



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Policing of Protests

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [900755] If [the Minister] will commission an independent review into the adequacy of legislation on the policing of protests.

The Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention (Diana Johnson): Like my hon. Friend, the Government value the role of peaceful protest as part of our proud democratic tradition. The Government regularly review the adequacy of existing legislation.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: The right to protest, and the courage of people taking to the streets to demand change, have given us many of our cherished social advancements—from the suffragettes demanding votes for women to the Race Relations Act 1965—but the sheer number of powers to restrict protest is resulting in peaceful protesters being arrested and sentenced to lengthy periods in prison. The previous Government pushed through a range of such laws despite opposition from senior policing figures and from Members across all parties. When will a comprehensive review of the state of protest take place, with a view to repealing powers that unnecessarily restrict the right to peaceful protest?

Diana Johnson: ... As she knows, there will be post-legislative scrutiny of the legislation passed by the previous Government. As the previous Government agreed, it will be considered in due course.

Richard Holden (Conservative): Recent footage of Metropolitan police officers saying that the description of Hezbollah as a terror group was a matter of “opinion” is alarming. The officers in question were deployed to a march in central London where support for Hezbollah was openly displayed, yet many offenders were only identified by photos on social media after the event. Will the Minister ensure that all officers are fully briefed on the proscribed status of Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist organisations, so that offenders are arrested on the spot, and not allowed to spew antisemitic hate on our streets?

Diana Johnson: We are all clear that Hezbollah are a proscribed organisation. The police take great care when they police protests; there is a great deal of briefing for officers beforehand. However, the way that those protests are policed is

operationally independent. I have been to see and talk to officers who are on the frontline at those protests, and I know that it is a difficult job. We should all say a big “thank you” for the work that they do. There have been many protests over the last 12 months that the police have dealt with, and many officers have had rest days cancelled to ensure adequate policing on our streets.

Neil Coyle (Labour): Southwark police officers recently told Bermondsey safety action group that they struggled to prevent or solve crime due to extraction duties, when they have to police repeat protests elsewhere in London. Does the Minister believe that the Met needs new powers to refuse permission for some repetitive protests in the capital, or should it use existing powers better to resolve and reduce extraction duties and increase safety in my community?

Diana Johnson: Police numbers are an issue, which is why this Government are clear about recruiting more neighbourhood police officers to increase that presence on our streets. ...

Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat): Although we respect and would protect the right to peaceful protest, antisemitic and Islamophobic offences have been reported at many recent protests. Those have contributed to an astonishing and shocking 25% increase in religiously aggravated hate crimes in this country, as was revealed last week. The Community Security Trust reports an almost 500% rise in antisemitic incidents, and Tell MAMA has recorded the highest ever number of anti-Muslim incidents. Can the Minister reassure us on what the Government will do to help the police continue to keep communities safe, and police protests in a way that does that?

Diana Johnson: The figures that the hon. Lady sets out are shocking. This Government are clear that there is no place in our society for antisemitism or Islamophobia. There are already meetings about how we can tackle that rise. It is shocking and it will not be tolerated. In some recent protests, the police have clearly had a difficult job to do, but I commend their work to tackle antisemitism and Islamophobia. We know that the police take their responsibilities seriously and that they do so without fear or favour.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-21/debates/A34DF303-B86A-4E1F-91F4-8D0223098416/PolicingOfProtests>

Topical Questions: Home Department

Jon Pearce (Labour): UK universities have experienced a fivefold increase in antisemitic incidents since the 7 October terrorist attacks. At a recent meeting of the Union of Jewish Students, I heard distressing examples of the Iranian regime organising on our campuses and stirring up hatred against Jewish students. Can the Minister tell the House what steps the Department is taking to deal with the threat posed by Tehran here on British soil?

