



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

See also Commons written answer 24950 “Ghassan Abu-Sittah” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Community Cohesion

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [902863] What steps the Government are taking to help ensure community cohesion.

**Reply from the Minister for Women and Equalities (Kemi Badenoch):** In this country, we believe in religious freedom. Everyone should be able to express their identity, faith and beliefs. However, this must be done in a way that respects the rights of others. Community cohesion in many of our towns and cities has been strained in recent months, following the 7 October attacks in Israel. The boundaries of acceptable behaviour in the public sphere are being tested. That is why on 18 December 2023 I published new guidance for public authorities, reminding them of their legal obligations under the public sector equality duty, and specifically that they should consider how they contribute to the advancement of good relations in communities as they deliver public services.

**Andrew Rosindell:** ... Does she agree that all public buildings, schools and organisations should be encouraged to fly the appropriate flags as symbols of unity, patriotism and

equality, rather than of division?

**Kemi Badenoch:** I do agree ... The point is that national pride should be celebrated, not shunned. That is why anyone in the UK is able to fly any of our national flags without needing the consent of their local authority, as per Government regulations that exempt national flags.

**Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... On community cohesion between different ethnicities, what plans does she have to make funding available to enable community events whereby each member of a community can demonstrate their culture and heritage, with all ages and all groups, and to build relationships in a similar way to what we are doing in Northern Ireland?

**Kemi Badenoch:** We encourage every celebration of the diversity in ethnicity that we have in this country. In particular, the Government want to emphasise equality under the law, the fact that there are not protected groups but protected characteristics, and that everyone should be free from discrimination. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-15/debates/6EEEA437-B550-4EC9-A64A-17846B0284C5/CommunityCohesion>

## House of Commons Written Answer

### Euthanasia

**Andrew Bridgen (Independent)** [25227] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether she has made a cost benefit analysis of the implementation of assisted dying.

**Helen Whately:** No cost benefit analysis has been made of the implementation of assisted dying.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-08/25227>

## Department for Education

### Age limits introduced to protect children in RSHE

... Following multiple reports of disturbing materials being used in Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) lessons, the Department for Education has published updated guidance that will ensure content is factual, appropriate and that children have the capacity to fully understand everything they are being taught.

Parents will have the right to see the resources that are being used to teach their children about relationships, health and sex in all circumstances and new age limits will be introduced so that children are not introduced to content they may not have the maturity to understand.

Sex education will not be taught before Year 5, and at that point from a purely scientific standpoint.

The contested theory of gender identity will not be taught and the guidance confirms copyright law should not be a barrier to sharing curriculum materials with parents – with the updated curriculum open for an [eight week consultation](#) from today (16 May).

At secondary school pupils will learn about legally ‘protected’ characteristics, such as sexual orientation and gender reassignment, but the updated guidance is clear that schools should not teach about the concept of gender identity.

In light of the [Cass Review](#), it is important that schools take a cautious approach to teaching about this sensitive topic, and do not use any materials that present contested views as fact, including the view that gender is a spectrum. ...

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said: Parents rightly trust that when they send their children to school, they are kept safe and will not be exposed to disturbing content that is

inappropriate for their age. ...

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said: This updated guidance puts protecting children at its heart, and enshrines parents' right to know what their children are being taught. It will support schools with how and when to teach often difficult and sensitive topics, leaving no doubt about what is appropriate to teach pupils at every stage of school. Parents can be reassured once and for all their children will only learn age-appropriate content.

Schools should ensure that RSHE teaching materials are available to parents and that parents are aware of what is being taught.

New content in the guidance, mirroring [letters sent by the Education Secretary](#) to schools over the past year, makes it clear that schools should make materials available to parents, and clarifies how copyright legislation gives them scope to do so.

The guidance also now includes additional content on suicide prevention in the secondary health and wellbeing section, including equipping pupils to recognise when they or their peers need help.

The guidance has also been strengthened to help young people to understand the benefits of rationing time spent online and the impact on their wellbeing, and the serious risks of viewing content that promotes self-harm and suicide.

