



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

## Home Affairs

### Ministerial Statement

#### **Death Certification Reform and the Introduction of Medical Examiners**

**Baroness Merron, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Health and Social Care)** [HLWS30] I wish to inform the House of the Government's plan to continue with the reform to death certification and introduce a statutory medical examiner system on 9 September 2024. By law, all deaths will become subject to either a medical examiner's scrutiny or a coroner's investigation. The changes will put the existing medical examiner system's obligations, duties and responsibilities on a statutory footing. Regulations were laid on 15 April 2024 including the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Regulations, the Medical Examiners Regulations and the National Medical Examiner (Additional Functions) Regulations and will come into force on 9 September 2024.

The changes will put the bereaved at the centre by providing an opportunity for them to raise questions or concerns with a senior doctor not involved in the care of the deceased. This will improve practice and communication, support the right deaths being referred to coroners for further investigation and help deter poor practice and criminal activity.

The introduction of medical examiners is part of a broader set of reforms to death certification, coronial and registration processes. We are working closely across Government to ensure we are supporting the professions involved with relevant communications and guidance. This will be published on 9 September when the reforms come into force.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-07-29/hlws30>

*The Regulations referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/492/made>

*and*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/493/made>

*and*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/494/contents/made>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Private Education: Religion

**Damian Hinds (Conservative)** [892] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her most recent estimate is of the number of pupils on roll in independent schools of a religious character of the (a) Anglican, (b) Roman Catholic, (c) other Christian, (d) Jewish, (e) Muslim, (f) Hindu, (g) Sikh and (h) other faiths in each local authority; and how many of each of those types of school there are.

**Stephen Morgan:** The department publishes statistics on pupils and schools in England, which is available here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>

The number of independent schools and pupils registered at them as at January 2024, by religious character and local authority, is available here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3d6557c3-5279-4652-b88d-08dcab23db45>

'No data' indicates that the local authority has no independent schools associated with that faith.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-22/892>

### Islamophobia: Education

**Fabian Hamilton (Labour)** [1195] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of mandating education on islamophobia in schools.

**Catherine McKinnell:** The department is committed to tackling all forms of prejudice, including religious prejudice, and education is a key component of building a fairer and more equal society.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, there are many opportunities in the existing curriculum for schools to teach about islamophobia, including through:

- Citizenship education, which is compulsory at key stages 3 and 4, and teaches about religious diversity, mutual respect and understanding.
- Relationships education, which is compulsory in all schools, and teaches about the impact of prejudice and the importance of respect.
- Religious education, which is compulsory in all state-funded schools, and educates about religious tolerance.

The department's 'Educate Against Hate' campaign also provides teachers, school leaders and parents with guidance, advice and trusted resources to help them safeguard students from radicalisation and build students' resilience to all forms of extremism. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.educateagainsthate.com/>

The government will keep the effectiveness of this approach under review and will consider the issue further in the Curriculum and Assessment Review.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-23/1195>

## House of Commons Library Briefing:

**Comparing the school curriculum across the UK**

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9834/CBP-9834.pdf>

TOP

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Visas: Families

**Rebecca Long Bailey (Independent)** [803] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of creating an emergency family reunion visa scheme for people affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

**Seema Malhotra:** Currently, those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine who wish to join family members in the UK can do so via the existing range of routes available.

Any application for a UK visa will be assessed against the requirements of the Immigration Rules. Immediate family members of British citizens and those settled in the UK who wish to come and live in the UK can apply under one of the existing family visa routes.

There are also routes available for dependants of those who are in the UK on a work or student route.

Individuals with protection status or settlement on a protection route may sponsor their partner or child (under 18), to join or stay with them in the UK, providing they formed part of the pre-flight family unit before the sponsor fled their country to seek protection.

When the visa application has been received consideration will be given to compelling, compassionate and exceptional circumstances.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-19/803>

### Gaza: Israel

**Clive Lewis (Labour)** [811] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish legal advice obtained under the previous Government on its decision to challenge the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction on Israeli military action in Gaza.

**Hamish Falconer:** As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, he is not able to look back on advice made available to previous Government Ministers. As was announced on 26 July, the Government will not be submitting observations to the ICC, in line with its position that this is a matter for the Court to decide on.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-19/811>

*The announcement referred to above is not currently available online.*

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### Occupied Territories: Development Aid

**Chris Law (SNP)** [614] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of UK-funded aid programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories that have been destroyed or seized by Israeli forces (a) since 7 October 2023, (b) over the last 12 months and (c) over the last five years.