Dan Jarvis: We have been clear that the behaviour of the Iranian regime, including the actions of the IRGC, poses a threat to the safety and security of the UK and our allies. The Government continually assess threats to the UK and take the protection of individuals' rights, freedoms and safety incredibly seriously, wherever those threats may originate.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-21/debates/2AFD7EB4-80A8-4024-8B1A-9F9AF17E12D1/TopicalQuestions#contribution-FAAFDADE-83FD-41EE-940B-FDA972B03BA6>

House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime

Tom Hayes (Labour) [8933] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if

she will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to develop a national action plan to tackle hate crime.

Diana Johnson: The Government is absolutely committed to tackling all forms of hate crime and has already committed to protect LGBT+ and disabled people by making all existing strands of hate crime an aggravated offence.

We will set out next steps in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-14/8933>

Proscription: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

Jon Pearce (Labour) [900765] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation.

Dan Jarvis: We will continue to consider all tools at our disposal to protect the UK and our interests from Iran-linked threats.

More than 400 Iranian individuals and entities, including the IRGC in its entirety are sanctioned.

We keep the list of proscribed organisations under constant review and continue to work at pace to identify further ways to tackle Iranian state threats.

The National Security Act 2023 provides another significant toolkit in the fight against individuals working for state entities like the IRGC. The UK is now a harder target for those states which seek to conduct hostile acts against the UK, including espionage, interference in our political system, sabotage, and assassination.

The Government continually assesses potential threats to the UK, and takes the protection of individuals' rights, freedoms, and safety incredibly seriously – wherever those threats may originate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/900765>

House of Lords Written Answers

Proscribed Organisations: Convictions

Baroness Hoey (Non-affiliated) [HL1390] To ask His Majesty's Government how many people have been convicted in the past 12 months of offences relating to the proscribed terrorist organisations Hamas and Hezbollah.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede: The Ministry of Justice publishes information on the number of convictions for criminal offences including terrorism offences for the period requested in the Outcomes by Offence data tool found at the following link: [Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2023](#).

However, it is not possible to separately identify convictions for offences relating to specific terrorist organisations. This information may be held on court records, but to examine individual court records would be of disproportionate costs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-08/hl1390>

Radicalism: Greater London

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL1169] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will examine the activities of pro-Iran Shia groups in London as part of the rapid review of extremism being conducted by the Home Secretary.

Lord Hanson of Flint: The rapid review of extremism, which is looking across the ideological spectrum, will kickstart a strategic reset on how government tackles extremism and address gaps in the current system which leaves the country exposed to hateful or harmful activity that promotes violence or undermines democracy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1169>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

David Pinto-Duschinsky (Labour) [272] 75th anniversary of Mill Hill Synagogue – That this House congratulates Mill Hill Synagogue on its 75th anniversary; recognises the essential role it has played in building a thriving and vibrant Jewish community in Mill Hill; applauds the impact it has had on Jewish life and learning; commends the immense contribution it makes to the local area; thanks its members for all they do; wishes it every success for the future; and looks forward to it continuing to go from strength to strength
<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62578>

CST

Pathway to Terror

CST's latest research briefing ... reveals the full story of Robert Taylor who was sentenced on Friday 18 October 2024 to 4 years in prison for nine offences relating to racial hatred, two terror offences, two offences related to hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation and one case of support for a proscribed organisation.

This prosecution came about after a two-year investigation by CST's open-source intelligence team into Taylor's pattern of far right and antisemitic activism around his hometown of Farnworth, Bolton. ...

Taylor is not himself a prominent figure within the UK extreme right wing; however, he was part of an international far right network, originating in the United States, called the Goyim Defense League (GDL) which has developed a reputation for shocking, overtly antisemitic public activism. This is starting to spread into the UK, with antisemitic material from GDL used in several antisemitic incidents and shared in far right online spaces. ...

The GDL is a loose transnational, neo-Nazi collective that engages in explicitly anti-Jewish activity both online and offline. ...

The increase in GDL-related content on X has included the circulation of deeply racist, antisemitic clips of GDL leader, Jon Minadeo, from his online livestreams. ...

This research briefing will, for the first time, reveal the extent of Taylor's antisemitic activity, the details of his extremist activities both online and offline, and CST's work to track down and uncover a prolific hate crime perpetrator in the name of protecting the Jewish community from the harm he may have posed.