Following reports of schools seeing rising levels of harmful misogynistic behaviour, the guidance now includes a dedicated section on sexual harassment and sexual violence, which covers some specific types of abusive behaviour that were not explicitly discussed previously, such as stalking, as well as advice for teachers about how to address misogynistic online influencers. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/age-limits-introduced-to-protect-children-in-rshe>

**Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education**

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/supporting-documents/Draft%20RSE%20and%20Health%20Education%20statutory%20guidance.pdf>

## Northern Ireland Executive

**A Respect Index for Northern Ireland (as measured by the Everyday Discrimination Scale): 2016 – 2023**

[https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/executiveofficeni/Respect\\_Index\\_report.html](https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/executiveofficeni/Respect_Index_report.html)

**Data Tables**

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/data-tables.xlsx>

## Police Service of Northern Ireland

**Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland: Update to 31st March 2024**

<https://www.psni.police.uk/system/files/2024-05/1154691941/Hate%20Motivations%20Bulletin%20Period%20ending%2031st%20March%202024.pdf>

**Hate Motivation Tables Period Ending 31st March 2024**

<https://www.psni.police.uk/system/files/2024-05/1418184798/Hate%20Motivations%20Tables%20Period%20Ending%2031st%20March%202024.xlsx>

**TOP**

# Holocaust

## House of Commons Library Briefing

### Holocaust Memorial Bill: Progress of the Bill

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9741/CBP-9741.pdf>

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## Israel

*See also Commons oral questions 902863 “Community Cohesion” that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and Commons written answer 24950 “Ghassan Abu-Sittah” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.*

## House of Commons Oral Answers

### Prime Minister’s Questions

**Richard Burgon (Labour)** [902821] Thirty thousand Palestinian deaths are not enough to move this Prime Minister to end arms sales to Israel. The killing of British aid workers is not enough to move the Prime Minister to end arms sales. It even seems that an all-out assault on Rafah, with all the death and destruction that would entail, would not be enough for him, unlike the US, so just what on earth would be enough finally to move this Prime Minister into the same position as the majority of the British public and end arms sales to Israel?

**The Prime Minister:** I point out to the hon. Gentleman that, unlike the US, the UK Government do not directly sell arms to Israel, and neither do the UK Government offer any military lethal aid packages to Israel, as the US does. He should not conflate these issues.

As part of the Government’s robust arms control regime, we regularly review advice to ensure compliance with international law, and Ministers act in accordance with that advice. As the hon. Gentleman knows, our position with regard to export licences is unchanged following the most recent assessment, and it is, indeed, in line with other partners, including the United States.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-15/debates/9E058D46-A209-4065-B39E-192F47368ADE/Engagements#contribution-8651CAB6-79A8-42D2-94D0-5B59A382FF87>

### Prime Minister’s Questions

**Rosena Allin-Khan (Labour)** [902827] In Gaza, Israel has attacked hospitals, attacked refugee camps and killed aid workers. Israel has blocked vital aid, turned off water supplies and denied access to food. Israel has killed thousands upon thousands of innocent civilians as the world watches, trampling all over international humanitarian law. No other country would be allowed to act with such impunity. Why does the Prime Minister allow Israel to get away with it unchallenged? And why does he continue to act as a bystander to such horror?

**The Prime Minister:** We do support, and I do support, Israel’s right to defend itself and remove the threat that Hamas, the terrorist organisation, pose to its people. But I am also deeply concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and I have consistently made that point at this Dispatch Box and to Prime Minister

Netanyahu. We must see further action to ensure that more aid gets to people who desperately need it; the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings must be open to allow more aid in. We are doing everything we can, trebling our investment; trying to get aid in by land, air and sea; and currently working with allies to build a temporary pier. The hon. Lady can rest assured that the Government will continue to do everything we can to get support to the people in Gaza who need it.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-15/debates/9E058D46-A209-4065-B39E-192F47368ADE/Engagements#contribution-83DE45CD-C23F-43A0-8BD2-056DDE3083FB>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Arms Trade: Israel

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [25137] To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, when she last held discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on the sale of arms to Israel.

**Alan Mak:** To support her decisions on export licensing to Israel, the Secretary of State for Business and Trade regularly receives advice from the Foreign Secretary and FCDO.

We continue to monitor the situation in Israel and Gaza closely, and all of our export licences are kept under careful and continual review.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-08/25137>

### Gaza: Military Aid

**Martin Docherty-Hughes (SNP)** [24928] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of deploying armed forces personnel to help facilitate the medical evacuation of civilians in Gaza.

