



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **BBC: Gaza**

**Tahir Ali (Labour)** [13328] To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has had recent discussions with the BBC board on impartiality in its news coverage of the conflict in Gaza.

**Julia Lopez:** The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Ministerial team regularly meets with BBC leadership, including members of the Board, to discuss a range of issues.

The BBC has a duty to provide accurate and impartial news and information. In delivering that duty, the BBC is editorially and operationally independent and decisions around its editorial policies and guidelines are a matter for the BBC. Ofcom is the external independent regulator responsible for ensuring BBC coverage is duly impartial and accurate under the Broadcasting Code and BBC Charter.

The Secretary of State has repeatedly made clear that the BBC's accuracy and impartiality is critical to viewer trust. It is particularly important when it comes to coverage of highly sensitive events, such as the terrorist acts committed in Israel on 7 October and the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The Secretary of State has regularly stated that point in meetings with the BBC.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13328>

## House of Commons Library Briefing

### The impact of the two-child limit in Universal Credit

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9301/CBP-9301.pdf>

## Charity Commission

### Regulator to investigate Al-Tawheed Charitable Trust over event held at its premises

... the charity regulator for England and Wales has announced a statutory inquiry to investigate the [Al-Tawheed Charitable Trust \(TUCF\)](#). This follows serious concerns raised regarding an event held at its premises.

TUCF was registered in 1994. Its charitable purposes include promoting the Islamic faith, supporting Muslim communities and promoting recreation, sport, social and cultural activities.

The regulator is investigating an event that was held by an external organisation at TUCF's premises in 2020. The charity's current trustees, who were not in office at the time, told the Commission the event was a 'religious remembrance programme' for Major General Qasem Soleimani, organised by a third party and not the charity itself. At the time of his death, Soleimani held a senior position in Iran's military, serving as Commander of both the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Qods Force. When the event was held, Soleimani was subject to sanctions imposed by the UK Government. The IRGC is still subject to these sanctions.

Through reviewing video footage provided to the regulator, the Charity Commission is aware that speakers praised Soleimani and could hear anti-Semitic chants being made during the event. The Commission has significant concerns about these matters and will be examining what controls the charity has in place for events and external speakers. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-to-investigate-al-tawheed-charitable-trust-over-event-held-at-its-premises>

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## Israel

**See also Commons written answer 13328 "BBC: Gaza" that is included in the Home Affairs section above.**

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Israel: Arms Trade

**Richard Burgon (Labour)** [12622] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, with reference to paragraph 44 of the summary grounds of the Secretary of State in the case of *The King (on the application of Al-Haq) v. Secretary of State for Business and Trade*, AC-2023-LON-003634, for what reason the assessment on Israel's commitment to comply with international humanitarian law was deferred for ministerial decision.

**Andrew Mitchell:** We regularly review advice about Israel's capability and commitment to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and act in accordance with that advice. As the Foreign Secretary has said, Israel has the capability and commitment to act within IHL, but we are also deeply concerned about the impact on the civilian population in Gaza. We continue to call for IHL to be respected and

civilians to be protected. The Foreign Secretary stressed this with Israeli political leaders in his visit of 24 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-01/12622>

*The summary grounds referred to above are not available online*

### **L3Harris: F-35 Aircraft**

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [13287] To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if she will review L3Harris's licence to produce release systems for the F-35 combat aircraft in the context of the International Court of Justice's order relating to the case of the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v Israel), published on 26 January 2024.

**Greg Hands:** Decisions on export licensing are based on the UK's Strategic Export Licensing Criteria. The Government's export licences are kept under careful and continual review, and we can amend, suspend or revoke extant licences, or refuse new licence applications, where they are inconsistent with these criteria.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13287>

*The International Court of Justice Order referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

## **House of Lords Oral Answers**

### **Palestinian State: UK Recognition**

**Lord Jackson of Peterborough (Conservative):** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs what discussions he had with the government of the United States before his announcement on 1 February that the United Kingdom should recognise a Palestinian state in advance of the conclusion of any future bilateral talks between Israel and representatives of the Palestinian people.