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2024/10/21/pathway-to-terror>

PATHWAY TO TERROR: From antisemitism to terrorism: Robert Taylor and the Goyim Defense League (GDL)

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/0/5/Pathway%20to%20Terror.pdf>

TOP

Israel

See also Commons oral answers “Policing of Protests”, and “Topical Questions: Home Department”, and written answer HL1390 “ Proscribed Organisations: Convictions” that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and the Lords debate “Iran (Sanctions) (Amendment) Regulations 2024” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza: Israel

Laurence Turner (Labour) [7146] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential implications for its policies of the (a) findings and (b) recommendations of the report entitled Detention in the context of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza (October 2023-June 2024), published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 31 July 2024.

Hamish Falconer: As the Foreign Secretary outlined in his statement to the House of Commons on 2 September, the UK's concern about the treatment of detainees was one of the factors determining the UK's decision to suspend certain arms export licences to Israel that could be used in the conflict in Gaza. We have read the recommendations produced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We urge Israel to reinstate immediate and unfettered access for the International Committee of the Red Cross into detention centres as required by international law. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary continue to press Israeli leaders on the importance of upholding International Humanitarian Law. We want to see an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the protection of all civilians, much more aid entering Gaza and a path to long-term peace and stability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-04/7146>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20240731-Thematic-report-Detention-context-Gaza-hostilities.pdf>

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/F5A06C09-84E1-4788-AF6F-E1560E2B25D3/MiddleEastUpdate#contribution-78DA6459-BB53-4645-8872-CB7C4F535069>

Gaza: Israel

Abtisam Mohamed (Labour) [8320] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law in the context of the conflict in Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: Following a review of Israel's compliance with International Humanitarian Law, we took decisive action on 2 September, suspending all the export licences that we assess might be used by the Israeli Defense Forces for military operations in Gaza: around 30 licences. The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and I have raised issues of International Humanitarian Law compliance on several occasions with the Israeli government. With mounting civilian casualties and hundreds of thousands of displaced people, all parties must do everything possible to protect civilians and fully respect International Humanitarian Law. We continue to urge Israel to fulfil its promise to flood Gaza with aid, and to permit immediate and unfettered access for the International Committee of the Red Cross to detention centres. Ministers will continue to raise these issues due with urgency with the Israeli Government.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-09/8320>

The announcement of the 2 September suspension referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/24090222000013/ExportsToIsraelMilitaryOperationsInGaza>

Israel: Lebanon

Abtisam Mohamed (Labour) [8321] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make an assessment of Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law in the context of the conflict in Lebanon.

Hamish Falconer: Following the 2 September suspension, there are currently no existing UK arms licences to Israel for use in Lebanon, apart from exempt F35 components, so there is no legal requirement to assess IHL compliance. This Government is clear that International Humanitarian Law must be upheld, and civilians protected. The UK's robust export licensing criteria state that the Government will not issue export licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law. Exports to the F-35 programme are exempted from this suspension. This is due to the F-35 programme's broader strategic role in NATO and wider implications for international peace and security. This exemption should not in principle apply to licences for F-35 components which could be identified as going to Israel.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-09/8321>

Information about the 2 September suspension, referred to above, can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/24090222000013/ExportsToIsraelMilitaryOperationsInGaza>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Military Aid

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green) [HL1531] To ask His Majesty's Government how many Israeli armed forces personnel are being trained in the UK, which training courses they are undertaking, and at which locations these courses are taking place.

Lord Coaker: This information is being withheld in order to protect personal information and to avoid prejudicing relations between the United Kingdom and another State.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-14/hl1531>

Hamas: Hostage Taking

Lord Farmer (Conservative) [HL1383] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to secure the release of the British hostage, Emily Damari, held in captivity in Gaza since the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel, and hostages directly related to British citizens such as Eli Sharabi, Avinatan Or and Oded Lifschitz.

