



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Debate

Online Safety Bill: Report Stage

... col 1320 **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay):** ... Amendment 1 inserts an introductory clause at the start of the Bill, providing an overarching statement about the main objectives of the new regulatory framework. The proposed new clause describes the main broad objectives of the duties that the Bill imposes on providers of regulated services and that the Bill confers new functions and powers on Ofcom.

The clause makes clear that regulated services must identify, mitigate and manage risks that particularly affect people with a certain characteristic. This recognises that people with certain characteristics, or more than one such characteristic, are disproportionately affected by online harms and that providers must account for and protect them from this. The noble Baroness, Lady Merron, raised the example of Jewish women, as did the noble Baroness, Lady Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent. Sadly, they have first-hand experience of the extra levels of abuse and harm that some groups of people can face when they have more than one protected characteristic. It could just as easily be disabled women or queer people of colour. ...

Subsection 3 of the proposed new clause outlines the main outcomes that the duties in the Bill seek to secure. It is a fundamental principle of the legislation that the design of services can contribute to the risk of users experiencing harm online. ... I am pleased to confirm that this amendment will state clearly that a main outcome of the legislation is that services must be safe by design. For example, providers must choose and design their functionalities so as to limit the risk of harm to users. ...

col 1321 **Baroness Merron (Labour):** 2: Before Clause 1, in subsection (2)(a), after “characteristic” insert “, or a combination of characteristics”

Member's explanatory statement

This amendment to the Minister's introductory Clause makes it clear that some internet users experience a higher level of harm than others, as a result of having multiple characteristics. ...

... Jewish women find themselves at the intersection of both anti-Semitic and misogynistic abuse. It is as though online abusers multiply the vitriol by at least the number of protected characteristics, such that it feels that the abuse knows no bounds, manifesting in far too many examples of Jewish women in the public eye on the receiving end of death, rape and other serious threats. ...

col 1322 **Baroness Harding of Winscombe (Conservative):** ... I want to highlight one word in [Amendment 1] ... The word is "activity". It is extremely important that in Clause 1 we are setting out that the purpose is to "require providers of services regulated by this Act to identify, mitigate and manage" not just illegal or harmful content but "activity". ...

col 1324 **Lord Clement Jones (Liberal Democrat):** ... The fact is that a combination of characteristics is a particular risk in itself; it is not just about having several different characteristics. ...

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: ... On the amendments tabled by the noble Baroness, Lady Merron, which draw further attention to people who have multiple characteristics and suffer disproportionately because of it, let me start by saying again that the Government recognise that this is, sadly, the experience for many people online, and that people with multiple characteristics are often at increased risk of harm. The Bill already accounts for this, and the current drafting captures people with multiple characteristics because of Section 6 of the Interpretation Act 1978. ... it does mean that, when interpreting statute, words in the singular include the plural and words in the plural include the singular. ...

col 1325 We have ... agreed to add a provision in Clause 211—the Bill's interpretation clause—to make clear that all the various references throughout the Bill to people with a certain characteristic include people with a combination of characteristics. ...

col 1329 **Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat):** ... I come to the recklessness amendment, Amendment 6 ...

col 1330 Recklessness means showing that a defendant was aware of a risk of causing harm but went on to take that risk anyway. There are two arms to the recklessness amendment. First, a defendant is reckless as to causing distress, alarm or humiliation and, secondly, the victim is alarmed, humiliated, et cetera. The first arm, the recklessness, is easier to prove than direct intention. The perpetrator can intend to have a laugh with his friends or send an image for a dare but is reckless as to causing distress. That means that he recognised there was a risk of causing distress but carried on anyway. ...

To read the transcript of this section of the debate in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/7722BAA6-C15A-4413-8758-2AF0927061BF/OnlineSafetyBill>

col 1389 **Lord Moylan (Conservative):** ...The Equality Act is essentially about discrimination against people as individuals or as groups. In defining direct discrimination, it says: "A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if, because of a protected characteristic, A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others".

So, there has to be a "B"—there has to be a person—for the Equality Act to be engaged. But this Bill says content is abusive when it "targets any of the following characteristics".

"Targets" is an interesting word. It does not say "attacks" and it does not relate to treatment. One can "target" something favourably. One can be positive in targeting something. It does not have to be a negative thing.

On the question of religion, if I, A, treat B adversely because they adhere to a particular religion, I fall foul of the Equality Act. But this appears to cover religion as a phenomenon.

col 1390 So, if I say that I am going to treat somebody badly because they are Jewish, of

course I fall foul of the Equality Act. But this appears to say that if I say something adverse and abusive about the Jewish religion without reference to any particular individual, I will fall foul of this clause. ... Are we creating a new blasphemy offence here, in effect, in relation to religion, as opposed to what the Equality Act does? ...

Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-affiliated): ... My main concerns are around the Minister's Amendment 172. There is a problem: because it is about protected characteristics—or apes the protected characteristics of the Equality Act—we might get into difficulty. Can we at least recognise that, even in relation to the protected characteristics as noted in the Equality Act, there are raging rows politically? ...

col 1391 I worry when I see this kind of list. It is not just inciting hatred ... It refers to abuse based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability and so on. This is a minefield ... Whether you like it or not, it will have a chilling effect on young people's ability to debate and discuss. If you worry that some abuse might be aimed at religion, does that mean that you will not be able to discuss Charlie Hebdo? What if you wanted to show or share the Charlie Hebdo cartoons? ... Some people would say that is abusive or inciteful. ... Under race, it says that "nationality" is one of the indicators that we should be looking out for. Maybe it is because I live in Wales, but there is a fair amount of abuse aimed at the English. A lot of Scottish friends dole it out as well. ...

col 1400 **Lord Moylan:** ... Would an abusive comment about a particular religion—let us say a religion that practised cannibalism or a historical religion that sacrificed babies, as we know was the norm in Carthage—count as "priority harmful content"? I appreciate that we are mapping the language of the Equality Act, but are we creating a new offence of blasphemy in this Bill?

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: ... the key provision in Amendment 172 is subsection (2) of the proposed new clause, which relates to: "Content which is abusive and which targets any of the following characteristics".

It must both be abusive and target the listed characteristics. It does not preclude legitimate debate about those things, but if it were abusive on the basis of those characteristics ... people making oblique threats, rather than targeting a particular person, by saying, "People of your characteristic should be abused in the following way"—it would be captured. ...

Baroness Fox of Buckley: ... It has been suggested that showing pictures of the Prophet Muhammad in an RE lesson ... is abusive. I am suggesting that it is not as simple as saying the word "abusive" a lot. In this area, there is a highly contentious and politicised arena that I want to end, but I think that this will exacerbate, not help, it. ...

col 1401 **Lord Moylan:** My noble friend seemed to confirm what I said. If I wish to be abusive—in fact, I do wish to be abusive—about the Carthaginian religious practice of sacrificing babies to Moloch, and I were to do that in a way that came to the attention of children, would I be caught as having created "priority harmful content"? My noble friend appears to be saying yes.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Does my noble friend wish to do that and direct it at children?

Lord Moylan: With respect, it does not say "directed at children"... if I were to do it, it came to the attention of children and it were abusive—because I do wish to be abusive about that practice—would I have created "priority harmful content", about which action would have to be taken?

col 1402 **Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** ... This relates to the definition of a characteristic ... To be a characteristic it has to be possessed by a person; therefore, the content that is abusive and targets any of the characteristics has to be harmful to an individual to meet the definition of harm. Further, it has to be material that would come to the attention of children ... So my noble friend would be able to continue to criticise the polytheistic religions of the past and their tendencies to his heart's content, but there would

be protections in place if what he was saying was causing harm to an individual—targeting them on the basis of their race, religion or any of those other characteristics—if that person was a child. ...

To read the transcript of this section of the debate in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/A3CD7080-9B88-4F19-A7A7-D81E1739B887/OnlineSafetyBill>

col 1414 Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: ... the Government removed the legal but harmful provisions from the Bill in another place, given concerns about freedom of expression. ...

I am therefore glad to bring forward a package of amendments ... relating to adult safety. Among other things, these strengthen our existing approach to user empowerment and terms of service by rebalancing the power over the content adults see and interact with online, moving the choice away from unaccountable technology companies and towards individual users. ...

col 1417 Lord Moylan: ... The danger is that the platforms themselves will either opt you into filtering automatically as the default, so you do not see what might be called the full-fat milk... or that they harass you to do so with constant pop-ups ... constantly being driven into switching on the filters—because the platforms themselves will be very worried about the possibility that you might see illegal content. ...

