



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following five questions all received the same answer

Schools: Admissions

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [179841] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to ban school admissions policies that require women to dress modestly.

Faith Schools: Admissions

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [179842] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the national secular society report entitled how state school admissions policies enable coercive control in religious communities, published in February 2023, whether she has made an assessment of the implications for her policies of that report's findings on admissions requirements for state-funded faith schools.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [179843] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impact of faith schools setting admissions criteria relating to families' private lives on those families.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [179844] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance her Department issues to faith schools on the implications of the UK's human rights obligations under international law for their admissions policies.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [179845] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing admissions exemptions that allow faith schools to select pupils based on the religious beliefs and practices of parents.

Nick Gibb: Like all other mainstream state funded schools, schools designated with a religious character, commonly known as faith schools, must admit all children who apply, without reference to faith, where there are places available. Where they are oversubscribed, they may give priority for places to applicants on the basis of faith. No parent is required to provide information on their membership or practice of the faith when applying to a faith school, although they may not then be eligible for priority under any faith oversubscription criteria.

The Department does not intend to remove faith schools' ability to set faith-based oversubscription criteria. Faith-based oversubscription criteria provide a means to support parents to have their children educated in line with their religious and

philosophical beliefs, where they wish to do so.

The admission authority of a faith school is responsible for setting their admission arrangements and deciding whether or not to use faith-based oversubscription criteria.

The Department issues the statutory School Admissions Code which applies to all mainstream state funded schools, including faith schools, and places requirements on admission authorities about their arrangements and what they may ask from parents as part of the admissions process. The Code also signposts other relevant laws which admission authorities must comply with, including the Human Rights Act 1998.

In constructing any faith oversubscription criteria, a faith school's admission authority must have regard to any guidance from the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination, to the extent that the guidance complies with the Code. They must also consult with the religious body when deciding how membership or practice of the faith is to be demonstrated. Ultimately, the admission authority must ensure its arrangements comply with the Code and other relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Anyone who is concerned that a school's admission arrangements are unfair or unlawful is encouraged to refer an objection to the independent Schools Adjudicator, whose decision is binding and enforceable. The Government does not routinely make an assessment of the impact of individual faith schools' admissions criteria. All legislation, including admissions law, must be compatible with equalities and human rights law.

The Department has no current plans to introduce more specific requirements for faith school admissions beyond those already set out in law. The Department routinely considers reports and guidance from stakeholders and other bodies, such as the report issued by the National Secular Society. All such information helps to inform future policy development.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/179841>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/179842>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/179843>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/179844>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/179845>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/nss-report-how-state-school-admissions-policies-enable-coercive-control-in-religious-communities.pdf>

The School Admissions Code, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001050/School_admissions_code_2021.pdf

The following two questions both received the same answer

Relationships and Sex Education

Julian Knight (Independent) [179942] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to issue new Relationships, Sex, Health and Education statutory guidance.

Relationships and Sex Education

Wendy Morton (Conservative) [180155] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to launch a consultation on statutory guidance, external speakers and resources in relationships, health and sex education classes.

Nick Gibb: On 8 March, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that the Department had brought forward the review of the relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance. The review will cover the full scope of the statutory guidance, including the use of external speakers and resources, and will involve working closely with stakeholders and experts to draw on the best available evidence.

On 31 March, the Department announced further details of the review, including the plan to set up an independent panel of experts to advise on what can be done to ensure that what is taught is appropriate by, for example, introducing age restrictions. Further details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-of-relationships-sex-and-health-education-to-protect-children-to-conclude-by-end-of-year>

The Department will undertake a public consultation on the amended guidance in the autumn.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/179942>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/180155>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-08/debates/A182F3E8-6CA8-4FBC-B10E-8045D9374E73/Engagements#contribution-621502A9-ADDB-4B38-A5C9-60DCBB841FF6>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Hate Crime

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench): To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the incidence of each of the five monitored strands of hate crime in respect of the sex of the (1) victims, and (2) perpetrators; and why annual hate crime data are not routinely disaggregated by sex when published.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, police-recorded hate crime data, published annually on GOV.UK by independent Home Office statisticians, are not routinely disaggregated by sex of victim or perpetrator. On 1 April, police forces started to identify and record any crimes of violence against the person, as well as sexual offences, that are deemed to be motivated by hostility towards the victim's sex.

