacement-and>

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Other Relevant Information

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Opens One Hundred and Ninth Session in Geneva

... Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and Representative of the Secretary-General ...said that this year marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was an opportunity to pause and reflect on how all could make the promises of the Universal Declaration and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination a reality for the millions of people who had been left behind on the human rights journey.

No country in the world was free from racial discrimination and racism, Ms. Al-Nashif said. In his [open letter on 3 March 2023](#), the High Commissioner for Human Rights called on each Government to take specific and urgent actions in this area ...

The Office of the High Commissioner had supported the launch of a Regional Network for development and anti-racism in the Middle East and North Africa region ...

States were called upon to take concrete steps to tackle persistent and emerging forms of racial discrimination, and to repair long-standing human rights violations, including those rooted in legacies of enslavement and colonialism. ...

The Office of the High Commissioner had convened regular virtual and in-person consultations to inform its work to advance the implementation of the [High Commissioner's Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality](#), launched in 2021. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/04/committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-opens-one-hundred-and-ninth-session-geneva>

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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>

Memorial to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50692/documents/3283>

Memorial 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/50675/documents/3265>

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/50697/documents/3284>

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>

Section 35 Order challenge

<https://www.gov.scot/news/section-35-order-challenge/>

Scottish Parliament written answer

Rona Mackay (SNP) [S6W-17198] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on what its response is to the UK Secretary of State for Scotland's use of section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 to prevent the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill from proceeding to Royal Assent, after it was passed by the Scottish Parliament.

Reply from Shirley-Anne Somerville: The Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill was passed by an overwhelming majority of the Scottish Parliament, with support from members of all parties. The use of section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 to stop the legislation proceeding to Royal Assent is an unprecedented challenge to the Scottish Parliament's ability to legislate on clearly devolved matters.

The Order was made without any specific prior engagement or notification by the Secretary of State during the Bill process. It was made without any specific request for amendments to the Bill from any UK Minister. Since the Order was laid, and despite requests, the Secretary of State and the UK Government have refused to provide any further clarification or engagement with the Scottish Government or Scottish Parliament. We have offered to discuss specific changes to the Bill with

the Secretary of State, but given that this offer has not been taken up, it is impossible to know what changes would satisfy the reasons the UK Government has given, particularly as he has highlighted that the existence of two different schemes within the UK is in itself problematic.

To uphold the democratic decision of the Parliament, and ensure proper protection of devolution, Scottish Ministers will now lodge a petition for judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision. The Scottish Government does not consider the reasons set out by him provide sufficient justification for his decision to make an order under section 35 of the Scotland Act. The Scottish Government also believes that the UK Government has not used the power in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Devolved Governments (agreed in 1999 and updated in 2013), or as envisaged when the Scotland Act was passed.

While the Scotland Act conferred the power in Section 35 on the Secretary of State, its use is unprecedented, so it is important to have clarity on the interpretation and scope of the power, and its impact on devolution. Those matters and the use of the power on this occasion should be legally tested in the courts.

The deadline for lodging a petition necessitates doing so during recess but I will make a statement to Parliament after the Easter recess, subject to agreement of the parliamentary bureau.

As is usual in these circumstances, the Scottish Government will not be able to comment on live legal proceedings.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-17198>

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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>

**** Supporting earlier resolution of private family law arrangements** (closing date 15 June 2023)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/private-family-law-consultation/>

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