If the platform decides to filter out racist abuse and you opt in to filtering out racist abuse or some other sort of specified abuse, it has to filter all racist abuse, not simply racist abuse that comes from people they do not like ... they cannot filter out stuff from only one side or other of the argument. The word “consistently” that is included here is intended to address that, and to require policies that show that, if you opt in to having something filtered out, it would be done on a proper, consistent and systematic basis and not influenced by the platform’s own particular political views. ...

col 1425 Baroness Fox of Buckley: ... One of the things that worries me about the Bill is the danger of echo chambers. ... I started today ... with a big crowd of sixth formers ... debating very difficult topics such as commercial surrogacy, cancel culture and the risks of contact sports. ... I am thinking, “We have now got a piece of legislation that says you can filter out all the stuff you do not want to hear and create your own safe space”. So I just get anxious that we do not inadvertently encourage in the young—I know this is for all adults—that antidemocratic tendency to not want to hear what you do not want to hear, even when it would be good to hear as many opinions as possible.

I also want to press the Minister on the problem of filtering material that targets race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability and gender reassignment. I keep trying to raise the problem that it could lead to diverse philosophical views around those subjects also being removed by overzealous filtering. You might think that you know what you are asking to be filtered out. If you say you want to filter out material that is anti-religion, you might not mean that you do not want any debates on religious tolerance. For example, there was that major controversy over the “The Lady of Heaven” film. ... You would not want, because you said, “Don’t target me for my religion”, to not be able to access that debate. I think there is a danger that we are handing a lot of power to filterers to make filtering decisions based on their values when we are not clear about what they are. ...

col 1427 Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: ... My noble friend and the noble Lord, Lord Allan of Hallam, raised the potential for being bombarded with pop-ups because of the forced-choice approach that we have taken. These amendments have been carefully drafted to minimise unnecessary prompts or pop-ups. That is why we have specified that the requirement to proactively ask users how they want these tools to be applied is applicable only to registered users. This approach ensures that users will be prompted to make a decision only once, unless they choose to ignore it. After a decision has been

made, the provider should save this preference and the user should not be prompted to make the choice again. ...

To read the transcript of this section of the debate in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/35CCD184-5828-4C47-AA19-D19D8AF44938/OnlineSafetyBill>

The amendments referred to in all three sections above can be read at

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/52119/documents/3778>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Unregistered Schools

Lord Warner (Crossbench): To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to re-introduce legislation to close down unregistered schools and, if so, when; and what further safeguarding action could be undertaken until any such legislation is passed.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Baroness Barran): My Lords, it is already an offence to conduct an unregistered school. The Government will always prosecute when it is in the public interest. We work closely with Ofsted to make effective use of its current powers to investigate unregistered schools. We recognise that improved powers would better enable effective action, which is why we intend to introduce legislation in this area at the next available opportunity.

Lord Warner: ... I assume that the Minister and her colleagues are familiar with the report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and the recent *Bloom Review*, both of which reveal widespread child sexual abuse in religious settings. Well before these reports, the Government knew as long ago as 2015 that Ofsted lacked the enforcement powers needed to deal with these unregistered religious schools. Given the urgency of this situation for vulnerable children at serious risk of harm, will the Government commit to legislation on religious schools in the next Session? If they cannot do this, will they perhaps consider supporting and helping a Private Member's Bill on this subject to strengthen Ofsted's powers? In the meantime, will DfE encourage Ofsted, social services and the police to take stronger safeguarding measures in respect of the most concerning religious schools?

Baroness Barran: ... I think he would agree with me that the vast majority of religious schools deliver a safe and very valued service to the children and families they work with. But of course he is right that there will be safeguarding exceptions in every setting and every community, and we are determined to address those when legislative time allows.

Baroness Whitaker (Labour): My Lords, I add to the plea for urgency by drawing attention to recent media coverage of former pupils from such settings. Some did not speak any English at school and others had no English, maths or science taught to them, only a very narrow religious curriculum. It is very important to rescue those children; surely they deserve an urgent response from the Government.

Baroness Barran: The Government need to strike a very delicate balance. I think we in this House would all agree that parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their children get a good education. Local authorities already have significant powers to check the quality of that education, and we are working closely with them and with parents, updating our guidance in this area, because we are all committed to making sure that every child has a safe and suitable education. ...

Baroness Blackstone (Labour): My Lords, I feel extremely disappointed by the complacent reply that the Minister has given to these questions. It is all very well to refer to religious schools doing a very good job—they often do—but these are not schools.

These are institutions that describe themselves as carrying out religious instruction, yet the pupils—and they are pupils, because they are there all day long and they are not getting any other form of education—are being treated appallingly, with a lack both of any proper curriculum and of safeguarding, so abuse of a really serious kind is often taking place. In these circumstances, surely the Government should move now to bring back that legislation that will close the loopholes that allow these institutions to continue to act without any proper prevention of the appalling damage that they are doing to children and young people.

Baroness Barran: I really hope that I did not give the House any impression of complacency. There is no complacency where there are serious safeguarding concerns. There have been more than 1,000 investigations by Ofsted of different out-of-school settings and, of those, 122 were offering a religious education, but there were also a number of other settings; 146 suspected illegal settings were found, 129 of those were closed or otherwise changed their operations, and we completed seven prosecutions.

Lord Lexden (Conservative): My Lords, is it not possible to tackle this problem through regulations under existing legislation rather than having to wait to find the time for fresh primary legislation?

Baroness Barran: My understanding is that we would need primary legislation to address the specific instance in which schools are offering a purely religious education.

Baroness Twycross (Labour): My Lords, as the Minister said, only seven providers of illegal schools have been successfully prosecuted. Proprietors of illegal unregistered schools exploit loopholes in the law around home education definitions of school. The issues and risks of unregistered religious schools have been noted already. ...

Baroness Barran: The noble Baroness rightly cited the seven prosecutions; however, she did not repeat the statistic that 129 of the schools investigated have either closed or changed their operations so that they comply with the law. By definition, it is difficult to track illegal unregistered schools, but there are a number of routes—for example, a member of the public or others can report concerns around extremism directly to the department.

Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat): ... one of my big concerns about the delay in dealing with these schools is the toll it is taking on the children. They report being unprepared for modern life, forced to study a narrow curriculum from dawn to dusk with no English, maths or science available and not even speaking English. This has been delayed for years. What does the Minister have to say to them?

Baroness Barran: We are obviously extremely concerned on their behalf. Children who receive the kind of exclusive religious education that the noble Baroness refers to often receive the rest of their education at home—not exclusively but frequently. The noble Baroness will be aware that we are tightening up and reinvigorating our efforts in relation to elective home education registers so that every local authority can track whether every child is getting a suitable and safe education. ...

Baroness Berridge (Conservative): My Lords, as my noble friend outlined, some of these children fall into home education. She outlined renewed efforts in relation to this, but part of the Schools Bill that we lost was to have a register. Is it my noble friend's view now that that can be done through other initiatives or are we going to get legislation on it as well?

Baroness Barran: ... the Government's position is that it would be best to have legislation in this area and to make the collection of this data mandatory. That is for two reasons: to trace those children who are home educated and unsafe and, importantly, to support those parents who are home-educating their children and perhaps struggling to do so. In the meantime, we are working closely with—and I personally have spoken to—the Association of Directors of Children's Services to make sure that we are working in a joined-up way on this issue.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-05/debates/DD3A7ACE-D225-4674-8795-495E2B233E21/UnregisteredSchools>

To read the report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, referred to above, see
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1112123/the-report-independent-inquiry-into-child-sexual-abuse-october-2022.pdf

To read the Bloom Review, referred to above, see
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1152684/The Bloom Review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1152684/The_Bloom_Review.pdf)

UK Parliament Health and Social Care Committee

Assisted dying/assisted suicide

Q237 Chair (Steve Brine, Conservative): ... where would you rate palliative care in England today if you had to land it somewhere between nought to 10? ...

Jonathan Ellis (Director of Policy, Advocacy & Clinical Programmes, Hospice UK): ... I would land it higher than five, certainly. Internationally, the UK is frequently rated as among the best in the world in its provision of palliative and end of life care. However ... there are huge inequalities. There are huge gaps and unmet needs that exist within our communities. ...

Q238 Dr Matthew Doré (Honorary Secretary, Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland): Historically, we have a very good history of it, but I do not think we are in a good place. We have a population in England and Wales of 58 million; that is 10 million who are over 65 and it is going to increase to 16 million by 2037 according to ONS figures. ...

We have evidence from Fliss Murtagh's paper showing that 69% to 82% of patients are going to need specialist palliative care. We have a diminishing workforce who are really struggling. On top of that, it is predominantly funded by the charitable sector. ...

Q239 Dr Doré: It is bonkers that we are talking about having an assisted dying/assisted suicide Bill that would be 100% commissioned and funded by the NHS when we leave the palliative care sector to be funded by the charitable sector. That is the state essentially endorsing death while not funding and paying for palliative care. ...