**Chris Law (SNP)** [615] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the financial cost to UK-funded aid programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a result of having been destroyed or seized by Israeli forces (a) since 7 October 2023, (b) over the last 12 months, (c) over the last five years.

**Hamish Falconer:** The FCDO does not routinely make estimates of this information over these timescales. We are aware, however, of a number of aid organisations

based in Gaza whose operations have been curtailed or damaged by Israeli military action since 7 October, including 57 organisation that had been given grants by the UK for a total amount of £600,000 through the FCDO Private Sector Support Programme.

Since 7 October the UK has also provided £19,750,000 to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Occupied Palestinian Territories pooled fund, which is used to support critical responses to emerging needs through UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs. OCHA has published data (which is publicly available) on demolitions, evictions, confiscations, and other related incidents since 2009.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-18/614>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-18/615>

*The OCHA data referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.ochaopt.org/data/demolition>

### **Gaza: Charities**

**Melanie Ward (Labour)** [765] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many British-registered charities working in Gaza have experienced (a) staff or volunteers being (i) killed and (ii) injured and (b) buildings or other infrastructure being destroyed or damaged in Gaza in the last 10 months; and how many (A) staff have been (1) killed and (2) injured and (B) incidents there have been of buildings being destroyed or damaged in Gaza in the last 10 months, by each registered charity.

**Hamish Falconer:** The UK Government does not hold this data directly. However, we are extremely concerned about the number of casualties amongst the humanitarian sector community, including our own UK nationals. International Humanitarian Law provides for the protection of non-combatants. Whilst in Israel, the Foreign Secretary pressed Prime Minister Netanyahu to implement improved deconfliction processes to protect aid workers. I will continue to raise with my Israeli counterparts the incidents that affect the delivery of vital humanitarian work.

Israel must take concrete steps to protect civilians and aid workers in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. This includes deconfliction between military and humanitarian operations, and supporting the minimum operating requirements of the UN agencies. The World Central Kitchen (WCK) deaths on 2 April, including the death of three British Nationals, were an appalling example of Israel's failure to provide an effective deconfliction mechanism to keep humanitarian operations safe from military operations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-18/765>

## **Downing Street**

### **PM meeting with President Herzog of Israel**

The Prime Minister met Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Paris.

The pair reiterated their commitment to maintaining the historic friendship between Israel and the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister expressed his condolences for the deaths of the five hostages kidnapped on October 7th, whose bodies have recently been recovered from Gaza.

The Prime Minister reiterated his ongoing support for Israel's right to self-defence in accordance with international law. He was clear that there is no moral equivalence between Israel, a democratic state actions and Hamas, a terrorist organisation.

The Prime Minister said there must be immediate steps towards a ceasefire, so that

hostages can be released and more humanitarian aid can get in for those in desperate need.

The two leaders committed to continuing their close partnership in key areas of collaboration such as trade and investment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-president-herzog-of-israel-28-july-2024>

## United Nations

### **Note to correspondents: In response to questions on the attack in the Israeli-occupied Golan**

The Secretary-General condemns the killing of 12 civilians, mainly children and teenagers in the Druze village of Majdal Shams, in the Israeli-occupied Golan ...

He conveys his deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and wishes a speedy recovery to all those injured.

Civilians, and children in particular, should not continue to bear the burden of the horrific violence plaguing the region.

The Secretary-General calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and reiterates once again his consistent call on all concerned to avoid any further escalation. The exchanges of fire across the Blue Line must cease immediately. All parties must comply with their obligations under international law. The parties must urgently recommit to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 and immediately return to a cessation of hostilities.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2024-07-28/note-correspondents-response-questions-the-attack-the-israeli-occupied-golan>

*UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

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### **Joint statement of UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander Lt. Gen. Aroldo Lázaro**

We deplore the death of civilians - young children and teenagers - in Majdal Shams. Civilians must be protected at all times.

We urge the parties to exercise maximum restraint and to put a stop to the ongoing intensified exchanges of fire. It could ignite a wider conflagration that would engulf the entire region in a catastrophe beyond belief.