**Leo Docherty:** The Ministry of Defence continuously assess medical support options in our response to the Israel/Gaza conflict.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/24928>

### Gaza: Israel

**Martin Docherty-Hughes (SNP)** [24929] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that any evidence of war crimes being committed in Gaza witnessed by UK armed forces surveillance is (a) documented and (b) investigated.

**Leo Docherty:** The unarmed UK reconnaissance aircraft are employed solely for the purpose of increasing our chances of locating the hostages.

The UK remains committed to holding perpetrators of war crimes to account, including through our support to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The UK would consider any formal request from the ICC for information and act in accordance with its international obligations under the Rome Statute and through the framework in the ICC Act 2001.

As signatories to the Rome Statute, the Genocide Convention and the Convention on Torture, the UK has a responsibility to investigate and prosecute those who have committed core international crimes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/24929>

### Gaza: Israel

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [25003] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what diplomatic steps he is taking to support the freedom of the press reporting on the Israel Hamas war in Gaza.

**Andrew Mitchell:** We recognise the valuable role of journalists operating on the

ground in Gaza, providing important coverage of the conflict in incredibly challenging circumstances. On 5 December, the UK supported a joint statement of the Media Freedom Coalition expressing concern over the repercussions for the safety of journalists and access to information due to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. We continue to call for the protection of journalists and media workers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/25003>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://mediafreedomcoalition.org/joint-statement/2023/journalists-in-conflict/>

### **Israel-Hamas: Ceasefire**

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [25002] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what diplomatic steps he is taking to support international partners with ceasefire discussions between Israel and Hamas.

**Andrew Mitchell:** The UK is doing all it can to reach a long-term solution to this crisis, including by calling for the immediate release of all hostages and continuing to support a deal which would secure a pause in the fighting.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/25002>

### **Gaza: Aid Workers**

**Chi Onwurah (Labour)** [25496] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, pursuant to the Answer of 8 May 2024 to Question 24458 on Gaza: Aid Workers, whether it is his policy that there should be an independent inquiry into the killing of the British aid workers by the Israeli Defence Forces.

**Andrew Mitchell:** As set out in the answer to Question 24458, we are carefully reviewing the initial findings of Israel's investigations into the killing of World Central Kitchen aid workers and welcome the suspension of two officers as a first step. Their inquiry so far has highlighted failures in deconfliction processes and the unacceptable conduct of the IDF personnel involved. This must never happen again.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-09/25496>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-01/24458>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Gaza: Aid Workers and Civilians**

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [25000] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what steps he is taking to help ensure Israel takes steps to protect civilians and humanitarian aid workers in Rafah.

### **Gaza: Humanitarian Aid**

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [25001] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will make diplomatic representations to his Israeli counterparts to ensure the Rafah crossing remains open and the flow of aid continues.

**Andrew Mitchell:** We remain deeply concerned about the prospect of a military offensive in Rafah. Over half of Gaza's population, including 600,000 children, are sheltering in the area, and the Rafah crossing is vital to ensure aid can reach the people who so desperately need it.

Entry points for humanitarian aid, including Kerem Shalom, must be reopened quickly to allow aid in. Israel must facilitate immediate, uninterrupted humanitarian access in the south, especially the entry of fuel, and ensure the protection of civilians and safe passage for those who wish to leave Rafah.

We are clear that we would not support a major operation in Rafah unless there is

a very clear plan for how to protect people and save lives. We have not seen that plan so, in these circumstances, we would not support a major operation in Rafah. The fastest way to end the conflict is to secure a deal which gets the hostages out and allows for a pause in the fighting in Gaza. We must then work with our international partners to turn that pause into a sustainable, permanent ceasefire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/25000>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/25001>

### **Gaza: Internally Displaced People**

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour)** [25711] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on evacuation routes for Palestinians displaced from eastern Rafah.

**Andrew Mitchell:** As I told the House last week, Israel must facilitate immediate, uninterrupted humanitarian access in the south, especially the entry of fuel, and ensure the protection of civilians and safe passage for those who wish to leave Rafah.

We have been clear that we would not support a major operation in Rafah unless there is a very clear plan for how to protect people and save lives. We have not seen that plan so, in these circumstances, we would not support a major operation in Rafah.

The Foreign Secretary and I continue to press these points with our Israeli counterparts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-10/25711>

*Andrew Mitchell's earlier comments referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-07/debates/9A94F5AE-A16B-4060-961C-4E1AF946D531/WarInGaza#contribution-5C85F7C4-6990-4F53-B887-8CEF8D94D284>

### **Gaza: Israel**

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [24999] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, whether he plans to make representations to his Israeli counterpart against the military operation in Rafah.

