



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

SCoJeC is incurring significant extra costs as a result of the war in Israel and Gaza, including producing expanded issues of this digest. Please help us maintain these resources by donating at

www.scojec.org/donate.html

Thank you very much for your support.



Home Affairs

House of Lords Written Answers

The following six questions all received the same answer

Faith Matters

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench) [HL3320] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the governance of the community interest company Faith Matters, which has been awarded more than £6 million in public funds for the Tell Mama project to monitor Islamophobia.

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench) [HL3321] To ask His Majesty's Government how much in public funds has been awarded to the community interest company Faith Matters for the Tell Mama project (1) up to March 2023, and (2) from April 2023 to March 2024; and what will be the award from April 2024 to March 2025.

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench) [HL3322] To ask His Majesty's Government, what proportion, if any, of the more than £6 million grants awarded to the community interest company Faith Matters for the Tell Mama project is from Prevent funds.

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench) [HL3323] To ask His Majesty's Government how much of the most recent more than £1 million grant awarded to the community interest company Faith Matters for the Tell Mama project has been paid; and when, if any, are the remaining payments due to be made.

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench) [HL3324] To ask His Majesty's Government what is the intended purpose of the most recent more than £1 million grant made to the community interest company Faith Matters for the Tell Mama project; and what is the breakdown of

the expected expenditure according to the grant conditions that have been stipulated.

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench) [HL3325] To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of the recently awarded more than £1 million grant to the community interest company Faith Matters is for the Tell Mama project which monitors Islamophobia; what proportion is for other initiatives; and what is the purpose of those other initiatives.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has funded Tell MAMA directly with over £6 million since 2012 (funding details are provided below) to monitor and support victims of anti-Muslim hatred, through a workplan agreed via a formal Grant Funding Agreement. The funding was increased to just over £1m for the 2023/24 financial year.

Tell MAMA is a project funded with the express remit of supporting victims of anti-Muslim hatred and monitoring incidents. The department funds Tell MAMA as a project of Faith Matters directly.

Tell MAMA are subject to internal grant funding processes and due diligence checks. This is the case for all funded partners, before any funding agreement can be processed. Tell MAMA's most significant expenses are staff related costs.

Tell MAMA's work has been recognised internationally as a good practice model in recording and monitoring anti-Muslim hate. Tell MAMA engages regularly with DLUHC officials to monitor progress and provide feedback on issues affecting Muslim communities and our response to anti-Muslim hatred.

Please see a formal breakdown of funding for Tell MAMA over the last 10 years:

Financial year	Funding amount
2011/12	£91,567
2012/13	£223,517
2013/14	£80,457
2014/15	£0
2015/16	£181,982
2016/17	£503,620
2017/18	£829,226
2018/19	£892,151
2019/20	£841,000
2020/21	£841,000
2021/22	£841,000
2022/23	£841,000
2023/24	£1,001,230
Total	£6,166,520

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/hl3320>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/hl3321>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/hl3322>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/hl3323>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/hl3324>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/hl3325>

War Memorials: Muslims

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL3551] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 21 March (HL3106), where the National Muslim War Memorial will be situated; and, if not in Westminster, for what reason.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Further information regarding the process for establishing a new Muslim War Memorial will be announced in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-22/hl3551>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-07/hl3106>

House of Commons Library Briefing

Visa bans: exclusion of foreign nationals whose presence is not conducive to the public good

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07035/SN07035.pdf>

Home Office

New laws to clamp down on disruptive protesters come into force

New public order powers to prevent individuals causing repeated serious disruption come into force today ...

Serious Disruption Prevention Orders will empower the police to intervene before individuals cause serious disruption, for those who have previously committed protest-related offences or ignored court-imposed restrictions.

The new orders can impose a range of restraints on an individual, including preventing them from being in a particular place or area, participating in disruptive activities and being with protest groups at given times. They can also stop individuals from using the internet to encourage protest-related offences.

These orders can be imposed on those who have, on at least 2 occasions, committed protest-related offences, for example locking-on, or breached the conditions of an injunction. The specific restrictions contained within each order will be decided by the court and can last up to 2 years. They can also be renewed if the person remains a threat.

Serious Disruption Prevention Orders were introduced as part of the Public Order Act 2023, which was passed last year, and are court orders. Breaching an order will be a criminal offence and will carry a maximum penalty of 6 months in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

Home Secretary James Cleverly said: The public has a democratic right to protest and this government will always uphold that.

