



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Ministry of Justice

#### **Coroners statistics 2022: England and Wales**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coroners-statistics-2022/coroners-statistics-2022-england-and-wales>

### Crown Prosecution Service

#### **Far-right extremist sentenced after attempting to make explosives**

... Vaughn Dolphin, 20, was sentenced to eight years and six months' imprisonment with an 18-month extended licence. ...

Nick Price, Head of the CPS Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division, said: "Vaughn Dolphin not only downloaded and collected documents useful to a terrorist, but he went one step further and attempted to make a firearm and gunpowder. This could have had devastating consequences.

"The racist beliefs he holds are a threat to our society, and it is right that he has been sentenced today for his crimes."

The CPS proved in court that his 'memorabilia' was in fact terrorist documents and publications, including step-by-step templates on how to make a homemade shotgun, and publications about making guns and explosives.

Extreme far-right content was also found on Dolphin's computer and phone. A folder on Telegram was found labelled 'right wing' that had multiple channels in it, one titled 'Hitler group.' He had also posted videos online of a terrorist attack carried out in 2022, which showed a mass shooting in Buffalo, New York. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/far-right-extremist-sentenced-after-attempting-make-explosives>

## Office for National Statistics

### Marriages in England and Wales

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/marriagesinenglandandwales2013/2020/marriagesworkbook2020.xlsx>

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## Holocaust

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7433] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) for the contents of the Learning Centre to be attached to the UK Holocaust Memorial, and (2) to specify the populations whose genocides are to be commemorated therein.

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** The main focus of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre's exhibition content is to ensure that the story of what happened during the unique events of the Holocaust resonates with the public. This will include raising questions about Britain's role at the time. The content will also address genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-25/hl7433>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Oral Answers

#### Israel: Palestinian Civilian Casualties

**Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green):** To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Israel regarding the number of deaths and injuries of Palestinian civilians caused by the Israeli military in the Israeli-occupied territories in 2023.

**The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon):** My Lords, all countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence. Where there is evidence of excessive force, we advocate swift and transparent investigations. As I said recently to the Israeli ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, on 21 April, the Foreign Secretary and I want to see a de-escalation and a willingness for dialogue from all sides. My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary and I also emphasised this during our meetings with Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen during his visit to London in March.

**Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle:** ... Can he assure me that no items covered by British arms export licences are being used in the infliction of those deaths and injuries, either by the Israeli military or Israeli civilians? I realise that this is very recent, but I draw particular attention to the early hours of 9 May, when 13 Palestinians were killed in airstrikes, including four children, four women and Dr Jamal Khaswan, a well-known dentist and chair of Al-Wafa Hospital.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I know, from being directly involved in our relations with both Israel and the Palestinians, the importance of negotiating what one hopes will be a lasting dialogue which will lead to a lasting and secure peace. Loss of any life, particularly those of children, is extremely distressing for all concerned. Irrespective of whether it is an Israeli life or a Palestinian life, it is one life too many. On the issue of arms exports, as the noble Baroness knows, the United Kingdom Government take their defence export responsibilities extremely seriously and operate some of the most robust export controls. We continue to monitor the situation between Gaza and the West Bank and Israel very closely. We are diligent and keep regular sight of all aspects of that dispute and conflict. I assure the noble Baroness of my best intent and good offices. When there is any loss of life on either side, I think I speak for all Members of your Lordships' House in saying that we would all rather it had not happened but, equally, one hopes that it will inspire all nobly intended people to work towards a resolution of this conflict, which has gone on for far too long.

**Baroness Warsi (Conservative):** My Lords, I welcome the decision of our Foreign Secretary not to engage with Ben-Gvir, a man convicted of inciting racism and supporting a terrorist organisation—a man whom the Israeli military felt was too dangerous to draft. What confidence does my noble friend have in the protection of Palestinian lives with Ben-Gvir in charge as the Israeli Minister for National Security?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, my noble friend speaks from deep insight into the Middle East. I alluded in my Answer to our direct engagement with Foreign Minister Cohen, and let me assure her that in all our engagements we have raised directly with the Israeli authorities the security of Palestinians in the West Bank and the importance of recognising their right to access to places of worship. During the recent challenges faced by that part of the world, we were engaging quite directly. I also assure my noble friend that we will continue to raise any issues of concern to ensure that all citizens of Israel—let us not forget that there are Arab citizens of Israel, both Christian and Muslim, as well as Jewish citizens—enjoy safe and secure rights, irrespective of where they may be. ...

