



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Oral Answers

Contest: UK Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2023

[The Home Secretary's first answer to the Commons urgent question](#) on 19 July was repeated in the Lords.

Lord Coaker (Labour): ... We are told individuals may develop a terrorist mindset during their time in prison and that four of the nine terrorist attacks since 2018 have been perpetrated by serving or recently released prisoners. ... What more can be done to prevent this radicalisation in prison?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): ... Despite ongoing efforts to mitigate the terrorist risk posed by individuals in custody, the majority still require long-term risk management post release.

However, following the Fishmongers' Hall attack, we established the probation national security division, doubled the number of specialist counterterrorism probation officers, and allowed for more robust and dedicated risk management of these individuals. Furthermore, all terrorist offenders on probation are now subject to electronic monitoring, and in June 2021 we introduced polygraph testing for terrorist offenders, giving us a powerful tool for monitoring behaviour. ...

Baroness Warsi (Conservative): ... Prevent, both as a policy and particularly in its implementation, is deeply controversial. Can my noble friend assist the Government's case by providing some detail, and specifically some data? ... Can he specifically provide data the Government hold on the origin of Prevent referrals—whether by, for example, the police, schools or healthcare—that lead to Channel interventions, data on Channel referrals by age for those under the age of 18, and, finally, data on autism and other forms of neurodiversity among individuals referred to Prevent and to the Channel programme?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... Prevent can occasionally be characterised as somewhat controversial, but we should remember that it is of course ideologically agnostic. ... Some 3,800 referrals have resulted in individuals receiving support to move away from radicalising ideologies. In the year ending 31 March 2022, there

were 6,406 referrals to Prevent, and of those, 13%, or 804, were adopted as Channel cases. I do not have the data as regards age, origin or autism, but I will endeavour to find that out. ...

Lord Harris of Haringey (Labour): ... My reading of the review of Prevent, which will now be fully implemented, is that it thinks that the preoccupation with or the amount of time spent on Prevent referrals for domestic extreme terrorists is misplaced and should be reduced, and the focus should be on Islamist terrorism. Can the Minister expand on that? Who then will deal with people who are at risk of becoming domestic extremists?

The other element of the Prevent review is to move away from what is pejoratively described as safeguarding. However, as we know, the route by which people become violent extremists is complicated, and it might make the Prevent strand more acceptable if it was seen as being about safeguarding vulnerable individuals rather than penalising communities.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... the Government have indicated that they will implement all the recommendations ... As the noble Lord noted, about 67% of attacks since 2018 have been Islamist, which represents three-quarters of the MI5 caseload and about 64% of those who are currently in custody. However, 22% of attacks since 2018 have been by extreme right-wing terrorist organisations. They represent about a quarter of the MI5 caseload and about 28% of those in custody for terrorism-related offences. ...

Lord Walney (Crossbench): ... the commentary around the revised Contest strategy makes clear that the Government believe that the proportion of referrals to Channel from those at risk of Islamist radicalisation is artificially low. Can the Minister confirm that that is the case? What is the plan to address that issue?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I fear I cannot confirm whether that is the case...

Lord Kamall (Conservative): ... a few years ago, I did some work with some anti-radicalisation programmes that looked at taking children who are young—often surprisingly young ... and using sport or other activities to convince them not to be radicalised ... One good thing about those projects is that they were run by psychologists who understood young children and people likely to be radicalised, but also by people from the Muslim community. Victims of terrorism are often Muslims themselves. ...

Lord Anderson of Ipswich (Crossbench): ... terrorist attacks on small venues, such as cafes and village churches, have, happily, barely featured over the last quarter of a century. Is the Minister satisfied that the proposed new statutory duties on those responsible for many hundreds of thousands of such premises to complete terrorism evaluations and to provide terrorism protection training to each worker, on pain of enforcement proceedings by a regulator, are in all respects proportionate?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... The Government carefully considered the impact on premises and events that may be captured by the forthcoming Bill. It includes ensuring the requirements are proportionate while achieving better public security and without placing undue burden on responsible persons. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-07-24/debates/03C258B1-5D37-4875-A575-204A0BFE9766/ContestUKStrategyForCounteringTerrorism2023>

The CONTEST update, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171084/CONTEST_2023.pdf

The Prevent Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1134986/Independent_Review_of_Prevent.pdf

Crown Prosecution Service

Two men charged with terrorism offences

The CPS has authorised charges in relation to two men under the Terrorism Act.