I think the main proponents of this are regarding choice: my body, my choice. ... but my understanding of the law is that there is individual autonomy versus public safety. For example, when I flew here I could not open the door to the aeroplane. I cannot choose to do that because it kills everyone else. That is the same reason why we have speed limits. ... The main argument I would put forward ... regarding assisted dying/assisted suicide is that it is a public safety issue. If you legalise it, you risk the wider majority of the population. ...

The historical precedence, I believe, is in capital punishment. ... We hung people who were subsequently proved to be innocent. That was with a full judicial process. There were judges, juries and beyond reasonable doubt and months of deliberation. Despite that we got it wrong.

What we are talking about here is two doctors making that choice so many weeks apart—two doctors who do not have access to all the things that judges and juries have to make their decision. ...

Essentially, we have a situation in which you are going to advocate, and there will be, incorrect deaths. My question to you guys is: how many incorrect deaths justify the fact of the right to pre-emptively kill yourself early? ...

Q240 Dr Paul Perkins (Chief Medical Director, Sue Ryder): ... One of the big stresses for patients and families is in the middle of the night when they have pain and are

distressed. ... In Marie Curie research last year 27% of the country does not have a dedicated advice line, where you can get through to someone sensible. You end up calling 111 perhaps and an ambulance comes and takes someone to A&E. Then someone ends up dying in A&E, which is not what you want. ...

Q241 Chris Green (Conservative): ... most funding for hospices comes from charity donations rather than national health service commissioning. Do you think that the current balance is right? ...

Jonathan Ellis: Absolutely. ... no, I don't think the mix is right. Hospices ... rely on charity donations for the vast majority of the care that they provide—fun runs, charity fundraising and bake sales to fund what, in any reasonable perspective, is a core healthcare service. ...

Q242 Jonathan Ellis: The right question to ask is, what is the mix of services that we need to meet the needs in the population? Most people who die each year will never come anywhere near a specialist palliative care service for lots of different reasons. Most people who die will be supported by their GP, by private care, by their family or by their loved ones. They are very often the people who miss out on expert intervention and could benefit hugely from that expert intervention. ...

If the person is receiving their care in a hospital bed, of course it is 100% funded through our taxpayer-funded healthcare system. If that person happens to be receiving their care in a care home bed and has assets, the chances are that they will probably have to sell their home to pay for that care. If they are receiving their care in a hospice bed or in a hospice-at-home service, they are reliant on charitable giving. ...

Q243 Jonathan Ellis: ... There is enormous benefit and value from the charitable contribution. ... the whole basis of the hospice model when it was first envisaged ... was to fix dying outside the NHS and then put it back. The bit we have never done is the putting back ...

Q245 Dr Doré: ... We fund loads of things that not everyone gets. Not everyone gets an eye problem—ophthalmology—and not everyone gets diabetes, but this is tax and dying; everyone dies. Why are we ignoring that area? ...

Q249 Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op): ... We have often heard throughout the inquiry that palliative care can be the solve-all, but also cannot be the solve-all. ... Can palliative care prevent all suffering at the end of life? Where are its limitations?

Dr Perkins: We would sit here sounding incredibly arrogant if we were saying that we could get rid of all suffering. ...

Our job is about making deaths as good as they can be and supporting families into bereavement. ... Sometimes I will be looking after people who have what I would consider intolerable symptoms, but they do not feel like that. They want to carry on and have more treatment. I see other people whose symptoms really are not that bad ... yet for them their life is intolerable, and they would like it to be ended. ...

Q250 Jonathan Ellis: ... pain is much more than physical. It can be physical, social, psychological or spiritual. ... it would be totally inappropriate for us to suggest or even imply that hospice and palliative care services can somehow address all pain in all circumstances. ...

Q251 Dr Doré: I will address the word “suffering” first. The pretext of that question is not killing the sufferer. It is like taking this room and saying, “I don't want it green,” so you knock it down rather than repainting it. There is a pretext in the question that alleviating suffering is helping the sufferer. ...

By and large, physical symptoms are almost predominantly controlled. It is the wider stuff—the social, psychological and spiritual aspects—which is much more distressing and harder. The undercurrent of what you are asking is whether assisted suicide could alleviate those things and act as a pretext along with palliative care. I would strongly

advocate no within healthcare, because the ethos contradict.

The ethos of palliative care through alleviating suffering is that you imbue a value and worth and safety upon that person. ...

There could be a whisper in someone's ear that maybe it is not worth living or, "What value are you bringing to this family?" ... There are the social circumstances. They cannot get a chair lift. There are disabilities. "You're not worth it." The contradiction of the ethos is there. What happens then is that palliative care becomes subservient to assisted suicide and the ethos. It shrinks or certainly stays stagnant where it is. By the way, although there is no normal suicide, non-assisted suicide either stays the same or goes up. In Oregon it increased by 20% to 30% because you have imbued in the culture—as a correlation rather than causation—that there are circumstances in which it is not worth living.

My question to you is: where does suicide prevention begin and promoting suicide end?...

Q252 Rachael Maskell: ... What provision could palliative care provide for people in that mental state, where they are determined to take the course of suicide, as opposed to providing that value, worth and safety ethos in wider healthcare?

Dr Doré: ... to imbue the value that you are important. It is to imbue safety ...

Q254 Rachael Maskell: ... How does ensuring that people have good palliative care ... help families with the bereavement process, as opposed to what we have perhaps witnessed with a disruption in the life process, through assisted dying/assisted suicide?

Jonathan Ellis: I think families and the people important to a patient are just as important in hospice and palliative care as the patient themselves. The support that is provided to loved ones is absolutely central, whether that is pre-bereavement support, helping people to prepare for the fact that the person who is so important to them is going to die, or providing the very best quality of care to the patient themselves. ...

Q255 Dr Doré: ... the palliative care ethos is living until you die. Our role is to let nature take its course, but control what nature throws at us. ...

If you don't want chemo, you don't have it. There are many advocates of assisted suicide who have had the opportunity to withdraw treatment but have not done so and wanted someone to actively kill them. It is not illegal to die. No one is forcing treatment on you. ...

Q256 Dr Perkins: ... There is the emphasis that palliative care is all about people who are dying. We are about life. We are about helping patients to have the best quality of life possible until they die, and supporting their families. ... Palliative care can be needed early in someone's illness. You do not need to be dying to need palliative care. ...

Q257 Chair: ... We spoke to the Canadians online as one of our sessions. ... Professor Dugdale [said] ... "... Many colleagues in Canada say that it used to be that if a patient said, 'Doc, I just don't want to go on any more,' you would then sit down with the patient and say, 'What do you mean you don't want to go on any more? Do you want to be discharged? You don't want more cancer treatment? What do you mean by that? Are you depressed? Do we need to get a psychiatrist in here? What is going on?' Now there is almost a reflex, 'Let's just call the MAID [Medical Assistance In Dying] team.'" ...

Q258 Dr Doré: ... I think of the DNACPR scandal during covid ... The Mental Capacity Act has not been fully implemented yet. We know about elder abuse. I wish I did not have to state this, but I think there will be a governmental apology in Canada in years to come regarding this. There is a massive scandal coming our way. ...

If you make assisted suicide a medical treatment, the arguments of equality break through. All the safeguards subsequently become potential things to slide. If it is a medical treatment, why are you denying a medical treatment to a 17-year-old as opposed to an 18-year-old? Why are you not offering a medical treatment to someone who does not have a life-limiting condition? Why are you not offering a medical treatment to someone who does not have capacity? All of the supposed safeguards potentially become easily surmountable barriers in legislation. They break down. That is what happens on the basis

of equality of access to a medical treatment.

Q263 James Morris (Conservative): ... When we went to Oregon, those who had been promoting the change to the law in Oregon made the suggestion that since the introduction of assisted dying in Oregon, palliative care had improved. ...

Dr Perkins: I have no reason to disbelieve the evidence you were given. ... the palliative medicine workforce in this country are not in favour of assisted dying. It may be difficult to find people in palliative medicine who want to work alongside that system. ...

Q265 James Morris: ... is it possible that the reason why, in this country, people are advocating a change in the law is, in a sense—exploiting is probably not the right word—a reflection of the fact that the palliative care system is still very fragmented? We have talked about regional inequalities and access. For people who want to advocate a change in the law, this gives them an opportunity to do so. ...

Dr Doré: ... Why do people want assisted suicide? That is the very fundamental question. Interestingly, in all the jurisdictions, including Oregon, there is no follow-up or monitoring of the decision in the room pre-death. There is some monitoring. It is inadequate post death. There is no “why”. I mean that. “Why is that person requesting this?”