However, recent months have shown certain individuals are just dedicated to wreaking havoc and causing severe disruption to the everyday lives of the public.

This is why we have introduced these new powers to ensure that anyone who ignores warnings from our law enforcement cannot continue to cause turmoil unpunished. ...

This builds on action announced earlier this year which will prevent protestors from using facemasks to conceal their identity at certain protests, make climbing on designated war memorials a criminal offence and ban the possession of flares and pyrotechnics at protests. The Criminal Justice Bill will also prevent individuals using the right to protest as a defence for committing criminal offences. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-laws-to-clamp-down-on-disruptive-protesters-come-into-force>

TOP

House of Commons Written Answer

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Andrew Selous (Conservative) [19563] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on opening up the port of Ashdod to aid supplies for Gaza.

Andrew Mitchell: The British Government has repeatedly called on Israel to open fully Ashdod Port for aid delivery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19563>

House of Lords Written Answers

Hamas: Hostage Taking

Lord Touhig (Labour) [HL3429] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with international partners about securing Red Cross access to hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government strongly supports and advocates for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) being given access to hostages. Ministers and senior officials have discussed this in multiple meetings with ICRC officials in the UK and overseas. In line with their mandate, the ICRC has called for the immediate release of all the hostages and for access to them whilst in captivity. So far, the ICRC has been denied access to the remaining hostages in Gaza. The ICRC has no means to compel conflict parties to provide it access and requires agreement from the respective parties to the conflict to visit hostages. The ICRC facilitated the release of 105 hostages as part of the deal agreed between Hamas and Israel in November 2023. The Government continues to call for a humanitarian pause to allow for the release of the remaining hostages.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3429>

UNRWA: Finance

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL3420] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to reinstate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and, if so, when.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK provided £35 million to UNRWA this financial year, including an uplift of £16 million for the Gaza humanitarian response, all of which was disbursed before the recent allegations came to light. No more British funding is due this financial year and we have paused any future funding of UNRWA. I met with Commissioner-General Phillipe Lazzarini on 4 April to discuss the steps they are taking in response to the interim findings.

We want UNRWA to give detailed undertakings about changes in personnel, policy and precedents to ensure this can never happen again. We are working with allies to try to bring this situation to a rapid conclusion - not least because UNRWA have a vital role to play in providing aid and services in Gaza.

We are aware that the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and Catherine Colonna have now provided their interim reports to the UN Secretary-General.

Our decision to pause future funding to UNRWA has no impact on the UK's contribution to the humanitarian response. We remain committed to getting humanitarian aid to the people in Gaza who desperately need it, including through other UN agencies and British charities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3420>

UNRWA: Finance

The Lord Bishop of Worcester [HL3437] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the humanitarian relief effort in Gaza and the West Bank of the decision to suspend aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our decision to pause future funding to UNRWA has no impact on the UK's contribution to the humanitarian response. We remain committed to getting humanitarian aid to people in Gaza who desperately need it, including through other UN agencies and British charities. We trebled our aid commitment this financial year and we are doing everything we can to get more aid in as quickly as possible by land, sea and air. UK funding has supported the work of partners including the British Red Cross, World Food Programme, UNICEF and Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS) to deliver vital supplies.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3437>

UNRWA: Finance

The Lord Bishop of Worcester [HL3438] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the livelihoods of Palestinian refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon of the decision to suspend aid to the United Nations Refugee and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The UK provided £35 million to UNRWA this financial year, including an uplift of £16 million for the Gaza humanitarian response, all of which was disbursed before the recent allegations came to light. No more British funding is due this financial year and we have paused any future funding of UNRWA..

Indeed, we are appalled by allegations that UNRWA staff were involved in the 7 October attack against Israel, a heinous act of terrorism that the UK Government has repeatedly condemned.

We want UNRWA to give detailed undertakings about changes in personnel, policy and precedents to ensure this can never happen again. We are working with allies to try to bring this situation to a rapid conclusion. I have discussed this with Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini on several occasions, most recently on 4 April.

We are aware that the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and Catherine Colonna have now provided their interim reports to the UN Secretary-General.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3438>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Gaza: Refugees

Lord Swire (Conservative) [HL3423] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are aware of any plans of the government of Israel to rehome Palestinian refugees from Gaza in the Sinai.

Lord Swire (Conservative) [HL3424] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have had discussions with (1) the European Union, or (2) the government of Egypt, about receiving Palestinian refugees from Gaza.