**Andrew Mitchell:** We are clear that we would not support a major operation in Rafah unless there is a very clear plan for how to protect people and save lives. We have not seen that plan so, in these circumstances, we would not support a major operation in Rafah.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/24999>

### **Gaza: Fuels**

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [25004] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what steps he is taking to help ensure there is a continued supply of fuel into Gaza, in the context of Israel's closure of both the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings.

**Andrew Mitchell:** We have been clear that entry points for humanitarian aid, including Rafah and Kerem Shalom, must be reopened quickly to allow aid in. Israel must facilitate immediate uninterrupted humanitarian access in the south, including the entry of fuel, and ensure protection of civilians and safe passage for those who wish to leave Rafah.

The Foreign Secretary's Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has pressed these points with the Israeli Government.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/25004>

## UNRWA

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [25138] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, pursuant to the Answer of 7 May 2024 to Question 24566 on UNRWA: Finance, when he plans to complete his careful consideration of Catherine Colonna's final report, UNRWA's response and the ongoing UN Office for Internal Oversight Services investigation.

**Andrew Mitchell:** As set out in the answer to Question 24566, the UK will set out its position on future funding to UNRWA following careful consideration of Catherine Colonna's final report, UNRWA's response and the ongoing UN Office for Internal Oversight Services investigation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-08/25138>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-01/24566>

*Catherine Colonna's report, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa\\_independent\\_review\\_on\\_neutrality.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf)

*UNRWA's response referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-preliminary-response-final-report-independent-review-mechanisms-and>

## House of Lords Oral Answers

### UNRWA

**Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour):** To ask His Majesty's Government what diplomatic steps they are taking in response to the temporary closure of the East Jerusalem headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East following attacks.

**The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon):** My Lords, immediately following the arson attack against UNRWA's headquarters in east Jerusalem, I made clear through a statement that the attack was completely unacceptable. We have also called for the violent perpetrators of this attack to be held to account, and also for Israel to ensure the protection of UN facilities and staff. We cannot allow room for extremism of any kind. That is a view shared by many of heads of mission, which have made similar representations.

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** My Lords, I am glad that the Minister has made such representations. Of course, UN internal documents and the head of UNRWA have reported months of attacks, obstruction and interference with UNRWA's work. I hope that the Minister will continue to make those representations to the Israeli authorities to ensure that these humanitarian workers are properly protected. Has he also raised the attacks on humanitarian convoys and trucks, which are also impeding the delivery of support?

Can I also ask the Minister about UNRWA funding? The Colonna review—the Minister has referenced it several times—has now concluded, and countries such as Canada and Australia have resumed financial aid. The Foreign Secretary, however, told Laura Kuenssberg that he was “more demanding” and was awaiting the findings of the final UN Office of Internal Oversight Services before we resume funding. Can the Minister explain when we can expect a decision to restore funding to this vital tool for getting aid into the Occupied Territories and Gaza?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, on the noble Lord's first question, both the Foreign Secretary and I have raised these issues quite directly and have issued statements. Trucks were going through the Jordan crossing and through the Erez crossing, which the United Kingdom has advocated for. It is a real tragedy that many of those trucks—a 40-truck convoy—were attacked. We have made strong



representations and continue to do so. I know that my noble friend the Foreign Secretary has been very seized of this in his recent engagements.

On the issue of UNRWA funding, as we have repeatedly made clear and I have said several times, we of course recognise the important role that UNRWA has played and continues to play in Gaza and indeed in neighbouring countries. The Colonna report was on the issues of mitigation and made particular recommendations. We know that UNRWA has also responded to that. As my noble friend the Foreign Secretary has said, there is one additional report that is specific to the attacks of 7 October, which is the oversight report, which we are awaiting and will then make a full assessment. I underline again our strong support for the important role that UNRWA has.