You are quite right that we kind of know some of those things. If we are talking about Oregon, 54% think that they are a burden; 7% have financial concerns and less than 30% are concerned about pain. It is not that they have pain. We don't know; it does not differentiate. If 54% of people believe themselves to be a burden, imagine the scenario, which I believe has happened in Canada. An elderly lady does not want to go to a nursing home. Rather than pay for the nursing home through their house, they want to give their house to the kids. There is an internal motivation to get assisted suicide because they want to give it to their kids. Is that the society we want?

Q266 Paul Blomfield (Labour): ... you acknowledged that a minority of people in palliative care nevertheless have a bad death. We talked earlier about what that bad death might look like. Rachael mentioned pain, acute nausea, terminal haemorrhaging, fungating wounds and people drowning through fluids produced in their own lungs. Do you think that might be a factor in people wanting to end their lives earlier?

Dr Doré: When I think of older people who have asked me for assisted suicide, and they have, they are worried about those things. It is not an actuality. They are fearful of those things.

Q267 Paul Blomfield: You say it is not an actuality. Are you saying that nobody suffers those things?

Dr Doré: I think those things are very rare. The people who are advocating something pre-emptive are fearful of those things, but that does not mean they are going to happen. For the vast majority of people, when you look at them and care for them, you say, “Look, you are important. I hear you. We are going to address the fear that you have a fungating wound.” This is a fear of something or other. We want to work through that. You say, “Look, let's work through it.” The desire for assisted suicide disappears. It is about living, as my colleagues have said, until you die, and letting nature take its course.

Q268 Paul Blomfield: Do you accept that some people, faced with those, albeit rare, awful outcomes might have different values from yours and might make a different choice? You talk about respect. Shouldn't there be respect for that choice?

Dr Doré: My argument against that is that it creates a public safety concern. With all the other aspects of it, as I talked about with the speed limits, how can you safeguard more widely against people like the old lady not wanting to sell her house to facilitate that? ...

Q269 Paul Blomfield: ... Your association has guidelines on the withdrawal of assisted ventilation at the request of a patient with motor neurone disease. Those guidelines say that, when evaluating that request, doctors should ensure “there is no coercion, nor is the decision driven by mistaken kindness to the family.” Can you explain to me how doctors

make that decision?

Dr Doré: It is the argument regarding withdrawal of treatment rather than demanding that someone kill you. Withdrawing treatment is the patient's right.

Q271 Paul Blomfield: ... In a previous evidence session about the Netherlands, we were told that 5% of deaths involve euthanasia and 25% of deaths involve palliative sedation. Do you have any data on the number of deaths involving palliative sedation in this country?

Dr Doré: ... Palliative sedation, as a European term, is very different from what we do in the UK. You are right that there were 44,000 palliative sedations in the Netherlands. That is with the intention of killing, and it is not even monitored. They put you to sleep with unproportional doses. Here, we titrate the doses of medicines to the symptoms. There is a very different ethos behind it, although the terms are the same.

Q272 Paul Blomfield: The question though, with respect, is whether you have data on the number of deaths involved in palliative sedation. ...

Dr Doré: It doesn't happen, so we don't have data. ...

Q274 Paul Blomfield: Do you deny the existence of palliative sedation at all in this country?

Dr Doré: It depends what definition you are using. If you are using the European definition, where they use unproportional doses, that is not what is happening here. In palliative sedation, where we are titrating to agitation, for the terminal agitated patient, we follow the patient, very closely monitoring and titrating the drug to solve the symptoms. ...

Q275 Dr Perkins: I think we are in a good position in this country, in that often our teams work as teams. What you do not want is a Shipman scenario, where a single clinician is working and looking after patients. We have teams who peer review what is happening. Also, we have the medical examiner. ... If we want to start collecting data like that, a good way to do it would be through the medical examiner system.

Q276 Paul Blomfield: ... in the absence of safeguarded choice some dying people take matters into their own hands, either by travelling overseas for an assisted death or by ending their own life in this country. ... Has Hospice UK been made aware of any cases of dying people ending their own life in hospices?

Jonathan Ellis: I am not aware of any instances of that happening.

Q277 Paul Blomfield: ... One of the concerns we are exploring as an inquiry is the absence of choice. We are looking at the safeguards that might be there for a change in the law. The absence of an assisted dying option leads people to take desperate measures. It often leads people to take their life prematurely because they want to exercise control while they still can. ...

Q279 Helen Whately MP (Minister of State, Department of Health and Social Care): ... around half a million people die each year in England, of whom a substantial share but not all will receive palliative and end of life care. The majority of that care is provided by the NHS, but hospices play a really important role in our system. ...

There are various international surveys and studies that look at how England compares to other countries. We do well, including being first of 81 different countries in a recent study in the *Journal of Pain Management*. ...

Against that, not for a minute do I think that is enough. ...

Q280 Chair: ... the long-term workforce plan ... does not mention the charitable workforce. ... Was that a mistake? Was it deliberate? ...

Helen Whately: ... Something that is really significant in the long-term workforce plan is the shift in the proportion of the workforce to be in community settings as well as in primary care. ... During the 15 years' period of the plan, the plan envisages the community workforce doubling and increasing as a proportion of the overall workforce from 30% to 37% of that workforce. ...

Q281 Professor Stephen Powis (National Medical Director, NHS England): ... This was always going to be a high-level plan at professional group level. I think the point is that by expanding the number of doctors and medical school places, the number of nurses through nurse training and the range of other professionals in the plan, that expansion of the overall workforce will by necessity mean that there will be an expansion of the various specialties that underpin the workforce as a whole. ...

Q282 Rachael Maskell: ... palliative care is a very specialist area of medicine which requires specific training as well as skills in not only medicine and nursing but other professions. Will there be an ambition to set out a palliative care plan in the light of what you have already highlighted—the inequalities within the system and many of the challenges which exist in the system?

Helen Whately: The approach that we are taking to raise the focus on palliative and end of life care in the system is very much through the structure of integrated care boards, the local NHS organisations and their duty to commission palliative and end of life care. ...

Q285 Helen Whately: The majority of palliative and end of life care is provided by NHS organisations. Hospices play an important part. We estimate that around £6 billion a year is spent by the NHS on palliative and end of life care. Hospice UK tells us that the hospice budget is around £1.6 billion a year. ...

Q290 James Morris: ... Is one of the reasons that it has taken 20 years or so, from the previous report, something about the attitude and values of NHS commissioning which, in a sense, undervalues end of life? It has not been a priority in our health system and continues not to be a priority.

Professor Powis: I don't think that is quite fair. It has certainly been a priority for us. ...

Q291 Helen Whately: ... The conversations are really important. Advanced care plans are produced through the conversation. ...

We are seeing increasing numbers of people having advanced care plans. At the moment, GPs have around 280,000 people on the palliative care register. ... Conversations are happening on advanced care planning, but we need to continue to prioritise that and focus on it, because it can lead to making sure somebody has the treatment that they want and avoid having treatment that they do not want, and they are more likely to be able to die in the place where they and their family would like them to. ...

Q292 James Morris: In terms of the values point, one of the previous witnesses said that he found it odd that societally we find it acceptable that hospices were funded by the sale of second-hand jumpers. From the point of view of raising money, if that was the case for cancer services, there would be public outrage. Do you see that as an issue around the way we treat end of life care and the way it is thought about in society? ...

Helen Whately: ... we should recognise that a lot of end of life and palliative care is provided through the national health service and funded through national health service funding. ...

Q293 Paul Blomfield: ... I appreciate at the outset that the Government have no official view [on assisted dying] and that they are neutral. ...

Is there any thinking going on at all about what a law might look like should we begin to address it? ...

Helen Whately: ... A change to the law in this sensitive area would be something for Parliament to decide. It is an issue of conscience for individual Members of Parliament. If the will of Parliament is that the law on assisted dying should change, then Government would not stand in its way. ...

Q294 Paul Blomfield: ... Among the jurisdictions that are moving down this path are three within the UK: Scotland, Isle of Man and Jersey. Is any thinking going on about how the Government would respond if assisted dying, as is anticipated, becomes legal within UK jurisdictions?

Helen Whately: We observe and watch what is going on in other countries, and, clearly, very importantly, within other parts of the United Kingdom. ...

Q295 Paul Blomfield: ... have there been any discussions within Government about the implications of a UK jurisdiction adopting a law facilitating assisted dying—any discussions at all?

Helen Whately: I have personally not been part of a discussion along those lines. I cannot speak for other discussions that may have happened.

Q296 Paul Blomfield: ... We both know that while the Government might be neutral, the will of Parliament cannot be facilitated without the Government finding parliamentary time for legislation to be properly considered. That has been the case on other issues of conscience such as abortion and other questions. Do you think it would be right, should there be a majority opinion in Parliament that we should properly consider the issue, that Government should find time for that debate to take place?