Anjem Choudary, 56, from Ilford, has been charged with one count of membership of a proscribed organisation, one count of addressing meetings to encourage support for a proscribed organisation and one count of directing a terrorist organisation.

Khaled Hussein, 28, from Canada, has been charged with membership of a proscribed organisation.

Nick Price, from the CPS Counter Terrorism Division, said: “The CPS has authorised charges in relation to Anjem Choudary and Khaled Hussein under the Terrorism Act.

“The charges relate to the proscribed organisation Al-Muhajiroun, also known as the Islamic Thinkers Society. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/two-men-charged-terrorism-offences>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Museums and Galleries: Restitution

John Hayes (Conservative) [194319] To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has had discussions with representatives of museums on the potential impact on UK culture of returning artefacts to their country of origin.

John Whittingdale: Museums and galleries in the UK operate independently of HM Government. Decisions relating to the care and management of their collections are a matter for the trustees of each museum, including research into items’ provenance and claims for restitution. Last year, Arts Council England published guidance on the handling of restitution claims and practical advice for museums on this matter.

Some national museums are prevented by legislation from deaccessioning objects in their collections unless, broadly, they are duplicates or unfit for retention. The two exceptions to this are when the objects are human remains less than 1,000 years old, and objects spoliated during the Nazi era. The Government has no plans to change these laws.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-17/194319>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/20167/>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Technology: Israel

John Howell (Conservative) [194178] To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether she has made an assessment for the implications of her policies of Tel

Aviv's recent rating as the second-best cleantech ecosystem; and if her Department will hold discussions with Israeli businesses on the steps being taken to develop cleaner and safer technologies.

Nigel Huddleston: The Department for Business and Trade works closely with the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, who recognise the importance of the CleanTech sector in Israel and its success and innovation in developing new technologies, along with the value that this can bring to the UK economy.

The Embassy both prioritises this sector and assists Israeli companies who wish to invest and expand into the UK. It also supports UK corporates who are looking for solutions that Israeli start-ups can provide in this sector.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194178>

Israel and Palestinians

David Lammy (Labour) [194139] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many times he has held discussions with his counterparts in (a) Israel and (b) Palestine in 2023.

David Rutley: The Foreign Secretary has spoken with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen four times this year, one of which was in person, three of which were phone calls. With regards to the Palestinian Authority, this year the Foreign Secretary has had one phone call with Foreign Minister Riad Malki, and two phone calls with Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh. The Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, also met with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riad Malki, and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) in January 2023. Lord Ahmad has also had several meetings this year with Palestinian head of mission Dr Husam Zomlot and Israeli ambassador Tzipi Hotovely in London. Finally, FCDO diplomats and development experts in the UK, Israel and the OPTs meet regularly with both Israeli and Palestinian officials to discuss UK foreign and development policy issues.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194139>

The following two questions both received the same answer

West Bank: Violence

David Lammy (Labour) [194138] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of changes in the level of violence against civilians in the occupied West Bank since January 2023.

Israel: Palestinians

Ruth Jones (Labour) [194275] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the violence in Israel and Palestine.

David Rutley: The security situation in the West Bank is deteriorating and further escalation must be avoided. The UK unequivocally condemns terror attacks against civilians. Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. On 5 July, the Foreign Secretary discussed recent violence and attacks against civilians in calls with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh. We call on the Palestinian Authority and Government of Israel to cooperate in securing the safety and protection of civilians across the West Bank.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194138>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194275>

Israeli Settlements

David Lammy (Labour) [194128] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has held with his counterpart in Israel on the expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank.