Baroness Gohir: ... Will historical data be made available on the government website? Looking at the last 10 years of hate crime data, it has increased every single year. Between 2021 and 2022, it increased by 26%. What action are the Government taking to reduce hate crimes for all groups affected?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: On the noble Baroness's latter point, she is right: in the year ending March 2022, there was a 26% increase compared to the previous year. Although the latest data does indicate that increase, the most recent Crime Survey for England and Wales figures, which were published in 2020, indicate a downward trend in overall hate crime incidents over the past decade. It is felt that the biggest driver for the increase in police-reported crime is likely to be general improvements in the recording of the crime. The police are also better at identifying whether a crime is a hate crime, along with increased victim willingness to come forward. As regards the publication of the data that we are collecting as of 1 April, I cannot say for sure yet. It is for 2023/24. It is voluntary at the moment, but it will be part of the annual data requirement. The Home Office statisticians will make an independent judgment as to whether it is fit for publication or not.

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Labour): My Lords, hate crimes have developed incrementally.

First, they were targeted at racially motivated offences, before broadening into the five strands to which the noble Baroness's Question alludes. So this should remind us that their current state is a snapshot in time. We must always review these things to extend further protections where they are necessary; that is how we got to where we presently are. So surely the routine disaggregation of annual data by sex would enable us to review whether there is a necessity of extended protections offered by hate crime laws to women and girls, in a way that is better informed than it apparently is at present?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Lord raises a good point. Of course, the Law Commission did look into this—a subject to which I am sure I will return. But the recording for hate crimes in terms of the sex of the perpetrator is actually very complex. The Ministry of Justice holds court criminal data; the sex of perpetrators is published for all crimes prosecuted that are specified in legislation, including hate crime offences such as racially and religiously aggravated assault, as the noble Lord has suggested. But where a sentence uplift is used because there is evidence of a hate element in the offence, it will be recorded under the offence legislation, not the uplift. Therefore, the sex of the perpetrator, while published, is not always linked to hate crime. Consequently, the data is not a complete representation of all hate crime and will not provide an accurate picture of the sex of the perpetrators.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, would the Minister agree that the whole point of collecting statistics on so-called hate crime is to use them to determine remedial action? But we already know the causes and the action required. So-called hate crime is unacceptable behaviour, not only against the five listed strands, but also against the very tall, the very short, the thin, the fat, people with red hair—anyone seen to be different from a questionable norm. We do not need statistics to lay down norms of acceptable behaviour in schools, the police and wider society.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I entirely agree with the points that the noble Lord has made. ...

Lord Hannan of Kingsclere (Conservative): My Lords, the hate crimes legislation seems to me to violate one of the general principles of common law, in that it defines crime subjectively: it defines crime as anything perceived to be a crime by the victim or by anyone else. Does my noble friend the Minister believe that the increase in reporting correlates exactly with an increase in actual crime? If it does, then what evidence is there that this legislation has been of value in combating discrimination and prejudice?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My noble friend asks an interesting question. I referred earlier to the Law Commission, which we asked to undertake a wide-ranging review into hate crime legislation. On the specific question, the Law Commission found that adding sex and gender to hate crime legislation could have made it more difficult to prosecute the most serious crimes that harm women and girls, including rape and domestic abuse. It would also treat sex unequally to other characteristics in scope of relevant hate crime laws, such as race or religion. So, while I cannot necessarily specifically answer my noble friend's point, I would say that it is an incredibly complex area that needs very careful thought.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, the Question from the noble Baroness, Lady Gohir, asked why hate crime statistics are not disaggregated by sex. But the question could equally be asked about why the data is not disaggregated by the age of the victim and the perpetrator. I well remember, when I sat on the pre-legislative scrutiny committee for the Domestic Abuse Bill, we had a lot of lobbying about violent acts against older people by younger people. Does the Minister agree that reporting the interaction of these characteristics, both sex and age, would allow resources to be better allocated for the victims and to prevent these types of crimes?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Again, the noble Lord raises an interesting point. He will be aware that age is not one of the five protected characteristics ...

