



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Northern Ireland Executive, Department of Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE): Information for Parents

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Department%20of%20Education%20-%20Information%20for%20parents%20-%20RSE.pdf>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Technical guidance for schools updated

... Schools have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against, harass or victimise pupils in relation to the characteristics protected by the Act, which include disability, race and sex.

The technical guidance outlines the obligations the Equality Act places upon schools regarding pupils with protected characteristics and the provision of their education. It helps school leaders to understand and comply with the Act and suggests steps schools can take to ensure they are meeting their obligations. Examples from across the protected characteristics are provided, in areas such as admissions, exclusions and access to facilities and services.

The guidance has been reviewed to ensure its references to the protected characteristics of sex and gender reassignment reflect developments in this complex area of policy and law, which continues to evolve.

The Department for Education will be issuing separate guidance for schools in England on supporting transgender students and they are expected to consult on this in due course. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/technical-guidance-schools-updated>

Updated Technical Guidance for Schools in England

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/technical_guidance_for_schools_england_updated_september_2023_0.docx

Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Palestinians

Tahir Ali (Labour) [199475] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen efforts towards a lasting and two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine; and if he will make it his policy to formally recognise the state of Palestine.

David Rutley: The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution, resulting in a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. The Foreign Secretary met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories this week. He discussed our strong bilateral relationship and the vital importance of de-escalating the rising tension in the West Bank. The Foreign Secretary also reiterated the UK's commitment to a two-state solution. The government will recognise Palestinian statehood at a time that best serves the interests of peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-09-13/199475>

House of Lords Written Answer

Israel: Palestinians

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL9999] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel in relation to the use of force in the death of Mr Ameer al-Jaghoub on 21 August.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our sympathies are with Ameer al-Jaghoub and his family. While we have not discussed this specific incident with the Israeli Government, the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank and Gaza is too high. In our dialogue with the Israeli authorities, whilst we have recognised their legitimate need to deploy security measures to address violence, we remind them that such deployments are done to minimise tension and use appropriate force. When there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations. Israel must abide by its obligations under international law, and we have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. As the occupying power, we urge Israel to fulfil its responsibilities, including ensuring the protection of the civilian population. I, (Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon), made this clear most recently in a meeting with the Israeli chargé d'affaires on July 4.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-09-07/hl9999>

Israel on the cusp of historic peace with Saudi Arabia, Netanyahu announces at UN

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Friday that Israel is at the cusp of a “dramatic breakthrough”: a historic peace deal between his country and Saudi Arabia.

“Such a peace will go a long way in ending Arab-Israeli conflict and will encourage other Arab States to normalize their relations with Israel,” he said, adding that it will also enhance prospects of peace with the Palestinians.

The agreement, he emphasized will “encourage a broader reconciliation between Judaism and Islam, between Jerusalem and Mecca, between the descendants of Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael.” ...

However, there is a caveat: Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas “must stop spreading the horrible anti-Semitic conspiracies” against the Jewish people, and that the Palestinian Authority must stop supporting and glorifying terrorists.

In his address, Prime Minister Netanyahu also said that a corridor stretching across the Arabian Peninsula and Israel, connecting India with Europe was announced by US President Biden, Indian Prime Minister Modi and European and Arab leaders at the recently held G20 Summit.

The “visionary corridor” would facilitate trade, communication and energy connectivity for the benefit of over two billion people, he said. ...

He denounced Iran for its terrorist acts, including through proxies, threatening international shipping, holding foreign nationals as hostages, killing and arresting many of its own citizens, and supplying drones and missiles that “bring death and destruction to innocent people in the Ukraine.” ...

In his address, Prime Minister Netanyahu also highlighted the development of artificial intelligence (AI), noting that while it offered immense benefits for humanity, it also posed grave dangers. ...

Prime Minister Netanyahu concluded his remarks, stating “bring forth the blessings of a new Middle East that will transform lands once written with conflict and chaos, into fields of prosperity and peace.”

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141302>

This ‘hideous occupation’ will not last, Abbas tells UN Assembly

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas addressed the UN General Assembly on Thursday, stating that those who think peace can prevail in the Middle East without the Palestinian people enjoying their full legitimate and national rights are mistaken.