David Rutley: 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 call into question Israel's commitment to a 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. The Foreign Secretary reaffirmed this position in his 30 June statement along with his Australian and Canadian counterparts, and to Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen directly in their 5 July phone call. The Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon also frequently raises this issue with the Israeli ambassador to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194128>

The 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>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Palestinians: Schools

David Lammy (Labour) [194129] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has held with his counterpart in Israel on (a) recent and (b) potential future demolitions of Palestinian schools in the occupied territories that are (i) funded and (ii) co-funded by the UK overseas development assistance budget.

David Lammy (Labour) [194140] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much overseas development assistance funding has been spent on Palestinian schools in the occupied territories which have been (a) demolished and (b) threatened with demolition by Israeli authorities in the last five years.

David Rutley: As I [Minister of State for the Americas and the Caribbean] said in the House of Commons on 18 July, 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. 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 (OPTs) in January.

The FCDO aid budget is allocated in accordance with UK strategic priorities against a challenging financial climate. It is not possible to calculate the exact figure for UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding spent on schools in the OPTs that have been demolished (or are at risk of demolition) because ODA funding for this area goes into a multilateral pooled fund. However, there is a robust framework in place for allocating ODA. Data on ODA spend in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is available on DevTracker

<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/countries/PS>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194129>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-14/194140>

David Rutley's 18 July comment, referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-18/debates/CAE81580-310A-4884-991D-68ABC4CA687B/IsraelAndTheOccupiedPalestinianTerritories#contribution-4A858351-E210-42B1-AF46-010D729D871C>

House of Lords Written Answers

Middle East: Diplomatic Relations

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL9217] To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the recent restoration of diplomatic relations between several Middle Eastern states.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome the recent agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran if it leads to a de-escalation of tension. The onus is on Iran to honour its commitments. We also welcome the Abraham Accords as a historic milestone bringing us closer to the goal of shared prosperity and peace throughout the region. The UK is working with regional partners to ensure the Abraham Accords are an enduring success, and we continue to encourage other countries who have not yet normalised their relations with Israel to do so. We continue to support efforts to ensure normalisation also delivers benefits for the Palestinians.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-10/hl9217>

The Abraham Accords, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.state.gov/the-abraham-accords/>

UNRWA: Finance

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL9220] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to help prevent the potential suspension from September of all United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) services to registered Palestinian refugees, because of financial pressures on its budget; and what is their assessment of the capacity of other United Nations agencies to sustain essential services.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a longstanding supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) voting to renew the agency's mandate until June 2026, 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. Given the impact of the global pandemic on the economy and public finances, the UK moved to a target of spending 0.5 per cent of GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2021. This was a difficult - but temporary - decision and the then Chancellor indicated during his budget speech on 27th October 2021 that the UK is currently on track to return to 0.7 per cent of GNI spend on ODA by financial year 2024/25. We are aware of UNRWA's immediate financial challenges and have pledged £10 million to UNRWA for this financial year. I, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon as The Minister of State for the Middle East, frequently raise UNRWA's financial situation with Middle East and North Africa regional partners at ministerial level, and the Minister of State for Development and Africa has also raised this with Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Supervisor General of KSRelief at the Riyadh humanitarian forum in February. To that end, the UK government is working with

UNRWA and other international donors to help ensure its continued financial viability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-10/hl9220>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Statement: Israel Judicial Reforms

An FCDO spokesperson said: As the Prime Minister discussed with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier this year, the UK's strong relationship with Israel has always been underpinned by our shared democratic values.

While Israel's exact constitutional arrangements are a matter for Israelis, we urge the Israeli government to build consensus and avoid division, ensuring that a robust system of checks and balances and the independence of Israel's judiciary are preserved.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fcdo-statement-israel-judicial-reforms>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

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

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

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

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

Online Safety Bill

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

Nakba Commemoration Bill

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

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

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

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

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

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

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

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)

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

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

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/>

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