Lord Dobbs (Conservative): My Lords, Saturday was the occasion of Stephen Lawrence

Day. I pay tribute to the noble Baroness, Lady Lawrence, who is in her place, for all the dedicated work she has done to build on the memory of her son. What a pity that it should have coincided with the outbursts of Diane Abbott, which left me cold in our modern world. We have hate legislation. Does my noble friend really think that that legislation is effective? Is it really reducing the amount of hate in society, or is it encouraging us to concentrate on the wicked things that are going on rather than allowing us the opportunity to celebrate and build on all the many good things that are going on in terms of race relations in this country, of which the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation is one?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I associate myself with my noble friend's remarks about the noble Baroness, Lady Lawrence, and the work she has done in that area. As regards whether hate crime legislation increases, improves or takes away from the current situation, there are plenty of reasons why hate is present in society—you can start with Twitter and move on. I am not sure that the legislation makes an enormous difference to that, but it is something that will remain front and centre of public debate for many years.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-04-24/debates/FEF07A65-5306-45CE-8AF6-2069CC2C3B65/HateCrime>

The hate crime data referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>

The Crime Survey for England and Wales figures referred to above can be read at

<https://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/en/SurveyResults.html>

The Law Commission review referred to above can be read at

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2021/12/Hate-crime-report-accessible.pdf>

Diane Abbott's letter to the Observer referred to above can be read (second down) at

<https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/commentisfree/2023/apr/23/success-for-women-not-same-as-for-men-letters>

Home Office

Government response to recommendation 8 of the Law Commission's review of hate crime legislation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/law-commission-review-of-hate-crime-legislation/government-response-to-recommendation-8-of-the-law-commissions-review-of-hate-crime-legislation-accessible>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [180520] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 167057, on International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, for what reason his Department has not to date discussed the potential creation of an international fund for

Israeli and Palestinian peace with other countries besides the United States.

David Rutley: The funds in question were established by the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, passed by the US Congress.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/180520>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-16/167057>

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [180521] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 167053, on International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, when he expects his Department to make a decision on UK collaboration in the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

David Rutley: We stand ready to collaborate and coordinate further with the US Government on the Middle East partnership for Peace Act, including regarding the fund's advisory board, as additional plans and priorities become available. Any decisions will be made once we have a fuller understanding of those plans and priorities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/180521>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-16/167053>

Al-Aqsa Mosque

Chris Grayling (Conservative) [180456] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on the violence at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in April 2023.

David Rutley: The Foreign Secretary has spoken to the Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen on 8 April following the terrorist attacks in the Jordan Valley and Tel Aviv, and we discussed the wider security situation. 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. While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage Israel to deploy these in a way which minimises tension and use of appropriate force. When there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we advocate for swift, transparent investigations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-14/180456>

West Bank: Evictions

Darren Jones (Labour) [181045] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help support Palestinians affected by the evictions from Masafer Yatta.

David Rutley: The UK opposes these evictions. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians 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. The Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, reiterated this position to Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in January, at which time he also visited a UK-donor funded school in Masafer Yatta. Lord Ahmad has also raised the issue of demolitions with Israeli Ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, in subsequent meetings. The UK continues to provide financial and political support for communities like those in Masafer Yatta through its

contributions to the West Bank Political Consortium and staff at the British Consulate General in Jerusalem make regular working-level visits to Masafer Yatta, most recently on 16 April.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-17/181045>

House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories

[The FCDO Ministerial Statement made in the House of Commons](#) on 20 April was read in the Lords.

col 1044 **Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour):** My Lords, I join the Government in condemning the appalling and cowardly murder of Lucy, Maia and Rina Dee, and send our deepest condolences to Rabbi Leo Dee and the rest of the family.