**The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton):** My Lords, this Government have always supported a two-state solution, and that remains the case. Clearly, recognising a Palestinian state at the right time is part of that policy. My noble friend asked about consulting our allies. Of course, we discuss all issues relating to the conflict in Gaza, and Israel-Palestine relations, but I am pleased to tell him that ultimately the UK has a sovereign and independent foreign policy set by a British Prime Minister and a British Foreign Secretary in the British Parliament.

**Lord Jackson of Peterborough:** I welcome that Answer. Hamas is a genocidal terror group: for the benefit of the BBC, they are not militants. The Palestinian Authority has lost control of large cities in the West Bank to Iranian-backed terror groups, openly pays salaries to convicted terrorists, and is deeply corrupt and repressive. Palestinian statehood is, I trust, something all of us in this House wish to see, but does my noble friend share my very grave concerns that premature, unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state now risks rewarding Hamas, playing into Iran's hands, and perhaps jeopardising the chances for a long-term, sustainable peace?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** I absolutely understand where my noble friend is coming from. I just say to him that of course it is not rewarding Hamas. Hamas does not believe in a two-state solution: it believes in the destruction of Israel. My point is that the whole point of a two-state solution is to create long-term, sustainable peace. I think the last 30 years have shown that we will not solve this problem without a solution that gives dignity and security to the Palestinian people as well as vital security to Israel. I say, as a strong friend of Israel, that this is the right approach and we should pursue it.

**The Archbishop of Canterbury:** My Lords, I welcome very strongly the continued emphasis by the Secretary of State on the two-state solution, and his condemnation of the Hamas terrorist group and his call for the liberation of hostages, as was echoed in a statement this morning from the Bishops. But it is not only in Gaza that we are seeing tragedy; we are seeing it in the West Bank, where it is almost forgotten that very large numbers of Palestinians have been killed by people who live in illegal settlements. One of the countries most affected by that is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. First, what support are His Majesty's Government giving to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, given its vulnerability and its significant responsibility as guardian of the holy places? If it comes under significant pressure, that would widen the conflict appallingly and dramatically. Secondly, what are the practicalities for Jordan in preparing for or aiding a two-state solution, where the flow of refugees towards it—and it has taken something like half its population in refugees—would be a very threatening process for its destabilisation?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** I thank the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury for his question. First, he is absolutely right to say that we should focus on what is happening in the West Bank as well as Gaza. It is a chilling statistic that since 7 October, 96 Palestinian children have been killed in the West Bank. There have been a series of very worrying developments and disturbances. That is why the Government are focused on this. Only yesterday, we announced for the first time some sanctions against violent settlers who are carrying out criminal acts in the West Bank.

The most reverend Primate also asked, rightly, about what we are doing to help Jordan. First, in terms of the incredible work Jordan does in looking after refugees, we have given a huge amount of aid and assistance to help it with the job that it has done. As he says, the crucial thing is to work with the Jordanians, as we are, towards the two-state solution, in which they can play a very big part. A crucial thing that needs to be sorted out is how you move from the current Palestinian Authority, which has a number of issues and difficulties, to a new technocratic Government who would work across the Palestinian territories. The Jordanians can play a big role in helping to bring that about.

**Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated):** My Lords, there are 200 land-based conflicts in the world, half a million dead in Syria, the world's biggest humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen, and millions slaughtered in Africa—yet the only conflict people in the UK seem to want to protest about is Israel defending itself against the racist, genocidal Islamists of Hamas. What does the Foreign Secretary think explains this irrational obsession with the world's only Jewish state?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** The noble Lord makes a very important point. If you look across the world and ask yourself, "Where's the biggest refugee crisis?", it is not in Israel or in the Palestinian territories; it is either in Sudan, where about 9 million people have moved into Egypt, or you could argue that it is in Myanmar, where Bangladeshis are looking after millions of Rohingyas in very difficult conditions. It is important that we try to keep a focus on what is happening around the world and look at the numbers. That said, the reason people are focused on Gaza right now is the level of death and destruction, and people want to bring that to an end, as do I. This is why we have made this proposal for the immediate pause, moving to the ceasefire, with the five conditions we need to put in place to help to bring that about and work towards a political solution.