**Lord Polak (Conservative):** ... I am sure that my noble friend will join me in wishing the people of Israel well on Israel's 76th birthday yesterday, including the 132 hostages being held in captivity. On 19 November 2018, I said from this position that "UNRWA, which was born in 1949, is now outdated, does not provide value for money", and that it "refuses to help resettle the Palestinians and even refuses to take ... some 2 million Palestinians living in Jordan" off its refugee list. It therefore "continues to perpetuate the problem". I appealed for a "new and modern programme of aid and development for the benefit of the Palestinian people and all the peoples of the region".—[[Official Report, 19/11/18; col. 2.](#)] I therefore ask my noble friend the Minister: post 7 October, can the UK take a lead to urgently create that new, modern programme?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I am sure that I speak for everyone when I say that we of course join in recognising the importance of anniversaries. Indeed, the establishment of Israel was supported by the United Kingdom and is supported by all Members of your Lordships' House. Equally, I am sure that my noble friend will recognise that it was a very sombre occasion in Israel. I have met with many hostage families and a recent comment that I heard was that there are 25 nationalities, and there are Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists who are held by Hamas in Gaza. That is why there is the human appeal to let the hostages go.

On the issue of UNRWA, I have a different perspective from that of my noble friend. UNRWA plays an important role; what is required is reform in terms of how it governs and the list that it provides to ensure that recruitment is done properly. As my noble friend reads the Colonna report, I am sure he will also recognise some really positive recommendations made by the former Foreign Minister of France. We are looking at those, but also require the detail of the report that the Secretary-General will get shortly.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench):** My Lords, does the Minister recognise that, utterly reprehensible as it is that even 12 out of UNRWAs 30,000 employees around the region should have been involved with Hamas, it is still really urgent to recognise that no proper humanitarian effort in that part of the world can be mounted, particularly in Gaza but also in the West Bank, without UNRWA being part of it? So, will he undertake that the review that he says is under way—we are now in the second month of the new financial year—will lead to a determination by His Majesty's Government without delay?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I have already articulated the United Kingdom's view on the important role that UNRWA plays. I have also said that we are looking to ensure not only that there are mitigations in place but that there is a full review of those abhorrent events of 7 October. The Government will be looking at both those reports and then making a decision accordingly, but I add again that we of course recognise the continuing and important role UNRWA plays.

**Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, UNRWA has lost 89 of its humanitarian workers in this terrible conflict and, as the noble Lord says, is the only body that is able properly to administer support for more than 1 million children displaced

within Gaza. That is equivalent to the entire under-10 population of Greater London. The impeding of that aid is a clear breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. I know that His Majesty's Government officials are collating evidence of when that supply is being impeded. Does the Minister agree that the Government should be as clear with us in Parliament as the US State Department is to Congress in providing all that information in a public manner? Will the Government do that?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I agree with the noble Lord about the importance of ensuring that aid reaches Gaza, particularly those who are most vulnerable, the women and children. That is where the Government have been focused since the tragedy of 7 October, but even in advance of that. We all know the challenges Gaza faces; that is why we have advocated so strongly for the reopening of the Rafah crossing. I know it has been closed since Israel's Rafah operation, including to important fuel supplies into Rafah, which need to be secured to ensure the facilitation of hospitals.

On the advice that the Government receive, of course there is a precedent, and we look at advice on a revolving basis. The Foreign Secretary receives advice from various sources, including assessments of adherence to IHL, and will then give his view accordingly. ...

**Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated):** I thank the Government Chief Whip. In February, the Hamas data centre was discovered underneath UNRWA's headquarters and, just yesterday, UNRWA terrorists were discovered using an UNRWA school as a base from which to launch their attacks, so it is absolutely clear that UNRWA still has very serious questions to answer. In the meantime, there are other agencies with whom we should be working to get much-needed humanitarian aid in for the poor people of Gaza, who have been so terribly affected by the war Hamas deliberately launched on 7 October, when it raped, kidnapped and murdered so many civilians.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** I assure the noble Lord that we are doing exactly that. Notwithstanding that, the funding that we have given has also been focused on other agencies like the World Food Programme, UNICEF and others. I come back to this point: I am sure the noble Lord recognises that mitigations are necessary, and we are pressing on those, but, equally, UNRWA has the most effective structures in Gaza. We need to ensure that those are not just revitalised, but that they are done so to allow for mitigation of the issues that were previously raised.