This year has been one of the deadliest for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: 98 Palestinians, including at least 17 children, have been killed by Israeli forces, and 17 Israelis have been killed so far in 2023. Each life lost is a tragedy, and every Palestinian and Israeli deserves a just solution to the conflict. As Andrew Mitchell said in the debate on the Statement: “When the House speaks with one voice, particularly in its condemnation of human rights abuses, we have an impact, and our voices are heard”.—[[Official Report, Commons, 20/4/23; col. 394.](#)]

We must therefore be united in strongly opposing all actions that make a two-state solution harder to achieve, including rocket attacks, the expansion of illegal settlements, settler violence and evictions and demolitions, and condemn all acts of terrorism.

Last month, the *2030 Roadmap for UK-Israel Bilateral Relations* was signed, and Andrew Mitchell assured the other place that it did not indicate any change in the UK’s long-established position on a two-state solution. Can the Minister therefore explain why there was no mention of this objective in the road map?

Andrew Mitchell also referred to the meetings between the Israelis and Palestinians in Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh to discuss ways to de-escalate the rising tensions. What are the Government doing with our international partners to support that process, and what is the Government’s assessment of both Israeli and Palestinian commitments made in those meetings being met?

Earlier today it was reported that a Jordanian MP has been arrested following allegations of attempts to smuggle weapons into Israel. Given concerns that the violence could spread, can the Minister tell us whether we are working with Jordan on de-escalation and engaging on this issue?

Andrew Mitchell said: “The UK’s position on settlements is absolutely clear: settlements are illegal”.

Earlier this month, UN special rapporteurs called on the international community to raise this issue. Have the Government taken any specific steps on this call?

The Minister stated in the other place that “the UK is clear that the demolition of Palestinian homes and forced evictions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and call into question Israel’s commitment to a viable two-state solution”.

col 1045 He also said that the UK Government “are also focused on preventing demolitions from happening in the first place ... through our legal aid programme”.

Can the noble Lord tell us what resources have been devoted to this programme and what assessment has been made of the success rate in challenging demolitions within the Israeli legal system?

The damage that Israeli restrictions on movement, access and trade inflict on the living standards of ordinary Palestinians, especially in Gaza, is huge. Can the noble Lord tell us what progress has been made on the UK’s call for access into and out of Gaza, in accordance with international humanitarian law, for humanitarian actors, reconstruction

materials and those, including Palestinians, travelling for medical purposes? What support are we giving to UN agencies and key partners on the ground in this regard?

In conclusion, Andrew Mitchell stated that

“the UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when the Government believe this will best serve the objective of peace”.—[[Official Report, Commons, 20/4/23; cols. 471-72.](#)]

Can the noble Lord specify the conditions the Government believe need to be met for this to happen?

Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat): ... I share in the condolences expressed by the noble Lord, Lord Collins, to the family—I know that the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, personally provided solace to them—and, in the wider context, to the families of the 17 Israelis killed so far in 2023 and the 17 Palestinian children among the 98 Palestinians. The murders of civilians are especially egregious and must be condemned. The responsibility of those in control is to reduce tension, and this is of course made harder when an Israeli family is devastated by loss, but also when the occupying power, Israel, does not even allow the registration of a Palestinian killed, as we read today. We join in the commemorations of the 75th anniversary of statehood of our ally and friend Israel, but recognise that this is one of the bloodiest years in many, far outstripping the violence last year.

It is therefore regrettable that this year looks less and less like a year of opportunity for peacemaking but rather, one of increased violence ... Israel is suffering from terrorism outwith and within its borders, but it is moving to wider breaches of international law with impunity; and moves to put those in the new Government of Israel—the most extreme members of the most right-wing Government in its 75 years—in civilian control of military administration of the illegally occupied territories is, in effect, a proposal for annexation. There is a combination of continuing lack of robust security and control within the Palestinian Authority, but also an Israeli Government facing unprecedented opposition at home.

col 1046 Of course, for peace there needs to be talk ... However, for a significant breakthrough, who would talk? It is correct that Israeli Governments are faced with groups who deny the very existence of the state, but now others face Israeli Ministers who deny the very existence of the Palestinian people. US Israeli groups are refusing to meet Prime Minister Netanyahu because of concerns about the consequences of what he described to CBS’s “Face the Nation” yesterday as legislation to “make corrections in our judicial system”.