<https://unifil.unmissions.org/joint-statement-un-special-coordinator-lebanon-jeanine-hennis-plasschaert-and-unifil-head-mission-0>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Experts hail ICJ declaration on illegality of Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory as "historic" for Palestinians and international law**

Israel and other UN Member States must immediately comply with the authoritative determination by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, independent human rights experts said ...

The landmark ruling of 19 July 2024 declared that Israel's occupation of the Gaza strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful, along with the associated settlement regime, annexation and use of natural resources. The Court added that Israel's legislation

and measures violate the international prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid. The ICJ mandated Israel to end its occupation, dismantle its settlements, provide full reparations to Palestinian victims and facilitate the return of displaced people. ...

The Court refuted the notion that Palestinian self-determination must be achieved solely through bilateral negotiations with Israel – a requirement that has subjected Palestinians to violence, dispossession and rights violations for 30 years.

“The Court has finally reaffirmed a principle that seemed unclear, even to the United Nations: Freedom from foreign military occupation, racial segregation and apartheid is absolutely non-negotiable,” the experts said.

They welcomed the Court’s recognition that converting occupation into annexation by demolishing homes, denying housing permits, and land grabs, violates the *jus cogens* norm prohibiting the use of force to annex occupied territory.

“May this historic ruling begin the realisation of the Palestinian people’s fundamental right to self-determination, and peace premised on freedom for all,” the experts said. The ICJ advisory opinion will serve as a critical tool to restore respect for international law, especially at this crucial moment when the Court is also considering Israel’s alleged violations of the Genocide Convention, they added. ...

“Since the Court ruling on 19 July, Israel has intensified attacks on the civilian population in Gaza and their natural resources,” they warned. ...

“While the UN Security Council and General Assembly will consider strategies to ensure a swift end to the illegal occupation”, the experts said, “States must immediately review all diplomatic, political, and economic ties with Israel, inclusive of business and finance, pension funds, academia and charities.”

They called for an [arms embargo](#), an end to all other commercial [*sic*] that may damage the Palestinians, and targeted sanctions, including asset freezes, on Israeli individuals and entities involved in illegal occupation and racial segregation and apartheid policies.

They further called for investigations and prosecutions against those involved in crimes in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly dual citizens serving in Israel’s military or involved in settler violence. ...

They also called on the international community to challenge Israel’s deliberate efforts to rewrite the rules of international humanitarian law, using it as “humanitarian camouflage” to legitimise potentially genocidal violence against all Palestinians.

“For too long, Palestinians have been held hostage to *realpolitik*, while Israel has made a mockery of international order and the normative framework of international law,” the experts said. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/experts-hail-icj-declaration-illegality-israels-presence-occupied>

*The Ruling (Advisory Opinion) referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf>

TOP

## Foreign Affairs

### UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Jim Allister (Traditional Unionist Voice) [80] Olympics opening ceremony** – That this House condemns the gratuitous and offensive mocking of Christianity as part of the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games 2024; and calls on the Foreign Secretary to register a protest with the International Olympic Committee.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62395>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office** “My message to British nationals in Lebanon is clear – leave.” @DavidLammy The FCDO also advises against travel to Lebanon. [plus video]

<https://x.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1818220098001256773>

TOP

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

### UK Parliament

**Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3741>

**Holocaust Memorial Bill**

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

### 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

**\*\* closes in 6 days**

**Independent review into civil unrest in Leicester 2022** (closing date 5 August 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/independent-review-into-civil-unrest-in-leicester-2022/independent-review-into-civil-unrest-in-leicester-2022>

**£20k registration threshold for charities in Northern Ireland** (closing date 11 August 2024)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-ps20k-registration-threshold-charities-northern-ireland>

**Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 16 August 2024)

[https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult\\_view/](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult_view/)

**Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill: Financial Memorandum** (closing date 16 August 2024)

[https://yourviews.parliament.scot/finance/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland/consult\\_view/](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/finance/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland/consult_view/)

**Gaps in Equality Legislation [Northern Ireland]** (closing date 6 September 2024)

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/committee-for-the-executive-office/gaps-in-equality-legislation-inquiry>

**Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2025-2028** (closing date 3 October 2024)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/our-strategic-plan-consultation-2025-2028>

[TOP](#)

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