**Baroness Helic (Conservative):** My Lords, the healthcare system in Gaza has collapsed, and the last functioning hospital in Gaza, the European Hospital, has had staff leaving in droves as the IDF start active combat in Rafah. No aid is going through to Gaza and the field hospital which we are supporting is able to provide only urgent care. Children are unnecessarily losing their limbs. I ask my noble friend: will the Government take another look and see whether there could be, and whether we should have, a pathway open for children with serious wounds, so they can be given specialist care which can only be afforded to them in the specialist hospitals which we are lucky to have in this country?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... I am sure I speak for everyone in your Lordships' House, irrespective of perspective on this conflict, in paying great tribute to those within agencies, particularly the voluntary agencies, who have allowed for UK medevac and those serving in the UK field hospital and others, for the courage, commitment and principle they show in bringing support to the most vulnerable.

On the issue of medevac, my noble friend will know that we have worked with other countries, including the UAE and Egypt, in facilitating that for those who are in most acute need of it. I also recognise the important proposal she has put forward. We want to ensure that those in urgent need, particularly children and the most vulnerable, are provided with that support. The best way that we can achieve this, as I say time and time again, is to stop the fighting, get the aid in, ensure the facilitation of all the medical services and get the hostages out. Human suffering

does not look at religion, race, colour or any other creed; it looks at humans, and we must put humanity at the core of everything we do.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-05-15/debates/BA5592D9-6B64-43CD-9E00-EA8A241B3EAA/UNRWA>

*The Colonna Report, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa\\_independent\\_review\\_on\\_neutrality.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf)

*David Cameron's comments to Laura Kuenssberg, referred to above, can be heard at*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001z828/sunday-with-laura-kuenssberg-arms-to-israel-gaza-protests-eurovision>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Immigration Controls: Israel

**Lord Godson (Conservative)** [HL4208] To ask His Majesty's Government what policies, guidance and practices the Border Force has adopted in relation to the arrival of (1) Israeli nationals, and (2) individuals with joint UK–Israeli citizenship in the UK; and whether there has been any change in this policy and its operation since October 2023.

**Lord Godson (Conservative)** [HL4209] To ask His Majesty's Government what policies, guidance and practices the Border Force has adopted in relation to the arrival in the UK of (1) Israeli nationals, and (2) individuals with joint UK–Israeli citizenship, who have served in the IDF.

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** Border Force's number one priority is to keep our borders safe and secure, and we will never compromise on this.

Border Force would not comment on individual policies that could jeopardise border security.

Border Force performs checks on 100% of passengers arriving at the UK border on scheduled services, enabling interventions against those known or suspected to pose a risk to the national interest.

There are many reasons why a Border Force Officer may feel it necessary to ask additional questions to satisfy themselves of eligibility to enter. Officers carry out checks that are deemed necessary in accordance with immigration procedures.

In the UK, the Immigration Rules require all arriving passengers, regardless of their nationality or country they arrived from, to establish their eligibility for admission.

To maintain a safe and secure border, a passenger's passport or national identity card is checked. There are also times when extra checks are conducted.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-30/hl4208>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-30/hl4209>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### Immigration Controls: Israel

**Lord Godson (Conservative)** [HL4210] To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) UK–Israeli citizens, and (2) IDF veterans or serving personnel, the UK Border Force detained for questioning in the periods (a) October 2023 to present, (b) October 2022–October 2023, and (c) October 2021–October 2022.

**Lord Godson (Conservative)** [HL4211] To ask His Majesty's Government how many individuals entering the UK from Israel or Palestine, who are not UK–Israeli citizens or IDF veterans or serving personnel, the UK Border Force detained for questioning in the periods (1) October 2023 to present, (2) October 2022–October 2023, and (3) October 2021–October 2022.

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** Border Force does not publish information on operational

activities. Doing so would publicise operational practices which would be used to assist in the evasion of customs controls and compromise border security.

However, the Home Office published data can be found at the following link:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65d887a154f1e70011165914/passengers-refused-entry-border-datasets-dec-2023.xlsx>

[Passengers refused entry](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-30/hl4210>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-30/hl4211>

### **UNRWA: Finance**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL4180]** To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), following the publication of the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality on 22 April.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Allegations that UNRWA staff were involved in the events that took place on 7 October in Israel are appalling, which is why we took decisive action to pause future funding to the organisation.