**Lord Pannick (Crossbench):** My Lords, after Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, Hamas was elected to power. Having been elected to power, it proceeded to terrorise and then murder its political opponents. Hamas remains very popular in Gaza and in the West Bank. How can we prevent an independent Palestinian state from being governed by Hamas, maintaining its policy of seeking to attack Israel and to murder, rape and abduct as many Israeli citizens as possible?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** The noble Lord asks an extremely good question. We have to try to help to separate the Palestinian people from Hamas. One of the best ways of doing that, apart from making sure that, as I have said, our conditions should include the Hamas leadership leaving Gaza and the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure, is to offer the Palestinian people—not Hamas, because it is not interested in a two-state solution—a route to better governance, with a reformed Palestinian Authority and the long-term horizon of a two-state solution to give them the dignity and security that they crave and that would help to bring about peace in the region.

**Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour):** My Lords, when the Foreign Secretary made the original statement, he was very clear that we need to show irreversible progress towards a two-state solution—something that both sides of this House have talked about for a long time.

My right honourable friend David Lammy welcomed the Foreign Secretary's comments, arguing that recognition should not wait for the final status agreement but should be part of efforts to achieve one. I asked the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, the day after those comments, what we are doing to translate the Foreign Secretary's desire into discussions with our allies, particularly at the United Nations, and how we give that hope a sense of reality.

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** What my noble friend Lord Ahmad and I are doing—we are virtually joined at the hip when we are not travelling separately to the region—is talking to all the partners in the region about how we work towards making that a reality. Recognition is obviously part of a two-state solution, and it should help with the momentum. The point that I have been making is that it should not be the first thing we do, as that would take the pressure off the Palestinians to reform and to do the things that need to happen in the Palestinian Authority. But just because it does not happen at the beginning does not mean that it must wait right until the end. One of the things that is beginning to change and that I think is hopeful is the American posture, which, until now, has been that recognition can come only when Israel and Palestine agree on the creation of a Palestinian state. Doing that would give Israel a veto, in effect, over a Palestinian state, which is the opposite of creating the sort of unstoppable momentum towards a two-state solution that we all want to see.

**Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, I welcome the Foreign Secretary's comments on the flexibility of recognising the state of Palestine before there is a full agreement with the State of Israel. I declare that I will travel to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ramallah from tomorrow night. What message can the Foreign Secretary share with these Benches that I can take to those I will meet that he has persuaded like-minded countries and our allies, who have a long-standing view that recognising the state of Palestine before any long-term agreement is the best platform to get an agreement with Israel?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** After I made my statement, which is absolutely in line with our long-standing policy that recognition should come when it gives the maximum impetus and input to a solution, the Americans announced that they were re-examining their policy and looking at options to see how recognition could best play a part in bringing about a two-state solution.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-13/debates/92F9BA16-0BBC-44F5-A611-F7C22AB297E8/PalestinianStateUKRecognition>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-all-abhor-unpleasant-deals-but-thats-what-must-happen-if-we-are-to-solve-the-gaza-crisis-article-by-the-foreign-secretary>

*David Lammy's comments referred to above can be read at*



### Children in Gaza

**Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green):** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs what his Department is doing to ensure the lives and security of the children of Gaza.

**The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton):** My Lords, the best way to address the humanitarian situation is by ending the fighting as soon as possible. That is why I have repeatedly said that an immediate pause in fighting is necessary. UK aid is saving children's lives. We are doing everything we can to get more aid into Gaza and have trebled our aid commitment to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This includes targeted support for children through our £5.75 million contribution to UNICEF. Children are also benefiting from life-saving food, shelter and health support that we are providing through partnerships with other UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Crescent societies.

**Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle:** I thank the noble Lord, but surely a pause in fighting is not enough. We need a permanent ceasefire now. Specifically, I am sure he is aware of the awful fate of six year-old Hind Rajab, calling for help in the midst of the bodies of her dead relatives, who appears to have died with two would-be rescuers from the Red Crescent. Have the Government demanded answers from the Israeli Government—or will they—about what happened to Hind, her family and the rescuers? Are the Government challenging the Israeli Government on the risks to hundreds of thousands of children in Rafah who are now in the path of the Israeli offensive? Surely it is time to stop all arms shipments to Israel, as a Dutch court has demanded that the Netherlands does, and implement targeted sanctions against members of the Israeli leadership, particularly those calling for new settlements in Gaza and on the West Bank.

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** ... The case she raises is completely tragic, and what is happening in Gaza is tragic. We want an end to this suffering and killing. Let me make this point: we want to turn the pause we are calling for into a ceasefire, by making sure the conditions are right for getting a stop in the fighting to mean a permanent ceasefire. The way to do that is by fulfilling a number of conditions. In our view, you have to get the Hamas leaders out of Gaza—otherwise, any ceasefire will not last because the problem will still be there. You have to dismantle the operation of terrorist attacks. You have to have a new Palestinian Authority Government in place. You have to give the Palestinian people a political horizon to a better future and a two-state solution. Crucially, you have to release all the hostages—and do that very quickly.

The noble Baroness asks whether we challenge the Israeli Government over individual episodes. Yes, we absolutely do. I have done that personally with them, for instance, over a building that was bombed that had UK medics and other charities in it. We will continue to do that as part of the very important process that we go through to judge whether they are in compliance with international humanitarian law.

**Lord Robathan (Conservative):** Is my noble friend aware of any moves by Hamas to protect the children of Gaza, for instance by releasing all the hostages, as he just mentioned, or stopping attacks on Israel and the leaders fleeing to the Gulf? Is he aware of any such moves? I agree with everything he said.

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** My noble friend makes a very good point. It is worth remembering that on 7 October, 29 children were killed by Hamas and 39

children were taken hostage and remain hostages today. It is right that we in this House keep asking what else Israel should do, but at the very same time we should also say what Hamas should do, which is to lay down its weapons and stop right now. It could stop this fight immediately.

**Lord Turnberg (Labour):** Is the noble Lord aware that the IDF has suggested that it is in no rush to enter into Rafah and will delay, possibly until after Ramadan? Meanwhile, the negotiations in Cairo can continue. That gives a chance for Hamas to release the hostages and for the conflict to stop.

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** That is absolutely right. I believe those discussions are under way, and it is a great pity that they did not reach that conclusion the last time they were under way. As I said, the best outcome we could seek is an immediate stop in the fighting. Let us hope that the stop is for as long as possible. I think that Israel was content to offer a month or six weeks as a pause. Then we need the momentum to turn that pause into a permanent ceasefire, without a return to the fighting. That should be our goal but, crucially, the pause is necessary to get the aid in and the hostages out. ...

**Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat):** ... UNICEF has said today that 600,000 displaced children are in Rafah in Gaza. That is comparable to the entire under-12 population of Scotland being displaced to one postcode area. Does the Foreign Secretary agree that for any belligerent in a conflict to advise children and civilians to relocate, on the pretext of their safety, to an area where there is no shelter, water or medicine, and where there are no security guarantees, is a war crime?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** I say to the noble Lord what I said yesterday in Scotland: many of the people in Rafah have already moved three, four or five times. It is not possible for them to move again. They cannot go north because they would be going back to homes that have been destroyed. They cannot go south because that would involve going into Egypt, which none of us wants to see and the Egyptians do not want. That is why it is so important that the Israelis stop and think before going ahead with any operations in Rafah.

**Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench):** My Lords, does the Foreign Secretary agree that the huge number of civilian casualties in Gaza is deeply damaging to the reputation of Israel? Will he therefore take action to promote a change of strategy by the Israelis, as well as the other measures he has mentioned? Thousands of civilians are being killed; that has to stop.

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** Our view from the start has been that, while Israel has a right to defend itself and the attacks on 7 October were an appalling attack on Israel—it is worth remembering that it was the biggest pogrom since the Holocaust in terms of the loss of life of Jewish people; we should not forget that—and a tragedy that it had every right to respond to and try to prevent happening again, Israel must obey international humanitarian law. Let us be clear: not only does that involve what the IDF does in terms of the way it prosecutes this war but, as Israel is the occupying power in Gaza, it has to make sure that humanitarian aid—food, water and shelter—is available to people in Gaza. If Israel does not do that, it would be a breach of international humanitarian law as well.

**Baroness Smith of Basildon (Labour):** My Lords, the Foreign Secretary is right; the priority has to be securing an immediate, extended pause in fighting to ensure that we can get aid in and the remaining hostages out, and create room for a long-term, sustainable ceasefire, followed by an even longer-term resolution. There are currently almost 1.5 million displaced Palestinians in Rafah and it is the main route for humanitarian aid. Any further Israeli offensive in Rafah will be catastrophic. The situation is getting more urgent by the hour. I know the noble Lord has been working to establish a contact group of regional and international leaders who would influence both sides. Is he able to offer any progress on that group or its ability currently to influence events?

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** At the Munich Security Conference on Friday, there will be a meeting of the key European countries that help to fund the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the key Arab and Gulf states working to help support a future Palestinian Authority. We very much hope that the Secretary of State of the United States will be there as well. This is not yet the formation of a contact group—a number of countries, particularly in the Arab world, are understandably nervous about meeting in advance of a proper ceasefire and a plan towards a cessation of hostilities—but I think we are on the way to getting this group, which the noble Baroness has long called for, up and running.

It is important, because there are lots of things that we need to start talking about now—what happens the day after a pause; a reconstituted Palestinian Authority; the question of how to offer a political horizon to people in the Palestinian territories; or indeed how to deal with Israel's very real security concerns. If there is a pause and then a ceasefire, how do you make sure that the people responsible for 7 October cannot remain in Gaza and that the infrastructure of terror is taken down?

**Baroness Helic (Conservative):** My Lords, alongside medical aid on the ground, one practical step the Government could take with an immediate impact would be to support medical care for children injured in Gaza on a temporary basis in the United Kingdom. I know that my noble friend and his department have been looking at this possibility. I would be grateful if he could update us on progress.

**Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton:** I thank my noble friend. It is called Project Pure Hope. We are looking very closely at whether it is possible to take the people in greatest need and bring them to British hospitals, as we have done in the past. The early work we have done shows that there is much we can do in the region, and we should probably do that first—for example, helping in the field hospitals that have been established, helping to send medical teams to referral hospitals in the region and supporting organisations such as Medical Aid for Palestinians. If that work leads to the identification of specific cases in which someone would be better off taking the long journey to Britain and going to Great Ormond Street or elsewhere, we certainly do not rule that out. We will continue to look at this.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-13/debates/43E1465D-10FC-4BE4-A9B3-8AD9E1DB8AD1/ChildrenInGaza>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Israel/oPt: Enabling human rights defenders and peaceful protests vital for achieving ceasefire and lasting peace, say UN experts**

... “As the international community takes steps towards negotiating a ceasefire that will end brutal hostilities in Gaza and deliver accountability for atrocities committed in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, we urge States to respect and enable the rights of everyone to freedom of peaceful assembly, of association and of expression.

It is urgent that States respect and protect the rights of civil society, human rights defenders, the academic community, and growing movements and protests calling for a ceasefire, peace, justice and the release of hostages and detained Palestinian civilians. These rights are key for enabling civil society and peaceful protest movements to play their important role to ensure a just and sustainable peace and end atrocity crimes and grave human rights violations, which we are currently witnessing against the Palestinian population in Gaza.