Lord Collins of Highbury: We condemn Hamas' continued holding of hostages in Gaza, including Emily Damari and all those connected to British citizens. Hamas must release all the hostages now, and a ceasefire deal must be agreed urgently to end the suffering. Since our first day in government we have been working alongside our allies and partners in the region in support of ongoing negotiations. We appreciate the tireless efforts of our partners in Qatar, Egypt and the United States, and continue to use all diplomatic avenues to further our aims. The Foreign Secretary reaffirmed to Israeli Foreign Minister Katz in Israel the UK's support in working together to deliver the return of all the hostages. The Foreign Secretary and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan have also met the families of hostages with links to the UK, whose loved ones have been murdered or taken by Hamas, to express our deepest sympathies and to highlight the diplomatic efforts underway.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-08/hl1383>

Armed Conflict: Food Supply

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Conservative) [HL1149] To ask His Majesty's

Government what steps they are taking to engage in diplomacy that specifically highlights the connection between conflict and hunger, as acknowledged in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 in 2018 and the G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact in 2021.

Lord Collins of Highbury: The UK champions UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2417 which enables reporting and early warnings to the UN Security Council when parties to conflict are causing food insecurity and famine risk, including by blocking access to humanitarian support and destroying agriculture and food and water production systems. We use our seat at the Security Council to implement 2417 and urge swift action when such warnings are submitted. We did this when formal warnings were issued earlier this year on Gaza and Sudan. On 13 June, the UK penned UNSCR 2736 on Sudan, with specific calls to warring parties to withdraw fighters to enable agricultural activities throughout the planting season.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1149>

UNSCR 2417, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2417\(2018\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2417(2018))

The G7 Compact referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/g7-foreign-and-development-ministers-meeting-may-2021-communiqué/g7-famine-prevention-and-humanitarian-crises-compact>

UNSCR 2736 referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2736\(2024\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2736(2024))

Hammas: UNRWA

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL1200] To ask His Majesty's Government in the light of the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality, published for the Secretary-General on 20 April, what assessment they have made of subsequent reports, and videos, of UNRWA's involvement with Hamas and its infrastructure.

Lord Collins of Highbury: We take these reports seriously and are following up with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to establish the facts. We expect UNRWA to meet the highest standards of neutrality as laid out in Catherine Colonna's report, including staff vetting. We welcome UNRWA's decisive action and support their decision to terminate the contracts of individuals involved in the October 7 atrocities. Catherine Colonna's review found that UNRWA had policies and procedures in place to ensure the organisation's neutrality. The FCDO speaks regularly to UNRWA and to other international donors on UNRWA management reforms, including at their bi-annual Advisory Commission meeting that met in June.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1200>

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

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf

Hammas: UNRWA

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL1201] To ask His Majesty's Government what information is held by the Consul General in Jerusalem on reported Hamas involvement in UNRWA.

Lord Collins of Highbury: We have taken a close interest in the allegations of Hamas involvement in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and subsequent investigations, on behalf of His Majesty's Government. We welcome UNRWA's decisive action and support their decision to terminate contracts of individuals involved in the October 7 atrocities. Anyone who participated in the horrific October 7 attacks should face the

full force of the law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1201>

UNRWA: Development Aid

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL1202] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to monitor UNRWA; and to ensure that international development funds do not indirectly support terrorist organisations.

Lord Collins of Highbury: The government is confident that United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is taking action to ensure it meets the highest standards of neutrality and is strengthening its procedures. £1 million of the £21 million of new UK funding will be earmarked to support UNRWA to implement the management reforms recommended by the Colonna review. Together with other donors, we will continue to monitor UNRWA's progress on implementation of its action plan. The FCDO will also continue to conduct our own annual assessment of UK funding to UNRWA.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1202>

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

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf

Gaza: United Nations

Lord Swire (Conservative) [HL1334] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the percentage of United Nations buildings in Gaza that have been destroyed during the last 11 months.