The Prime Minister has been clear that the UK will set out its position on future funding to UNRWA following careful consideration of Catherine Colonna's final report, UNRWA's response and the ongoing UN Office for Internal Oversight Services investigation into these allegations. We recognise the pivotal role the UNRWA play in support of Palestinians in Gaza and neighbouring countries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-29/hl4180>

*Catherine Colonna's report, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa\\_independent\\_review\\_on\\_neutrality.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf)

*UNRWA's response referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-preliminary-response-final-report-independent-review-mechanisms-and>

### **UNRWA: Finance**

**Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Labour) [HL4237]** To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Independent Review Group on the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality, published on 22 April; what are the implications of the report for future UK policy towards the agency; and whether they will resume funding UNRWA.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Allegations that UNRWA staff were involved in the events that took place on 7 October in Israel are appalling, which is why we took decisive action to pause future funding to the organisation.

The UK recognises that UNRWA is critical to aid delivery in Gaza. The Prime Minister has been clear that the UK will set out its position on future funding to UNRWA following careful consideration of Catherine Colonna's final report, UNRWA's response and the ongoing UN Office for Internal Oversight Services investigation into these allegations.

We remain absolutely committed to getting humanitarian aid to people in Gaza who desperately need it, including through other UN agencies and British charities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-30/hl4237>

*Catherine Colonna's report, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa\\_independent\\_review\\_on\\_neutrality.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf)

UNRWA's response referred to above can be read at <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-preliminary-response-final-report-independent-review-mechanisms-and>

## Welsh Senedd Statement of Opinion

**Peredur Owen Griffiths (plaid Cymru) [OPIN-2024-0387] Recognising the State of Palestine** – This Senedd:

1. Recognises the historic links between the Palestinian people and the people of Wales.
2. Reaffirms its calls for an immediate ceasefire on all sides, the release of all hostages, and an end to the conflict in Gaza.
3. Calls upon the UK and Welsh Governments to immediately recognise the State of Palestine as a first step in a process to enable a path to a lasting peace and two state solution.

<https://record.senedd.wales/StatementOfOpinion/387>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Attacks against UN human rights experts must cease: Coordination Committee of Special Procedures**

... The Coordination Committee of Special Procedures... issued a statement today, denouncing verbal attacks, derogatory social media campaigns and aggressive and offensive statements by State officials and civil society ...

"We are shocked by the vilification, threats and personal attacks faced by UN Special Procedures experts who bring courage and dedication to their work to spotlight human rights violations and atrocities all over the world," the Coordination Committee said.

"These attacks have included unfounded allegations of misuse of resources and claims of bias and unprofessional conduct intended to damage reputations, on social media, during UN meetings and even when experts are on official country visits," the Committee said.

Personal attacks have coalesced around certain flashpoints and contexts and manifest when the experts are particularly vocal in crisis or emergency situations ...

"Our colleagues addressing the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel face severe targeting in social media, and baseless accusations that question their integrity and motivations," the Committee said. ...

"A threshold is breached when criticism is not directed at the work of an independent expert, but veers into disparaging personal remarks," it said.

The Committee also pointed to instances when personal information including residential addresses and telephone numbers had been published on social media – a malicious practice known as "doxxing."

"The publishing of experts' private data without their consent has exposed them to unacceptable security risks. Threats against family members of mandate holders are a further means of intimidation that creates serious physical and mental insecurities that reverberate beyond the experts," the Committee said. ...

"These attacks impact not only the experts concerned, but also reverberate and have a damaging effect on the Special Procedures mechanism itself, which is the largest body of independent human rights experts in the UN system." ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/attacks-against-un-human-rights-experts-must-cease-coordination-committee>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Ghassan Abu-Sittah

**Patrick Grady (SNP)** [24950] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, whether he has had discussions with the Government of (a) Germany and (b) France on the refusal of entry to their country of Dr Ghassan Abu Sittah, Rector of Glasgow University; and if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of such refusals.

**Andrew Mitchell:** I have not made representations on this matter to either the French or German Authorities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-07/24950>

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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>

Amendment Paper

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0155/amend/criminal\\_rm\\_rep\\_0516.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0155/amend/criminal_rm_rep_0516.pdf)

#### **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>

Amendment Paper

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0007/amend/holocaust\\_rm\\_cwh\\_0516.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0007/amend/holocaust_rm_cwh_0516.pdf)

House of Commons Library Briefing

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9741/CBP-9741.pdf>

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

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

## **Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief Bill**

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

## **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>

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

**Faith school designation reforms** (closing date 20 June 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/faith-schools-policy-team/faith-school-designation-reforms/>

**\*\* Review of the RSHE statutory guidance** (closing date 11 July 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/>

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