**Lord Turnberg (Labour):** My Lords, it is worth remembering that the dreadful loss of life in the recent conflict with Gaza is due to the war between Israel and Islamic Jihad, sponsored by Iran, not between Israel and the Palestinian people. Does the Minister agree that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians goes back a long way and is due to the failure of both sides to compromise?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, first, the noble Lord speaks with great insight. I agree with him. I have been in this role for a while now; one thing I have certainly learned about what is needed in diplomacy is the importance of compromise, but also that diplomacy comes at times from listening to the situation from the other side. I am encouraged by the fact that, historically, moves forward have been made to resolve this issue. In the wider region, we have seen confidence-building measures; indeed, His Majesty's Government are very supportive of the Abraham Accords, which have brought a greater degree of security and stability to the region. I assure the noble Lord that, through our good offices, we will continue to work with both sides to ensure that, first and foremost, peace is sustained and stabilised, and then, importantly, to ensure that negotiations can take place between both sides.

**Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, a report from the United Nations Committee Against Torture has accused the Palestinian Authority and Hamas of torturing human rights activists, women, LGBT people, political opponents, collaborators and others. Can the Minister say what action will be taken, given our concern for the human rights of Palestinians living under the rule of Hamas and the PA, as highlighted by the recent deaths of two men in Hamas custody?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As part of my wider brief, I am the UK Minister for Human Rights. I assure the noble Lord that we do not deal directly with Hamas, but we do engage directly with the Palestinian Authority. We raise a broad range of issues. Most recently, I met Riyad al-Maliki in the margins of the Coronation; we talked about the importance of resolving the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel but, at the same time, the importance of ensuring that the rights of citizens in areas under Palestinian control are also guaranteed. Upholding human rights is a central component of any responsible Administration.

**Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench):** My Lords, does the Minister agree that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza is illegal and immoral, and that land confiscation and the demolition of homes are a direct provocation to violent protest? Should not His Majesty's Government be far more robust in condemning Israel's flouting of international law?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, the position of His Majesty's Government on the West Bank and the territories is clear; that is why we refer to them as the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We believe we should see progress towards the resolution of this conflict. On demolitions, the noble Lord will have seen that I recently raised directly with the Israeli authorities our concerns over the recent demolitions that have taken place, in particular the demolition of schools, and emphasised again the importance of access to education for all communities, particularly children, across that part of the world.

**Baroness Smith of Basildon (Labour):** My Lords, may I bring the Minister back to the UN and his role as Human Rights Minister? He will be aware that this month the UN Human Rights Council is looking at Israel's human rights record as part of its universal periodic review. Our permanent representative at the UN, Ambassador Simon Manley, has referred to the progress made by Israel and called on it to reverse its policy of settlement expansion in the Occupied Territories. Can the Minister say a bit more about our engagement with Israel on this issue through the UN, including whether high-level discussions are taking place, with our Foreign Secretary talking to Israeli Ministers?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for raising the direct conversations that we are having with the Israeli authorities and assure her that we are doing exactly that. During Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit to the UK, my right honourable friend the Prime Minister was able to raise directly the importance of the two-state solution and, yes, my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary engages consistently and regularly, particularly with Foreign Minister Cohen, whom I engage with directly as the Minister responsible. In the context of the United Nations, we have strong working relationships as friends and partners to Israel, and that will continue; we will work constructively on this important agenda. Human rights matter to Israel. It is a democracy, and any democracy, wherever it is in the world, should also recognise its important responsibilities as a democracy.

**Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative):** My Lords, the noble Baroness, Lady Bennett of Manor Castle, rightly referred to the assassination of three commanders of Palestinian Islamic Jihad following 100 rockets being fired towards southern Israel. One of the targets assassinated yesterday, Tarek Azaldin, had been creating a rocket-launching apparatus in Jenin and had taught a cell how to fire and build rockets. Sadly, 10 civilians did die in that attack. Despite pressure from Iran, Hamas did not get involved in that fighting or the fighting last August. Israel has reportedly sent a message via Egyptian mediators urging Hamas not to respond. Will my noble friend and His Majesty's Government be urging Hamas, through Egypt, not to enter this conflict?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, my noble friend rightly talks about the loss of life and the missiles launched against Israel, which raise questions about the security and safety of Israeli citizens. I agree with my noble friend. We welcome

that Hamas has not been involved in this current conflict; nor has it been involved in escalating it. That is a good thing. We will use our usual channels to ensure that this conflict is not escalated. We have seen escalation and the need for de-escalation being directly addressed by the Israeli authorities themselves.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-05-10/debates/18A4EB15-18C8-4896-8C65-AAA2F3D45FB9/IsraelPalestinianCivilianCasualties>