Helen Whately: I recall back in 2015, shortly after I had been elected, that we debated a private Member's Bill about assisted dying. There was a substantial debate at the time. ... at the time Parliament voted very clearly against assisted dying at that point. What I can do is reiterate the Government position, which is that should the will of Parliament change, the Government will not stand in its way, but Parliament needs to take that step.

Q297 Paul Blomfield: There is a difference between not standing in its way and enabling proper debate. ...

Helen Whately: You are asking me a hypothetical question which, at the moment, I cannot give you a different answer to.

Chair: ... We heard earlier ... about investment in palliative care versus, presumably, the investment that the NHS would have to make in providing medically assisted dying. If we were to have a change in the law ... has any modelling work been done in NHS England about where that cost would come from?

Professor Powis: Not that I am aware of. This is a policy area that I do not think it appropriate for NHS England to get involved in. ...

Q298 Chair: It is a matter for Parliament in making the moral decision to cross that Rubicon, but if we were to be faced with such legislation it would be perfectly reasonable for Members of Parliament to come to NHS England and say, "How would you facilitate such a change if we were to give it the green light?" We would have to be in that knowledge base before we made that decision. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/13397/html/>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answers

Business of the House

Peter Bottomley (Conservative): ... Eight days ago, on 28 June, before the debate on the hybrid Holocaust Memorial Bill, but after I had come into the Chamber, a written statement from a Minister was put in the Library saying that the estimated cost in one year had gone up by more than twice the £17 million that the Government have already spent without achieving anything.

Does the Department think that is an appropriate way of putting important information into the public domain, when neither Minister speaking in the debate mentioned that increase

of nearly £36 million and no MP in the Chamber knew about it?

Will the Leader of the House ask the permanent secretary in that Department to report this to the National Audit Office and ask it to update the report it made a year ago?

Penny Mordaunt: ... I have written to the Department on that matter and I shall certainly, again, make sure it has heard his comments today.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-06/debates/2A7F8BCA-E30E-41E7-8F1D-C81532A196BD/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-DC244F41-B59C-4DE9-B180-A9BC436C90FF>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-06-28/hcws891>

House of Lords Written Answers

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL8725] To ask His Majesty's Government for what reasons they support the commemoration of the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime against people of Jewish origin and others in Victoria Tower Gardens, to the exclusion of other genocides and other available sites.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Victoria Tower Gardens was chosen as the most fitting site in terms of its historical, emotional, and political significance and its ability to offer the greatest potential impact and visibility for the project. The planned Holocaust Memorial will commemorate the six million Jewish people and all victims of Nazi persecution, and the accompanying learning centre will address subsequent genocides.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-22/hl8725>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

The Earl of Sandwich (Crossbench) [HL8737] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the proposed Holocaust Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens will affect the Buxton anti-slavery memorial location, in terms of (1) physical distance, (2) daylight, and (3) visitor numbers; and what research, if any, has been carried out by planners to obtain these answers.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Landscape improvements as part of the proposed Holocaust Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens are intended to enhance the opportunity to appreciate the significance of the Buxton Memorial. Full details of the assessed impact on the Buxton Memorial are included in the planning application, especially the Environmental Statement, which remains available on Westminster City Council's website.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-22/hl8737>

The Planning Application and Environmental Statement referred to above can be read at

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

The following three questions all received the same answer

Victoria Tower Gardens

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL8816] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 22 June (HL Deb col 328) that the proposed design for a Holocaust memorial “uses approximately 7.5 per cent of the area of Victoria Tower Gardens”, and the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Housing, Communities and Local Government) on 4 July 2019 (HC270274), which refers to around 85 per cent of green space being retained, whether they will clarify the amount of green

space that would be lost; and what assessment they have made of the calculation by the London Historic Parks & Gardens Trust that 29.6 per cent of the green space, excluding the mound, would be lost.

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL8817] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 22 June (HL Deb col 328), in relation to the consideration of alternative sites for a Holocaust memorial, that "all that work was done many years ago", whether they intend to publish their assessment of sites alternative to Victoria Tower Gardens.

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL8818] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 22 June (HL Deb col 329) concerning the proposed Holocaust memorial, whether they will clarify what was meant by the statement that "The view of Parliament from the memorial will serve as a permanent reminder that political decisions have far-reaching consequences".

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Detailed information on the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre published as part of the planning application includes an assessment of the significance of the chosen location (see especially the proof of evidence of the UK Holocaust Memorial co-chairs (document cd 8.1) and the assessment of alternative sites (see environmental statement volume 2 revised chapter 4 (cd 6.49)). The information remains available on Westminster City Council's website.

In addition to the planning application information, the answers I provided on 12 April 2023 (HL6914) and 5 May (HL7432) provide detailed figures on the areas used for the proposed development. For clarity, the figure of approximately 7.5% relates to the total area of Victoria Tower Gardens and the figure of around 85% relates to the area of green space at Victoria Tower Gardens.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-27/hl8816>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-27/hl8817>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-27/hl8818>

The remarks referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-06-22/debates/8B6CD0FC-3C14-4F4D-BA76-468B3A6C41FE/HolocaustMemorial#contribution-7889B5E0-BDDC-4534-9DD2-3D8AAD7F7410>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-06-22/debates/8B6CD0FC-3C14-4F4D-BA76-468B3A6C41FE/HolocaustMemorial#contribution-8B134CFD-FA3A-48E8-9AAB-0AE9A5B0A19A>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-06-22/debates/8B6CD0FC-3C14-4F4D-BA76-468B3A6C41FE/HolocaustMemorial#contribution-F7FFC6A5-E37D-404C-8472-19667E6F8D07>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2019-06-27/270274>

and

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

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-25/hl7432>

The proof or evidence, and assessment of alternative sites, referred to above can be read at

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

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Israel

See also the Ministerial Statement and Q&A on “Iran” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Correction

Violence in the West Bank

The following is an extract from the Urgent Question on Violence in the West Bank on 4 July 2023.

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru): My thoughts go out to the people affected by the horrific attacks on the Jenin refugee camp. We must be clear that this is a violation of international law and that the occupying forces, in particular, have a responsibility to end the violence. I will give a clear suggestion of a possible action: will the UK Government send a clear message of condemnation by bringing to an end the importation into the UK of goods that are produced in those Israeli settlements that are deemed illegal under international law?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: As I say, we will continue to make calls on Israel—
[*Interruption.*] Goods made in the settlements are not allowed to be imported, and that continues to be the case. We continue to grow the work that we do on trade with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the OPTs, and I know the Department for Business and Trade is focused on that development work.

[\[Official Report, 4 July 2023, Vol. 735, c. 703.\]](#)

Letter of correction from the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Anne-Marie Trevelyan):

An error has been identified in my response to the right hon. Member for Dwyfor Meirionnydd (Liz Saville Roberts). The correct response should have been:

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: As I say, we will continue to make calls on Israel—
[*Interruption.*] **Goods imported from the settlements are not entitled to benefit from UK-Israel trade preferences.** We continue to grow the work that we do on trade with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the OPTs, and I know the Department for Business and Trade is focused on that development work.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-05/debates/6251AE0A-FD29-4DA0-A8D0-8B6D3A3E7BB0/ForeignCommonwealthAndDevelopmentOffice>

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Israel: Palestinians

Anum Qaisar (SNP) [191707] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his Israeli counterparts on the potential impact of the Israeli permit system on Palestinian mothers from Gaza with babies receiving treatment in East Jerusalem hospitals.

Anum Qaisar (SNP) [191709] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to the Israeli authorities on reports of the forced transfer of Palestinian patients from Palestinian to Israeli ambulances to enter occupied East Jerusalem.

David Rutley: Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We recognise that under

international humanitarian law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health to the fullest extent of the means available to it. The wounded and ill in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-28/191707>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-28/191709>

Israel: Palestinians

Anum Qaisar (SNP) [191711] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities on (a) recent and (b) possible future demolitions of Palestinian schools in the occupied territories.