Lord Collins of Highbury: The September 2024 UN Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) damage assessment shows two-thirds of all buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed since October 2023. Schools, warehouses and offices run by UN agencies have been severely affected along with much of the civilian infrastructure in the Strip, hindering efforts to preserve access to basic services - safe drinking water, shelter and healthcare. We remain deeply concerned over aid workers' safety in Gaza. Israel must take concrete steps to improve deconfliction at all levels of its command-and-control structures, so the UN and its humanitarian partners can operate safely and effectively.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1334>

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: Proscribed Organisations

Lord West of Spithead (Labour) [HL1349] To ask His Majesty's Government whether recent attacks by Hezbollah on Haifa and Northern Israel and Israeli strikes in Lebanon have led to reconsideration of the proscription of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Lord Collins of Highbury: We keep the list of proscribed terrorist organisations under constant review. Iran's destabilisation of the Middle East, human rights violations, nuclear escalation and threats against people in the UK are abhorrent. We will not hesitate to take the most effective measures against the regime and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Recently, we imposed sanctions against four IRGC individuals responsible for facilitating the work of Iran's proxies and partners in the region. Overall, the UK has more than 400 sanctions designations in place on Iranian individuals and entities in response to the regime's malign influence internationally.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1349>

Downing Street

PM call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel: 19 October 2024

The Prime Minister said he was alarmed to hear about the drone launched towards Prime Minister Netanyahu's home this morning.

They discussed the situation in the Middle East following the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, who the Prime Minister said was a brutal terrorist and that the world is a better place without him.

He also discussed with Prime Minister Netanyahu the opportunity presented by Sinwar's death to halt the fighting and get the hostages out. The Prime Minister also stressed the importance of getting much more aid into Gaza.

Finally, the leaders also discussed Lebanon and the importance of making progress on a political solution.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-19-october-2024>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Hamish Falconer During my visit to Al Arish last week, I saw first-hand the unacceptable lack of aid getting into Gaza. On return I met with Sigrid Kaag, @UN Senior Coordinator for the OPTs, to discuss the desperate and urgent need to increase aid access and protect civilians. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/HFalconerMP/status/1848641034852393335>

Anneliese Dodds Today I met with Sigrid Kaag, UN Senior Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We discussed the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the UK's support for the UN's role in the OPTs. As winter approaches, it's vital that Israel ensures much more aid gets into Gaza. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/AnnelieseDodds/status/1848348095269999099>

Welsh Senedd Oral Answer

Questions to the First Minister

John Griffiths (Labour): First Minister, in the year since the horrific Hamas attacks, Israel's military forces have killed over 40,000 people in Gaza, including so many children and women, with an unknown number buried under the rubble. Humanitarian aid has been prevented and used as an instrument of war. We have seen basic public services and infrastructure destroyed, and extreme hunger and disease is spreading. International law has often been ignored and genocide proceedings taken to the International Court of Justice. World opinion strongly supports an immediate ceasefire, release of the hostages and the beginning of a process towards a political solution.

First Minister, along with community members in Newport East with connections in Palestine, I very much welcome Welsh Government's donation of £100,000 to the middle east appeal of the Disasters Emergency Committee Cymru. Will you also carefully consider other ways in which Welsh Government can make clear its concern at the ongoing death and destruction in Gaza, the West Bank and now Lebanon, whether that concerns disinvestment in the economy of Israel, recognising the state of Palestine, or working to influence our UK Government?

The First Minister (Eluned Morgan): ... I know how troubled we all are when we see those scenes from the middle east. They're genuinely horrific, and it just breaks your heart, in particular when you see children suffering, and the scale of

devastation that we see is just unimaginable for us, as we consider how they are coming to terms with this incredibly difficult situation. I'm very clear that we need a genuine long-term two-state solution. The fighting needs to stop. We need to see an immediate ceasefire, an end to the killing, and we need to see a significant increase in the amount of aid that can be provided, and, of course, the hostages should be returned.

I am pleased that the Welsh Government was able to contribute £100,000 to the Disasters Emergency Committee for the middle east. What is more impressive is the incredible response of the people of Wales—over £0.5 million within 24 hours. And I'd like to thank and pay tribute to all of those who have contributed and ask that other people might consider a donation at this very difficult time in the middle east.