If we all believe in the rule of law ... then the burden is placed on an occupying power as a sovereign entity. However, the only reference to the illegal occupation in the road map referred to is one line in the security section of the introduction: “We will cooperate in improving Palestinian livelihoods and Palestinian economic development”.

This suggests to any reader that we consider Palestine to be a federal province rather than an occupied territory. However, regardless of the view on that, we have actively and deliberately cut economic development support to Palestine, inhibiting the development of livelihoods, which acts against avowed UK policy. As I have raised previously, why has UK support for Palestine, which was £102 million in 2020, been reduced to £6 million in 2023-24? Department for Business and Trade funding for economic development in the area, which was stressed specifically in the road map Statement, has been cut from £25 million to zero. ...

Finally, I welcome chapter 12 of the road map, on gender, but why is it silent on other areas of tolerance? Avi Maoz was a deputy Minister under Netanyahu—a religious nationalist, anti-Arab and anti-LGBTQ coalition partner representative. Mr Maoz has described LGBT people as a threat to the family and said that he wanted to cancel gay pride parades. He has also said that a woman’s greatest’s contribution is in marriage and raising a family. ...

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): My Lords, first, I thank the noble Lords from the two Front

Benches for their support for the Government's Statement and add our unequivocal condemnation of acts of terrorism which, tragically, saw yet another family, that of Rabbi Dee, ripped apart, with the incredible loss that he and the Dee family have suffered, with the loss of both his wife and two beautiful daughters. I know I speak for the whole House in once again reiterating both our collective sense of abhorrence of the act of terror that took their lives and our strong sense of solidarity and support at this very trying time.

col 1047 That said, there has been the generosity and strength of spirit shown by Rabbi Dee himself through his engagement. Noble Lords will have read the letter that my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary sent to Rabbi Dee. I had the opportunity to visit Lucy Dee's family and meet her parents, sisters and brother at their home and join the shiva. I can share with noble Lords the incredible sense of tolerance and recognition. There was no hate being directed to those who had carried out these abhorrent acts. There was, yes, a call for justice, but, equally, a recognition of our common humanity. There could not be no better example of that than in the donation we saw of Lucy Dee's organs, one of which went to a Palestinian Arab. ...

I assure both noble Lords that we remain absolutely committed to a two-state solution, where we see not just the independence of both states. In the world in which we stand, ultimately there will be an interdependence between a future Palestinian state and the State of Israel.

Israel has, of course, an absolute right to protect its citizens. That is why, when the events unfolded at the Al-Aqsa mosque, we were among the first directly to raise the reaction that we saw across the Arab and Islamic world. I engaged quite directly with the Israeli authorities, as I did with the Palestinian authorities and other key neighbours. We immediately needed a de-escalation. Of course, we saw further attacks, with the missiles that were launched into Israel from both Lebanon and Gaza, but, thankfully ... we saw a de-escalation ...

There were a couple of points about the road map ... This in no way undermines or changes the position of the United Kingdom Government on the two-state solution. Equally, however, it is important that we recognise Israel as a partner and move forward on a bilateral basis to strengthen our relationship. ... the issue of security is paramount, but the welfare of Palestinians in the OPTs is also important. ...

col 1048 We regard the settlements as illegal and against progress on the two-state solution. Many within Israel have also challenged the current Government in the calls they have made on certain of the outposts. On the converse, I would say, as I saw myself through my visit to Israel when the new Government came in, Israel is a robust democracy where the independence of the judiciary is respected. ...

... last year, we again supported the UN on the ground, including UNRWA. When I went to Hebron recently, I also visited an UNRWA school. It is important that other countries in the region also support the livelihood and education of Palestinian children. ...

col 1049 The security and stability of Israel are important, as is the welfare and progress of every Palestinian. There is loss of life—we see the Dee family and what has been suffered. ... Whether it is the toll of the tragic and abhorrent deaths through terrorism of Lucy Dee, Maia and Rina, or the death of 15 year-old Muhammad Nidal, these are all individuals, yes, but they are all families, and the impact is being felt by everyone across both Israel and the OPTs. ...