David Rutley: The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to international humanitarian law. Our opposition to the demolition of Palestinian property is long-standing. The practice causes unnecessary suffering and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. Most recently, on 7 May, The Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon wrote to the Israeli Ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, to express the government's opposition to the demolition of Jubbet Adh Dhib school. Lord Ahmad has also visited a school under threat of demolition in Masafer Yatta during his visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-28/191711>

Israeli Settlements

Anum Qaisar (SNP) [191710] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Israel's compliance with paragraph 4 of UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

David Rutley: We have long supported resolutions consistent with our policy, including United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334. The UK's position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution and indeed contribute to the negative trends that imperil the two-state solution. We urge Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately and we continue to monitor the changes to the settlement approval process instituted by the Government of Israel on June 18, which facilitate swifter approval of construction in settlements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-28/191710>

UN Security Council 2334, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

UNRWA: Finance

Anum Qaisar (SNP) [191708] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to increase funding to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

David Rutley: While the seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, the UK remains a longstanding supporter to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) and values its importance as a vital humanitarian and stabilising force in the region. In the financial year 2022/2023, the UK provided UNRWA with £18.7 million and in 2023/4 our funding is approximately £10 million. Our annual contribution to their programme budget helps UNRWA provide education to over 533,000 children a year (half of

them girls), and access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees. We are aware of UNRWA's financial challenges and frequently raise this with MENA regional partners at ministerial level, most recently with the government of the United Arab Emirates. To that end, the UK Government is working with UNRWA and other international donors to help ensure its sustainability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-28/191708>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Violence in the West Bank

The answer given by the Minister in the House of Commons was read in the House of Lords.

Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour): My Lords, we must all be concerned about the events in the camp in Jenin. Last Whitsun, I visited the West Bank, touring refugee camps ... I witnessed at first hand the conditions in some of the camps and the closeness of the communities. I also witnessed settler violence against Palestinian villagers. The situation was pretty dire. I recognise that Israel has the right to defend itself against militant groups, but that right must be exercised proportionately and in line with international law.

... what of substance are the Minister and the Government doing to bring this immediate conflict to an end and to lay the foundations of a two-state solution, which we all seek?

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): ... I share his concern, and we have all been again shocked by the cycle of violence that continues to occur across the West Bank in particular but also in Gaza. I share the same sentiments and principles that the noble Lord has articulated in relation to Israel's security concerns; however, as it seeks to address those particular concerns, it should do so by respecting and minimising civilian casualties, demonstrating restraint and adherence to principles of international humanitarian law, and ensuring that civilians are protected.

On the steps that the United Kingdom is taking, as the Minister responsible for the Middle East, I can assure the noble Lord that, first and foremost, we are engaging directly with both sides. Over the past 48 hours or so I have spoken to the Israeli representative to the United Kingdom at length and to the Israeli chargé d'affaires. My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has spoken to Foreign Minister Cohen of Israel as well as the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, Mohammad Shtayyeh, again emphasising: first, the importance of de-escalation; secondly, the importance of ensuring a minimisation of any further violence that may take place; and, thirdly, the need to ensure, particularly on the Israeli side, now the Jenin operation has ended, that full access is given to allow full medical attention for those injured during the crisis. Tragically, people have died on both sides. There has also been a further attack in Tel Aviv with a car ramming. It shows the challenge that we all face regarding the ever-growing circle of violence. I agree with the noble Lord and assure him of my best offices in addressing the issue of the immediate cessation of violence. It should be the foundation for direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I, too, have visited the Occupied Territories in the West Bank in recent times and echo the concerns already raised. I pay particular tribute to the NGOs and voluntary organisations within the Occupied Territories that are giving support in the current circumstances. I am particularly concerned, again, about settler violence and increasing attacks, and the incitement from the extreme Government of Israel for settlers to erode and take away the rights of the resident population there. I am concerned to hear from Medical Aid for Palestinians that medical aid is proving inaccessible for many civilians under the violent conditions within the West

Bank and that they are prevented from having access to medical support. I should like to hear the Government say something about that. The UK Government now have the presidency of the UN Security Council. Will they take a leadership role to ensure the protection of human rights for the Palestinian people in the illegally Occupied Territories of the West Bank?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... I have directly met some of the NGOs, including Medical Aid for Palestinians, in my office in the last 48 hours and we discussed specific measures. Engagement with NGOs is a key part of my priorities. We will be convening a session tomorrow on this issue at the UN Security Council. It is a closed session but will be followed later in our presidency with a more extensive debate on the Middle East peace process. I share all the relevant concerns expressed by the noble Baroness about the need for negotiation and for peace to prevail.

Viscount Hailsham (Conservative): Will my noble friend say to his counterparts in the Israeli Government that those of us who are strong supporters of the state of Israel are none the less deeply concerned by the building of settlements outside the internationally recognised frontiers of Israel, by the absence of any obvious movement on a peace settlement or agreement with the Palestinians, and by the propensity to use massive force? Does he agree that this is not a stable situation?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I totally agree with my noble friend. For the record, again, the United Kingdom's position on the settlements is clear: they are an impediment to peace. As my noble friend illustrated, those settlements are of course illegal under international law.

Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated): My Lords, Israel was forced to act because the Palestinian Authority lost control of Jenin and Islamic jihadists and Hamas terrorists then used the city to mount a wave of terror attacks on families and children in Israel. In this operation, the IDF destroyed explosives labs, seized hundreds of guns and bombs and arrested 120 terrorists. It did all that in a densely populated area while ensuring that there were no civilian casualties at all—not one. Does the Minister agree that this was a justified, proportionate, successful operation to tackle terrorism?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, as I have already indicated, as both a friend and a partner to Israel, the UK—indeed, I myself—reiterated those exact points to the chargé during our conversation, as did my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary. However, as we see the cycle of violence occur yet again, is it equally important that the core issue is addressed, because there can be no peace for any Israeli or Palestinian until we see a final settlement on this long-standing issue.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister agree that trying to allocate blame in the circumstances of the events of the past few days is probably not very worth while? Surely it is becoming clearer that the total absence of any discussion of ways to dial down the escalation, which is being provoked by extremists on both sides, is part of the problem. What do we in the Security Council plan to do to see whether some discussion—direct or indirect—of the way ahead could now take place, perhaps adding a small element of chance that the escalation will not continue into a new intifada?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I agree with the noble Lord about the role that the UK has to play. We are convening appropriate meetings. Ultimately, I agree that what we need—indeed, the only way to stop this cycle of violence—is de-escalation now and a pathway to peace.

Lord Polak (Conservative): ... There is a clear pattern of behaviour, which—whether it is drones targeting Ukrainian citizens, the support for Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Jenin, or Iran via the IRGC—continues to destabilise across the globe. ...

... every Government's first duty is to defend their people. Does he therefore agree that we must stand shoulder to shoulder with our friend and ally Israel in removing Iranian-

backed arms and explosives before they are used to murder innocent Israeli citizens?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... we have been very clear in our statements on Israel's destabilising influence in the wider region. I reiterate on the record that the first responsibility of any responsible Government is the security of their citizens. As I said, while we appreciate, respect and have defended Israel's right to self-defence, what is equally needed—as I am sure my noble friend agrees—is security, stabilisation and, ultimately, a pathway of sustainable peace for both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/054A0BF6-2DCB-4FBD-B35D-136751271883/ViolenceInTheWestBank>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL8728] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made, if any, to the government of Israel in support of the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' call on that government to immediately cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's position on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. As the Foreign Secretary said in his 30 June statement, alongside his Canadian and Australian counterparts, the continued expansion of settlements is an obstacle to peace and negatively impacts efforts to achieve a negotiated two-state solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-22/hl8728>

The UN Secretary-General's statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2023-06-28/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-the-occupied-palestinian-territory>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-international-statement-following-recent-events-in-israel-and-the-west-bank>

UNRWA: Finance

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL8727] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with other donor countries about providing new funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) following UNWRA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini's forecast on 20 June of likely cuts to UNWRA's service provision.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are longstanding supporters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), providing essential humanitarian support to Palestinian refugees across its five zones of operation. Our annual contribution to their programme budget helps UNRWA provide education to over 533,000 children a year (half of them girls), and access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees. We are aware of UNRWA's financial challenges and frequently raise this with MENA regional partners at ministerial level, most recently with the Government of the United Arab Emirates. To that end, the UK Government is working with UNRWA and other international donors to help ensure its sustainability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-22/hl8727>

The forecast referred to above can be read at

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/commissioner-general-statement-advisory-commission-meeting-unrwa>

United Nations

Secretary-General's press encounter ... on the situation in the Middle East

... I was deeply disturbed by the news from Jenin in the occupied West Bank.

I strongly condemn all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror.

Israel's airstrikes and ground operations in a crowded refugee camp were the worst violence in the West Bank in many years, with a significant impact on civilians, including more than one hundred injured and thousands forced to flee.

Schools and hospitals were damaged. Water and electricity networks were disrupted. And people in need were prevented from accessing essential care and relief.

All those injured must have access to medical care, and humanitarian workers must be able to reach everyone in need.

I once again call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law, including the duty to exercise restraint and use only proportional force, and the duty to minimize damage and injury and respect and preserve human life.

The use of airstrikes is inconsistent with the conduct of law enforcement operations.

I also remind Israel, as the Occupying Power, that it has a responsibility to ensure that the civilian population is protected against all acts of violence.

I understand Israel's legitimate concerns with its security. But escalation is not the answer. It simply bolsters radicalization and leads to a deepening cycle of violence and bloodshed.