He said he had come carrying the cause of his people, who are struggling for freedom and independence, and to remind the Assembly of the tragedy caused by the Nakba 75 years ago, the effects of which continue to be exacerbated by the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

“This occupation that challenges your resolutions, violates the principles of international law and international legitimacy, while it races against time to change the historical, geographical and demographic reality on the ground aimed at perpetuating the occupation and entrenching apartheid,” he said.

The Palestinian leader noted continuing attacks by the Israeli “racist right-wing” government, kidnapping people, destroying homes, stealing resources and refusing to release bodies of martyrs. It also continues to violate the City of Jerusalem, and the historical and legal status of holy sites.

“The occupying Power is also feverishly digging tunnels under and around Al-Aqsa Mosque, threatening its collapse, or the collapse of parts of it, which will lead to an explosion with untold consequences,” he said, adding:

“We have repeatedly warned against transforming the political conflict into a religious

conflict, for which Israel will bear full responsibility.”

With the peace process deadlocked due to Israel’s policies, Mr. Abbas urged the General Assembly to hold an international peace conference, in which all countries concerned with achieving peace in the Middle East will participate. ...

He called on the States that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so, and for the State of Palestine to be admitted as a full member in the United Nations. ...

The Palestinian leader urged the General Assembly to designate 15 May each year as international day to commemorate the anniversary of the Nakba, in memory of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians killed, forcibly displaced and whose homes were destroyed.

He also called on the international community to assume its responsibility “with full courage” and implement resolutions to recognize Palestinian rights.

Concluding his address, Mr. Abbas said his message to the Israelis is that “this hideous occupation that is imposed on us will not last regardless of their ambitions and delusions.”

“The Palestinian people will remain on their land, which they have inhabited for thousands of years, one generation after the other ... they cannot leave their land, and if anyone must leave it must be the occupiers,” he said.

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141237>

Funding woes continue to plague UN Palestine refugee agency

The head of the UN agency that assists Palestine refugees across the Middle East, UNRWA, on Thursday appealed for consistent and sustainable financing to keep its operations running and avert chronic shortfalls. ...

“It has become absolutely unbearable to deal with a situation where the needs of the Palestine refugees increase, the expectations increase, the region is hit by multiple crises, and at the same time to operate public-like services...with decreasing funding,” he said.

The tension is also fuelling “a feeling of abandonment by the international community”, he warned. ...

Mr. Lazzarini recently took the decision to open UNRWA schools even though he was unsure if they will remain open for the rest of the year. More than half a million children depend on the UN agency for education, its “flagship programme”.

He said education was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and austerity measures, but also violence in the occupied Palestinian territories and in refugee camps, such as the clashes between factions at the Ein El Hilweh camp in Lebanon this month.

“One indicator which I was sharing with members here today was data on the fourth grade this year. Only 20 per cent of the students reached the average for Arabic and Mathematics, whereas in 2015 it was 60 per cent,” he said. ...

He urged the international community to step up support.

“If we are still unable to establish justice for the Palestine refugees, let us at least give them a chance to live decently and in dignity,” he said.

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141247>

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Other Relevant Information

Policy Exchange

The Symbolic Power of the Veil

<https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Symbolic-Power-of-the-Veil.pdf>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

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>

Nakba Commemoration Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461>

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>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

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

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454>

Scottish Parliament

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

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland (closing date 5 October 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/equality-and-human-rights/a-human-rights-bill-for-scotland-consultation/>

The future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales (closing date 26 October 2023)

<https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/ons/futureofpopulationandmigrationstatistics/>

Management of burial grounds, application for burial, exhumation, private burial and restoration of lairs: regulation in Scotland (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/regulation-burial-scotland/>

Statutory inspection of burial authorities, cremation authorities and funeral directors (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/statutory-inspection-burial-authorities/>

Funeral director licensing scheme for Scotland (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/licensing-funeral-directors-scotland/>

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) [Northern Ireland] (closing date 24 November 2023)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse-consultation>

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