Lord Pickles (Conservative): ... The Palestinian Authority has a “pay for slay” system, where money is handed over by way of a pension or stipend to Palestinians who murder Israeli citizens, particularly Jews. When we were in the EU, the EU administered the prisoners scheme and held a list; we did not have direct access. Now, we administer that scheme ourselves. Will the Minister make it clear to the Palestinian Authority that British

taxpayers' money will not be paid out for the murderer of a mother and two girls on a visit to the seaside? Will he tell the authority about the requests made at Sharm el-Sheikh and, in particular, at Aqaba? Will he tell the authority that it has lost control of Jenin and Nablus and needs to re-establish itself because a consequence of its absence there is that armed gangs are murdering Palestinians within its area?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... I assure him that we have stressed to both the Palestinians and the Israelis—I did so directly to the Palestinians—the importance of ensuring that the security co-operation that has existed and continued between both sides, notwithstanding the challenges that have been faced on the ground, is restored at the earliest opportunity.

I further assure my noble friend that no UK aid—this has been looked at over a period of time—is used for payments to Palestinian prisoners, their families or the so-called martyrs fund. However, we stand by the importance of supporting essential needs in the West Bank and Gaza, which I am sure my noble friend recognises. Equally, we stress and ensure that checks and balances and mitigations are put in place to ensure that such support and funding reaches the most vulnerable. ...

col 1050 **Baroness Blackstone (Labour):** ... can the Minister tell the House precisely what steps the Government are taking to work with the international community to prevent yet more Israeli illegal settlements in the West Bank? ... For how much longer are the Israeli Government going to get away with ignoring their obligations under international law with impunity with respect to illegal settlements?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... to be absolutely clear, we regard the settlements as illegal under international law. They call into question the progress on and commitment to a two-state solution. We have urged Israel to halt its settlement expansion, which threatens the physical viability of a Palestinian state ...

On demolitions, as I have already said, some of the strongest statements that we can make are through direct visits. We are committed to working with all parties in respect of these demolitions and evictions of Palestinian property; most notably, at the moment, a demolitions order remains over the Palestinian town of Masafer Yatta. ...

col 1051 **Lord Bellingham (Conservative):** ... Does the Minister agree that the appalling rhetoric from Iran that the state of Israel has no right to exist was quite shocking and deeply unhelpful? What representations will we make to the state of Iran and to the UN on this matter?

... the 2030 road map stated very clearly that we were going to do all that we possibly could to boost trade between the UK and Israel ... I think that the House accepts and understands that there will be a reduction in ODA going into those poorer parts of the Palestinian territories, but are we serious about boosting support for small businesses and enterprise in those Palestinian areas to relieve poverty? ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... it is my firm belief that, ultimately, economic empowerment and education provide real opportunities to progress ... That is why it is important that while we stand very strongly in our position, we also seek to strengthen our negotiations and relationship with Israel.

... this in no way negates our previous position on the OPTs. ...

Regarding recognition, it appals me when such statements are made by certain individuals in a given Government. We cannot support statements which do not recognise the existence of a particular community or people, and the same applies to Iran. It still shocks me to this day. Israel has been in existence for many decades. It is a reality on the map. You may not like it, but it is a reality, and those who do not like it need to live with it and recognise that Israel plays a very important role in the world. ...

col 1052 **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, I join with others

in expressing condolences and in the condemnation of violence, however caused and by whom. However, my attention has been drawn to the concluding sentence of the section of the Statement on the mounting death toll, which says: “We say to the Israeli Government that although Israel has a legitimate right to defend its citizens from attack, the Israeli security forces must live up to their obligations under international humanitarian law.”

A little later, in relation to the al-Aqsa raid and the status quo, it states: “The raid by Israeli police on Al-Aqsa mosque during Ramadan and on the first day of Passover was one such incident. When Israeli security forces conduct operations, they must ensure that they are proportionate and in accordance with international law.”

International law is mentioned twice. I am aware of the full explanation which the Minister gave of the Government’s policy, but given that international law is referred to twice, it is surprising that the breach of international law which is constituted by the illegal settlements was not referred to at all. Nor was there any reference to settler violence ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I fully recognise that the situation and the violence that occurred at the al-Aqsa mosque during Ramadan and Israel’s response was called out quite directly by the UK Government. ...