Restoring the hope of the Palestinian people in a meaningful political process, leading to a two-State solution and the end of the occupation, is an essential contribution by Israel to its own security. ...

Question: Secretary-General, can you clarify if your condemnation specifically applies to Israel in your statement? ...

Secretary-General: No. It applies to all use of excessive force and obviously, in this situation, there was an excessive force used by Israeli forces.

Question: Secretary-General, three special rapporteurs today have accused Israel of possible war crimes in Jenin for actions that amount to egregious violations of international law and standards of use of force. Does that square with what you have described today in terms of the attacks on hospitals, on infrastructure, civilian infrastructure? Do those attacks amount to war crimes? And yesterday, Palestine's ambassador again talked about the need for an international protection force. Is this something you can endorse? Do Palestinians need an international force to protect them from Israel?

Secretary-General: I don't think it's realistic to think that we can have a military force sent to Israel. I don't think the Israeli Government would consent on that possibility. But I think we need to find mechanisms to allow for the protection of civilians in these dramatic circumstances. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2023-07-06/secretary-generals-press-encounter-visits-haiti-and-trinidad-and-tobago-and-the-situation-the-middle-east>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israeli air strikes and ground operations in Jenin may constitute war crime: UN experts

Israeli air strikes and ground operations in the occupied West Bank targeting the Jenin Refugee camp and killing at least 12 Palestinians may *prima facie* constitute a war crime, UN experts said today.

“Israeli forces’ operations in the occupied West Bank, killing and seriously injuring the occupied population, destroying their homes and infrastructure, and arbitrarily displacing thousands, amount to egregious violations of international law and standards on the use of force and may constitute a war crime,” the experts said. ...

“The attacks were the fiercest in the West Bank since the destruction of the Jenin camp in 2002,” the UN experts said.

They pointed to multiple reports about ambulances being prevented from accessing Jenin Refugee Camp to evacuate the wounded, hampering their access to medical assistance. Around 4,000 Palestinians reportedly fled the Jenin Refugee Camp overnight on Monday and Tuesday after the deadly air strikes.

“It is heart-breaking to see thousands of Palestinian refugees originally displaced since 1947-1949, forced to march out of the camp in abject fear at the dead of night,” the experts said.

Denouncing so-called “counter terrorism” operations by Israeli forces, the experts said the attacks found no justification under international law.

“The attacks constitute collective punishment of the Palestinian population, who have been labelled a “collective security threat” in the eyes of Israeli authorities,” they said.

They expressed grave concern about military weaponry and tactics deployed by Israel’s occupation forces at least twice over the last two weeks against Jenin’s population.

“The Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory are protected persons under international law, guaranteed of all human rights including the presumption of innocence,” the experts said. “They cannot be treated as a collective security threat by the occupying Power, all the more while it advances the annexation of occupied Palestinian land, and displacement and dispossession of its Palestinian residents.”

The experts said Israel’s operations in Jenin were amplifications of the structural violence that has permeated the occupied Palestinian territory for decades.

“The impunity that Israel has enjoyed for its acts of violence over decades, only fuel and intensify the recurring cycle of violence,” they said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/07/israeli-air-strikes-and-ground-operations-jenin-may-constitute-war-crime-un>

In Dialogue with the State of Palestine, Experts of the Human Rights Committee Commend the Creation of an Observatory to Combat Gender-Based Violence, Raise Issues Concerning the Death Penalty and Reported Targeting of Persons Exercising Freedom of Expression

... The Committee has before it the initial periodic report of the State of Palestine (CCPR/C/PSE/1).

Mohammad Fahad S.A. Shalalkeh, Minister of Justice and head of the delegation, said that the recent demolition of homes, and the killings and displacement of civilians in Jenin were crimes against humanity within the framework of the Covenant. The occupying forces had to cease their pursuit of colonisation. International human rights law and not laws from the Talmud or Torah had to govern the situation. The continued promulgation of racist laws and execution of prisoners ran counter to international human rights law.

The dialogue was taking place in a context of the continuing Israeli civilian and military

occupation of Palestine, whose people were denied not only justice because of a racist judicial system but also their basic human rights. Settler terrorism had only escalated. While Sven Kuehn Von Burgsdorff, representative of the European Union in Palestine, had described settler violence as terrorism and highlighted Israeli occupation authorities' collusion with them, he also emphasised the importance of United Nations organs, treaty bodies included, to put measures in place that could prevent its escalation, killing and forced displacement. ... statements made by the occupying authority were rife with calls for national, ethnic, religious and racist hatred. ...

Nevertheless, Palestine acceded to international human rights treaties as the country believed that incorporating the rights and freedoms inscribed therein into its policy and legislation was necessary. Palestine had moved from a revolutionary approach to a structured path to statehood. ...

A Committee Expert noted that the Committee was aware of the Israeli occupation, as well as continued expansion of its colonies and the Gaza Strip blockade. ... The Committee called on Israel to bring its position in line with international law. It understood the many obstacles preventing Palestine from fully implementing the Covenant and its Second Optional Protocol. However, in acceding to international human rights treaties, Palestine committed to respecting the rights and freedoms inscribed therein in territories under the Government's effective control ...

The non-discrimination legal framework in the country was of concern, as it did not address gender identity or sexual orientation. Further, reports had been received that often "the testimony of a man was worth two of women". Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and Bedouin people was concerning, but articles addressing such discrimination were totally absent from legislation. Antisemitic rhetoric in the public sphere was also regrettable. ...

Abortion was criminalised, and was allowed only in certain cases with the approval of religious authorities. How would the State party guarantee that women had bodily autonomy? ...

In 2020, 22 anti-corruption protestors were arrested during a peaceful protest in Ramallah. Eight of them were charged with unlawful gathering. Charges against two of the anti-corruption protestors were deemed inadmissible, and six of them would be tried. ...

Whistle-blower Amira Shihadeh had received death threats and lost her job after she provided confidential information to the Anti-Corruption Commission. How would the State party ensure confidentiality and support the work of whistle-blowers? ...

Another Expert noted that the draft family protection law had still not been adopted by parliament. What was its status and did the law contain text addressing marital rape as a specific crime? Honour crimes were concerning. How were they investigated? ...

Almost half of the prison population had yet to be convicted and the situation of detainees awaiting trial was especially concerning in Ramallah. What measures were the State party considering to reduce the number of detainees? ...

Another Expert asked about draft legislation concerning the death penalty. What were its tenants, what was its status and was there a timeline for its implementation? Reportedly, the State party would rather regulate the death penalty than abolish it for lack of political will. Would it consider abolishing the death penalty altogether? ...

Deaths from the misuse of firearms by security forces were concerning. 18 Palestinians had been killed by law enforcement in the past five years. What measures would be taken to hold those responsible for use of excessive force accountable? ...

A Committee Expert said that the Israeli occupation undoubtedly had a negative effect on the overall health situation in Palestine. What rules regulated the submission of medical requests to the occupation authorities? Approval rates were low, considering the number of requests. What was the average time for responses to such requests? What was the percentage of overall budget allocated to managing health referrals in Palestine? What

were the chances of survival for the chronically ill, people with high-risk illnesses such as cancer, and people undergoing major surgeries? How many Palestinian patients were admitted into Israeli hospitals in line with their obligations? ...

Responses by the Delegation

... The draft Constitution of the State of Palestine included all the provisions of the Covenant. Further, there was a draft law criminalising torture, including a definition of torture. National religious identity was not in contradiction with the Covenant. ...

Sexual orientation was not prosecuted and law enforcement protected the right to life of people of all sexual orientations. The law of public health did not stipulate a link between abortion and religious opinion, but rather between the life of the women and the child. ...

Marital rape was not specifically criminalised. If complaints were reported to police, the offence was qualified as “psychological and physical harm”, determined by forensic reports. ...

The death penalty was in the penal codes applied in civil and military courts. Since 2005 it had not been implemented, however. ...

Palestine had suffered torture more than many other States. Delegation members recounted having been imprisoned in Israeli prisons. The State party loathed torture. ...

Palestine had acceded to many international conventions and agreements and in light of the events in Jenin, it would accede to more. The State party’s legal system was a dualist system that held great respect for cultural values. ...

Regarding legal protections for whistle-blowers and their relatives, specific rules came into force in 2021. Whistleblowing was encouraged and always remained confidential. ...

Israel was preventing Palestinians from accessing medical care. It was made clear that Palestinians were second class citizens during the pandemic, as the permit system did not allow Palestinians to access appropriate medical support. In Gaza, for example, medical support was truly lacking. Worse, Israel pillaged goods and finances through customs and prevented medical supplies from entering Palestinian territory, a practice that greatly isolated Gaza.