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/14143#C622837>

Northern Ireland Assembly Members Statements

Airports: Arms Supplies to Israel

Gerry Carroll (People Before Profit Alliance): A year into a brutal genocide that has killed at least 100,000 people, you think that you have witnessed everything. After seeing refugee camps blown to bits, hospitals and schools flattened and universities wiped out, you think that you have seen everything. Then, last week, we saw something horrific and brutal that really showcases what Israel and Zionism are all about at their core. We saw the incineration of Sha'ban al-Dalou — the burning alive of a man who was not yet 20 years old. Can you imagine the rightful and justified horror and outcry if that had been carried out in a hospital in Ireland, Europe, America or elsewhere? However, it is deemed to be acceptable and OK because it is another massacréd Palestinian. To me and to millions and billions of people across the world, that is not normal, acceptable or right. After a year of genocide and normalisation of the abnormal — the killing of people on the basis of their nationality and the massacre of Palestinians on an industrial scale — we have witnessed a mass movement to defy the political consensus and the actions of Washington, London, Berlin and other states.

We have to ask questions and focus on the role played by the Governments on these islands in funding the war machine and, in particular, the use of airports. We know that US warplanes go through Shannon Airport, and I pay tribute to the anti-war activists who protested at Shannon a few weekends ago. Journalists from 'The Ditch' reported that weapons of war had gone from the US via Shannon in Ireland to arm the Israeli war machine under the watchful eye of the Southern Government. What is flown through Aldergrove airport? Who is monitoring what goes through Aldergrove? I asked the Economy Minister a question about that, and his answer was that, effectively, nobody monitors it and it is not monitored by the Department. Are the First and the deputy First Minister monitoring what goes through Aldergrove? If it is found that weapons of war for Israel are going through that airport, who will do something about it?

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024/10/22&docID=414508#4605492>

Conflict in the Middle East

Kate Nichol (Alliance): The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has reached a point of unimaginable suffering. I know that I am not alone in being deeply pained by the images and stories of innocent people who have lost their lives. The numbers are staggering, but the impact goes far beyond the statistics. They are people whose futures have been stolen,

their families torn apart and their communities left in ruins.

I have spoken several times during Members' Statements about the need for a ceasefire in Palestine, for humanitarian aid, for the return of the hostages and for the ending of arms sales to Israel: today, I renew that call with even greater urgency. Right now, millions of people across Gaza, Lebanon and the wider region are in need of food, shelter and medical aid.

The international community must not stand by as the atrocities continue: we must demand immediate action, an end to violence and bloodshed and a commitment to a just and lasting peace for all.

Last week, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched an urgent appeal to provide life-saving aid to those affected. The DEC brings together 15 leading aid charities at times of humanitarian crisis overseas. I know that times are tough for many, but if people are able to contribute, their donation, no matter how small it is, will make a difference. The UK Government will match, pound for pound, up to £10 million donated by the public to that appeal.

Right now, an overwhelming 2.1 million people — almost the entire population of Gaza — do not have enough to eat. Homes, schools and hospitals lie in ruins, and people are struggling to access the most basic necessities of food, water and medical care. The situation is especially dire for children, many of whom are suffering from malnutrition, injury and trauma. We owe it to them to act. Charity alone is not enough: we need more than temporary relief; we need long-term solutions. We must hold our Governments accountable, demand diplomatic action and insist that international leaders come together to broker a ceasefire that respects human rights and upholds the dignity of all people. We also need to stop looking away from the images on our screens and use them to motivate us to act. Please speak out, pressure our Government to act and, if you can, support the DEC's appeal. Our voice and support can literally help to save lives.

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024/10/21&docID=414507#4603425>

Gaza: Genocide

Pat Sheehan (Sinn Féin): The situation in Gaza is getting worse every day. Israel is blocking humanitarian aid and food entering northern Gaza at every turn. It is not I who claim that but a top official of the United Nations.