On settler violence, by definition, any violence should be condemned, and we totally condemn settler violence ...

Lord Polak (Conservative): ... I was in Israel for Passover with my family. The attack was horrific. In fact, the other attack—the ramming—happened outside our hotel on the Friday night, when sadly an Italian lawyer passed away from being hit by the car. It was actually frightening. I was with my grandkids; it was all a bit too close.

If I may say, the initial response from the FCDO was, frankly, weak and embarrassing. That first statement over the weekend after the horrific killing of Lucy and her two daughters was embarrassing. But I pay tribute to the Prime Minister, who after his weekend break came out with a very strong statement about terror, followed by the Foreign Secretary’s letter. ...

col 1053 Tonight is Yom HaZikaron; in the Israeli calendar, it is the night where the whole of Israel will stop to remember the soldiers who have given their lives for the state. That carries on until tomorrow evening, which becomes Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel’s Independence Day—75 years, as has been mentioned.

It is all the more concerning to me that, just before coming into the Chamber this evening, there was another car ramming in Jerusalem. People’s lives are being devastated.

So, I have two questions for my noble friend. The first is picking up the point of the noble Lord, Lord Purvis. He talked about LGBT rights. I ask my noble friend: where else in the Middle East, including in the Palestinian Authority in Gaza, does the LGBT community have rights comparable with what it has in Israel? Is there anywhere else in that area that has the rights that the LGBT community has?

Secondly, it has been a couple of weeks since the Prime Minister met with the Prime Minister of Israel. I would be grateful if he could give us a little bit of understanding of that meeting.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... I think my noble friend has already both asked and answered his first question. I think that is a reflection of the vibrant democracy which I alluded to in the state of Israel. Notwithstanding the different and quite passionate discourses that take place in Israel, there are different communities, including the LGBT community. There is a flourishing Israeli-Arab community as well. I think these are realities on the ground which we all very much recognise.

col 1054 In terms of the discussions in the visit that took place by Prime Minister Netanyahu, it was also building upon the importance of the road map which was signed between Foreign Minister Cohen and Foreign Secretary Cleverly, to see how we could progress that in terms of practical delivery. I am sure that my noble friend recognises, as does the whole House, that my right honourable friend the Prime Minister also used that as an opportunity to stress the importance of the two-

state solution, and also the importance of the United Kingdom as a constructive partner to both Israel and the Palestinians.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-04-24/debates/6EF47DD5-C372-4269-AA95-26CF2B91B94B/IsraelAndOccupiedPalestinianTerritories>

The 2030 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>

With the exception of the first quote, which is referenced in the text, Andrew Mitchell's comments, referred to above, were made during the 20 April debate on "Human Rights Protections: Palestinians", and can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-04-20/debates/FA8242F1-F6CB-4E0E-AC9F-A9F05F8C5E3E/HumanRightsProtectionsPalestinians>

The report referred to above by Lord Purvis of Tweed can be read at

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-65347218>

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

<https://twitter.com/odedrevivi/status/1646728913895211011/photo/1>

The Prime Minister's statement referred to above has been reported at (amongst others)

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/11/thousands-gather-for-west-bank-funeral-of-british-israeli-shooting-victim>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UK and international partners announce new sanctions on Iranian regime

The UK, US and EU are today announcing further sanctions on Iranian regime officials responsible for human rights violations, including from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The UK has [designated more than 70 Iranian officials and entities](#) for human rights violations since October 2022, with the total number of Iran-related designations amounting to more than 300. The list includes the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety, the Iranian Prosecutor General and the Morality Police. ...

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said: The Iranian regime are responsible for the brutal repression of the Iranian people and for exporting bloodshed around the world. That's why we have more than 300 sanctions in place on Iran, including on the IRGC in its entirety.

The UK and our international partners are again making clear today that we will not overlook the regime's brutal oppression. We will continue to take a range of action to hold the regime to account for its actions. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-international-partners-announce-new-sanctions-on-iranian-regime>

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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/50805/documents/3334>

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>

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