For example, for all Palestinian children suffering from cancer, 35 per cent of requests for care abroad were rejected and 65 per cent were rejected by Israel. One patient out of 10 lost their lives for lack of care.

All capital punishment in Gaza was beyond the control of the Government.

Palestinian people and leaders stood firmly against antisemitism because Palestinians were semitic themselves. ...

There were projects, conducted in partnership with international organisations, that were providing the Palestinian people with a basic minimum level of human rights. These were not enough in light of systematic violence; forced closure, arbitrary sieging and destruction of Palestinian villages and districts; confiscation of land and the settlement policy. Nevertheless, the Palestinian Government had the duty to assume its responsibilities towards its people. ...

Violent crackdowns on peaceful protests critiquing the Government were concerning, especially in Gaza. In certain instances, Gaza districts had been closed down or barricades set up. ...

Another Expert noted that while freedom of movement was indeed limited by the occupation, the refusal of issuance of passports to those living in Gaza for vague reasons was concerning. ...

How would the State party ensure that democracy was restored through regular and free elections? While voting in West Jerusalem was indeed a problem, elections were not held in Hamas-controlled Gaza. It seemed that Israel’s refusal to allow those in Jerusalem to participate in elections had become a pretext to not hold them. ...

Reports showed that women in Palestine were afraid to use social media as their accounts were often hacked and they received threats of violence based on the content they shared. ...

The delegation said that the judiciary was independent according to Palestinian law. ... In 2007, Palestine decided that passports would be issued to those in Gaza through the passport directorate in Ramallah, as falsified passports were concerning and could pose a threat to national interests. Between 2011 and 2023, the Ministry of Interior rejected around 1,000 applications from persons with criminal records. Palestine could not impose its jurisdiction throughout the territory and therefore often did not grant a passport unless someone fled the country. Any applicant who had been denied a passport could appear in court to obtain one. 40,000 passports had been issued over the past five years. ... Israel resorted to solitary confinement at home for children below 14 years of age in Jerusalem. As Israeli law did not allow for juveniles to be detained, they were kept at home and tracked under threat of a large fine. Currently, 12 bodies were held in Israeli morgues waiting for repatriation to Palestine. ...

Israelis established their State at the expense of the Palestinian people. Today, the territory called out for intervention into the settler violence in Jenin, especially from the United Nations. The same thing had happened in Huwara. How could Palestine implement the Covenant under occupation and duress from 63 terrorist organizations? Men, women and children were killed in terrorist acts and the world was silent. It was as if Palestinians did not have human rights. ...

A Committee Expert asked about the hundreds of people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who were in debt. If a person was not able to pay their debt, their creditor could ask for their sentence to continue. Out of approximately 46,000 sentences, over 3,000 were for women in debt. ...

Another Committee Expert said military courts, particularly in Gaza, had jurisdiction over civilians, reportedly issuing death sentences. What judicial guarantees were provided to civilians tried in military courts? ...

Responses by the Delegation

There was no cooperation between Palestine and Israel, which did not fulfil its obligation as an occupying power. Israel effectively robbed patients financially. Charges on medical bills were inflated. The State party had stopped dealing with Israeli hospitals on the issue. Israel withheld a much larger portion of medical fees than of other transactions. Palestine's legitimacy was reflected in the Palestinian Authority. Elections in 2018 saw the instatement of the President and the legislative council, with the absence of three members who had yet to join. Elections in the occupied territories since 1967 took place. ... The elections would take place following acceptance of holding them in Jerusalem. The international community had to support Palestine on this issue.

Ibrahim Khraishi, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine ... [said] It was important to call for an end to the occupation, which prevented self-determination. ...

The World Health Organization had released reports on the state of health in Palestine and the Occupied Syrian Golan. Impediments to access to health included Israel setting inflated prices for vaccines, sometimes by ten times. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/07/dialogue-state-palestine-experts-human-rights-committee-commend-creation-observatory>

Initial report submitted by the State of Palestine under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2015

<https://undocs.org/en/CCPR/C/PSE/1>

TOP

House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Iran

col 996 **The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly):** ... We know from working closely with our international partners that these Iranian menaces extend beyond the UK to the rest of Europe and the wider world. In March 2023, an Iranian-orchestrated plot was stopped in Athens. We have seen similar attempts in the United States of America, Türkiye, France and Denmark. Such brazen activity is unacceptable. ...

The first duty of His Majesty's Government is to protect the British people and those who have made their home here in the United Kingdom. ...

We have already designated more than 350 individuals and organisations linked to the Iranian regime, covering its military, security and judiciary. We have sanctioned the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety. ...

col 997 There is clear evidence that the Iranian regime continues to prepare operations against individuals in Europe and beyond. ...

First, we will establish a new Iran sanctions regime. ... It will give us new and enhanced powers to counter Iran's hostile and destabilising activities in the UK and around the world, allowing us to impose asset freezes and travel bans on more of Iran's decision makers, and on those doing its bidding.

In particular, we will have broader powers to target those involved in the regime's efforts: to undermine peace, stability and security in the region and internationally; to proliferate arms or weapons technology from Iran; to undermine democracy, respect for the rule of law and good governance; and to carry out other hostile activities towards the UK and our partners, including threats to our people, property or national security. We expect to introduce the necessary legislation in Parliament later this year.

Secondly, today we have designated a further 13 individuals and entities responsible for serious human rights violations inside Iran. ...

col 1001 **Brendan O'Hara (SNP):** ... Will the Foreign Secretary explain why the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has been sanctioned and not proscribed? We were told six months ago by the Minister for Security ... that the IRGC was to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation. ...

James Cleverly: ... I recognise that people see proscription as the most desired outcome, without necessarily understanding that much of what they suspect they want to see from what they believe will be the outcome of proscription is actually already in place, such as asset freezes and travel bans. ...

Theresa Villiers (Conservative): A constituent of mine has repeatedly raised serious concerns about connections between the Islamic Centre of England, the IRGC and the Office of the Supreme Leader. He also believes there could be such connections between the Supreme Leader and an Islamic centre in Manchester. What are the Government doing to ensure that UK-based charities such as those two centres can never be a threat in any way to the security of Iranian dissidents in the United Kingdom?

col 1002 **James Cleverly:** ... My Department has discussed that with the Home Office. Indeed, I have discussed it with the Minister for Security, my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Tom Tugendhat). I reassure her and the House that he takes the actions of the organisations that she has mentioned very seriously indeed. We wish to ensure that the Charity Commission also full discharges its duty to ensure that any organisation under its remit is not used to harass or persecute foreign nationals, or indeed British people, here in the UK. ...

col 1003 **Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat):** ... Mahsa Amini was an inspiration to women

not just in her own country, but across the world. ...

Will the Foreign Secretary back the campaign to rename the street of the Iranian embassy after her, so that every business card, every email, every piece of post that they have to receive and send has her name on it? ...

James Cleverly: The hon. Lady ... will know that the naming of thoroughfares is a decision not for central Government, but for local government. None the less, she makes an incredibly important point. Perhaps the planning committee of the local council might take her suggestion on board.

col 1004 **Greg Smith (Conservative):** Iran has made no secret of its efforts to arm, fund and train Palestinian terror groups in the west bank. The leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad has even said that its terrorists depend on Iranian-supplied weaponry. That is the very same group that has turned Jenin into a city of terror. I am sure my right hon. Friend will agree that we should condemn this destabilising activity. Does he also agree that such horrendous examples doubly underline the need for the very welcome toolkit of measures he has announced this afternoon—the need not just to have them in our arsenal, but to use them?

James Cleverly: ... I completely agree that that support for violence and terrorism, not just in the west bank but more broadly across the middle east, is completely wrong and we will always stand up against it. The sad truth is that the Palestinian people suffer because of the export of Iranian violence into the region. We continue to work, as a cornerstone of our foreign policy, to bring about peace between the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. That is not helped by the violent interference of Iran, and we will continue to take action to deter and prevent it. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-06/debates/4F4C55A1-2720-4CB3-BCD1-9556B65D2E3A/Iran>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill**

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

Call for evidence

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2023/july-2023/economic-activity-of-public-bodies-overseas-matters-bill-call-for-evidence/>

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>

Report Stage, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/7722BAA6-C15A-4413-8758-2AF0927061BF/OnlineSafetyBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/A3CD7080-9B88-4F19-A7A7-D81E1739B887/OnlineSafetyBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-06/debates/35CCD184-5828-4C47-AA19-D19D8AF44938/OnlineSafetyBill>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/52119/documents/3778>

and

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/52137/documents/3783>

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

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>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

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

**** Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill** (closing date not specified – no later than 14 September 2023 but may be earlier)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2023/july-2023/economic-activity-of-public-bodies-overseas-matters-bill-call-for-evidence/>

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/>

TOP

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