*The report from the United Nations Committee Against Torture, referred to above, can be read at <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPrICaQhKb7yhssc5SQY91uNTToQXavgSMYKIARM36CTZ%2F7zBaA7%2BAq3wkl%2F3rshl0BepP7ruRoCKVlsZYaA4aK2CF001zF44oXFUthMFidsuESDsrBQOwxWL>*

*Simon Manley's statement, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/43rd-universal-periodic-review-statement-on-israel>*

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Salah Hamouri

**Lord Godson (Conservative)** [HL7396] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to prevent Salah Hamouri, who was convicted in Israel in 2005 of plotting to murder a rabbi, from speaking at events in the UK.

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** The Home Office does not routinely comment on individual cases.

The Home Secretary has a range of powers and tools that can be used to prevent someone from entering to the UK on a case-by-case basis if it is assessed that they pose a threat to UK society.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-24/hl7396>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon** I condemn the indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza targeting innocent civilians in Israel. Attacks on civilians are unacceptable, and this violence must stop. The UK calls for an immediate cessation of these attacks - the only lasting solution is for peace to prevail.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1656350618452099094>

### 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>

## European Parliament Resolution

### Discharge 2021: EU general budget - Commission and executive agencies

... 140. Deplores the problematic and hateful material in Palestinian school textbooks and study cards which has still not been removed; underlines that education and pupils' access to peaceful and unbiased textbooks is essential, especially in the context of the rising implication of teenagers in terrorist attacks; stresses that financial support from the Union for the Palestinian Authority in the area of education shall be provided on the condition that textbook content is aligned with UNESCO standards, as decided upon by Union education



ministers in Paris on 17 March 2015, that all anti-Semitic references are deleted, and examples that incite hatred and violence are removed, as repeatedly requested in the resolutions accompanying the discharge decisions in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial years 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020; therefore requests the Commission to closely scrutinise that the Palestinian Authority (PA) modifies the full curriculum expeditiously;

141. Is concerned about the destruction and confiscation of Union-funded projects in the West Bank; recalls the position of the Council, expressing its commitment to ensure that all agreements between Israel and the Union must unequivocally and explicitly indicate the inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, as well as to continue the effective implementation of existing Union law and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products; ...

**To read the full text see**

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0137\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0137_EN.pdf)

## United Nations

### **Secretary-General Following Latest Security Developments in Gaza with Deep Concern, Condemns Civilian Loss of Life**

... The Secretary-General is following with deep concern the latest security developments in Gaza, and the ongoing escalation and risk of further loss of life.

The Secretary-General condemns the civilian loss of life, including that of children and women, which he views as unacceptable and must stop immediately. Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the proportional use of force and taking all feasible precautions to spare civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations.

The Secretary-General also condemns the indiscriminate launching of rockets from Gaza into Israel, which violates international humanitarian law and puts at risk both Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

The Secretary-General urges all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and to work to stop hostilities immediately. He reiterates his commitment to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sqsm21791.doc.htm>

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## Foreign Affairs

### **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon** Appalled by the terror attack killing 4 people in Djerba last night near Tunisia's El Ghriba Synagogue where the annual Jewish pilgrimage is taking place. My thoughts & prayers are with all those affected & I commend the Tunisian authorities' response to contain the situation.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1656337690906722312>

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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>

Lord consideration of Commons amendments

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-05-10/debates/47179E49-FBDF-4E1D-A7E0-87909969A49E/HigherEducation\(FreedomOfSpeech\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-05-10/debates/47179E49-FBDF-4E1D-A7E0-87909969A49E/HigherEducation(FreedomOfSpeech)Bill)

#### **Holocaust Memorial Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

#### **Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

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

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

#### **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

### 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

**\*\* closes in 4 days**

### 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>

**Charities tax compliance** (closing date 20 July 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/charities-tax-compliance/consultation-charities-tax-compliance>

**JPR 2023 Antisemitism in the UK Survey** (closing date not stated)

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/panel/UKantisemitism2023> (UK except Scotland)

and

<https://bit.ly/3Vg7DDH> (Scotland)

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