States must ensure that any measures related to countering terrorism, hate speech or anti-Semitism, public order or national security do not result in imposing undue restrictions, criminalisation or reprisals against civil society actors, human rights defenders and protesters.



Western countries and donors should immediately reverse their recent decision to suspend or restrict funding to vital Palestinian and Israeli civil society organisations that have been working on human rights for years. These measures, based on apparent unsubstantiated allegations related to diverting funding to “terrorist entities”, and specifically targeting civil society working on Palestinian rights, infringe the principle of non-discrimination, and violate the right of associations to seek, receive and use financial resources.

In line with the UN Secretary General’s [call](#), we reiterate our calls for member States to reverse their funding suspension to the UN Agency for Palestine refugees in the near East (UNRWA), following serious allegations that 12 UNRWA personnel were involved in the 7 October attacks in southern Israel. Such broad measures, suspending or halting funding to entire organisations, are grossly disproportionate, appear politically motivated and contribute to collective punishment against Palestinian civilians already subjected to immense suffering, killing and starvation.

Peaceful protests and rights movements should be facilitated rather than restricted or criminalised for advocating for human rights, for international criminal accountability and an end to the international crimes against Palestinians.

Enabling and protecting human rights defenders and fundamental freedoms is also vital to give effect to the recent [ruling](#) by the International Court of Justice, which ordered preventing acts of genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza, including through the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts of genocide, monitoring and reporting on Israel’s compliance with the court order.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/02/israelopt-enabling-human-rights-defenders-and-peaceful-protests-vital-achieving>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following four questions all received the same answer*

#### **EU Institutions: Religious Freedom**

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour)** [13017] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact for his policies of the recent Court of Justice of the European Union ruling on the prohibition of visible religious symbols in government offices within the European Union.

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour)** [13018] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether he has had recent discussions with his counterparts in EU member states on the potential impact of the Court of Justice of the European Union’s ruling on religious symbols on (a) Sikhs, (b) Muslims, (c) Jews and (d) Christians.

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour)** [13020] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what steps his Department is taking to initiate discussions with his European counterparts on the potential impact of the Court of Justice of the European Union’s recent ruling on visible religious symbols for British citizens who work in the EU.

#### **Religious Freedom**

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour)** [13019] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what assessment he has made of the implications of the ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union to allow religious symbols to be banned in public sector workplaces for his policies on international religious

(a) freedom and (b) expression.

**Andrew Mitchell:** We note the recent Court of Justice of the European Union (EU) ruling on the prohibition of visible religious symbols in government offices.

This case is a matter for the EU and its Member States. We will continue, as part of our wider work on freedom of religion or belief, to monitor the situation of religious or belief communities, including where applicable, as this relates to British citizens working in the EU.

The UK Government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all, and promoting mutual respect, here in the UK and internationally. Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a longstanding human rights priority for the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/13017>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/13018>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/13020>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/13019>

*The ruling referred to above can be read at*

<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=77366F7EF5084FC94DF287C080BF6977>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Arms Trade (Inquiry and Suspension) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3567>

#### **Criminal Justice Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3511>

#### **Disestablishment of the Church of England Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3539>

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

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

#### **The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 [Draft]**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348253191/contents>

#### **Genocide Determination Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3535>

#### **Genocide (Prevention and Response) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3521>

## **Holocaust Memorial Bill**

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

## **International Freedom of Religion or Belief Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3564>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3596>

## **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill**

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

## **Scottish Parliament**

### **Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

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

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Enhanced Dataset [England]** (closing date 5 March 2024)

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/clinical-audits-and-registries/female-genital-mutilation-datasets/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-enhanced-dataset-overview-of-2024-consultation>

### **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill - Standard Tier** (closing date 18 March 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/martyns-law-standard-tier-consultation>

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