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Swire (Conservative) [HL3425] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel about the forcible expulsion of the Palestinian population from Gaza.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government firmly rejects any suggestion of the resettlement of Palestinians outside of Gaza.

The UK's position is clear: Gaza is Occupied Palestinian Territory and will and must be part of a future Palestinian state. We support a two-state solution that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. This is

the only viable option to ensure peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3423>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3424>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3425>

Gaza: Food Supply

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL3421] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, IPC Global Initiative - Special Brief, published 19 March, that famine in Gaza is imminent; and what steps they are taking in response.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Palestinians are facing a devastating and growing humanitarian crisis.

On 20 March, the Foreign Secretary announced the UK has funded WFP to provide 2000 tons of food aid, enough to feed 275,000 people in Gaza.

On 25 March, the Royal Air Force airdropped 10 tonnes of food aid - including water, rice and baby food - directly to civilians in Gaza.

We have trebled our aid commitment this financial year and we are doing everything we can to get more aid in as quickly as possible by land, sea and air.

We continue to call for an immediate stop in fighting to get aid in and hostages out, then progress towards a sustainable, permanent ceasefire, without a return to destruction, fighting and loss of life.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/hl3421>

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report referred to above can be read at https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/largest-uk-aid-delivery-enters-gaza-to-feed-275000-people>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Occupied Palestinian Territory/Israel: Vital need to ensure humanitarian aid and protect humanitarian workers: Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: Jeremy Laurence

As we approach six months of hostilities, it is with deep sadness and outrage that we reflect on the devastation and death toll in Israel and Gaza. Over 33,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, are dead, 75,000 or more are injured, and at least 7,000 are presumed dead under the rubble. Over 1,200 are dead in Israel and hundreds injured. More than 100 hostages remain in captivity. Huge swathes of Gaza have been bombed into oblivion. The Gaza Strip has changed forever.

The violations of international law committed since 7 October in Israel and Gaza, including gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, as well as the destruction and suffering of civilians in Gaza over the last six months, are unprecedented. And the risk of further atrocity crimes is high.

The world has collectively spoken that this carnage and wanton destruction must end immediately. The hostages must be released unconditionally. Humanitarian aid and other goods necessary for the survival of the civilian population must be allowed to flood into Gaza and be safely distributed to every part of the Strip.

Also, the High Commissioner stresses again that there must be accountability for the

serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law that have been perpetrated, as well as a renewed resolve to reach a political solution to ensure Palestinians' rights to self-determination, equality and non-discrimination, and which guarantees that Palestinians and Israelis can live side by side in peace. The occupation must end. This should not just be rhetoric, but action is needed now.

This week, the world was shocked by Israel's killing of seven people working for World Central Kitchen. So far, nearly 200 humanitarian workers have been killed in Gaza, including close to 180 UN staff.

The Israeli airstrikes that killed World Central Kitchen personnel underline the horrific conditions under which humanitarian workers are operating in Gaza. Israel has also killed law enforcement officials and others involved in securing humanitarian aid delivery, directly contributing to the breakdown of civil order and putting humanitarian workers and those in need of aid in further danger.

Following these latest attacks, NGOs, including the World Central Kitchen and Anera, have suspended aid delivery and distribution to Palestinians in Gaza, increasing the already real risk of more deaths from famine and disease at larger scale.

International law requires all parties to respect and protect humanitarian relief personnel and ensure their safety, security, and freedom of movement. Israel, as the occupying power, has the additional obligation to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that the basic needs of the population of Gaza are met. This means that it must ensure the provision of food and medical care to the population commensurate with its needs, and if it is unable to do so, it must facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations to deliver that assistance and the access of the population to it in a safe and dignified manner.

Attacking people or objects involved in humanitarian assistance may amount to a war crime. As the High Commissioner has repeatedly stated, impunity must end. Independent, thorough and effective investigations into all alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed on 7 October and subsequently need to be conducted promptly. The High Commissioner reiterates his call on all duty bearers to ensure cooperation with international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court. All victims and their families should be granted full reparation.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2024/04/occupied-palestinian-territoryisrael-vital-need-ensure-humanitarian>

TOP

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

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-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

European Commission: 1st progress report of the EU antisemitism strategy

(closing date 19 April 2024)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14204-1st-progress-report-of-the-EU-antisemitism-strategy_en

TOP

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