What do I mean by that? Is the United Nations not an enemy of Israel now? That is why Israel had to kill almost 230 United Nations staff in the past year. That is why it had to destroy a United Nations watchtower and attack a United Nations camp with a tank recently.

I do not know what the other aid workers did wrong that meant that Israel had to kill them, or indeed the 800 health workers whom they killed either. However, whatever the reason, the international community is still selling arms to Israel to use against those same "enemies". Some 400,000 Palestinians are at risk of being killed in northern Gaza. If Israel does not kill them by bombing, they will starve them to death.

Again, it is not I who claim this, but the group Jews for Justice for Palestine. Its website is worth a look. There you will find information about Sha'ban al-Dalou, a 20-year-old Palestinian student who was burned alive last week when Israel again bombed al-Aqsa hospital. You will also get information about the "general's plan" to drive all Palestinians out of northern Gaza by famine and to kill whoever remains.

Israel is already implementing that plan. It is no secret. Israel itself announced to the media that it was to carry out the general's plan. If Israel succeeds in expelling the Palestinians from northern Gaza, it will bring blame not only on Israel but on the international community as a whole. It is not I making that claim — it is the Israeli group B'Tselem, an Israeli human

rights organisation working in Israel.

Supporters of Israel can turn a deaf ear to the United Nations, to Amnesty International, to Human Rights Watch and to the hundreds of other organizations that are demanding an end to the genocide, but when Israelis themselves demand that their Government stop the genocide, is it not time for the international community to listen?

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024/10/21&docID=414507#4603452>

UN Development Programme and UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Gaza War: Expected Socio-Economic Impacts on the State of Palestine October 2024

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-10/gaza-war-expected-socioeconomic-impacts-palestine-policy-brief-english-1.pdf>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Beirut hospital attack: Civilians must be protected: Volker Türk

I am appalled by the Israeli strike near Rafik Hariri University Hospital in Beirut's densely populated Jnah neighbourhood that reportedly killed at least 18 people, including four children, and wounded 60 others, and reiterate that the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians must be respected.

The hospital itself, which is one of the main hospitals in Beirut and has received a large number of patients throughout the conflict, also appears to have been damaged in the strike late on Monday.

In the conduct of military operations, all feasible precautions must be taken to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. Hospitals, ambulances and medical personnel are specifically protected under international humanitarian law because of their lifesaving function for the wounded and the sick. When conducting military operations in the vicinity of hospitals, parties to the conflict must assess the expected impact on healthcare services in relation to the principles of proportionality and precautions. Any incidents which affect hospitals must be subjected to a prompt and thorough investigation.

I repeat the UN's call for an immediate cessation to hostilities, and remind all parties that the protection of civilians must be the absolute top priority.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/beirut-hospital-attack-civilians-must-be-protected>

UNRWA

SOS from our UNRWA staff in northern Gaza: Philippe Lazzarini

Nearly three weeks of non-stop bombardments from the Israeli Forces as the death toll increases.

Our staff report they cannot find food, water or medical care. The smell of death is everywhere as bodies are left lying on the roads or under the rubble. Missions to clear the bodies or provide humanitarian assistance are denied.

In northern Gaza, people are just waiting to die. They feel deserted, hopeless and alone. They live from one hour to the next, fearing death at every second.

Throughout the war over the past year, some UNRWA staff stayed in the north and did the

impossible to provide aid to internally displaced people. We kept some of our shelters open despite heavy bombardments and attacks on our buildings.

On behalf of our staff in northern Gaza, I am calling for an immediate truce, even if for few hours, to enable safe humanitarian passage for families who wish to leave the area and reach safer places.

This is the bare minimum to save the lives of civilians who have nothing to do with this conflict.

Ceasefire now.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/sos-our-unrwa-staff-northern-gaza>

Gaza: the Israeli Authorities continue to deny humanitarian missions: Philippe Lazzarini

Gaza: the Israeli Authorities continue to deny humanitarian missions to reach the north with critical supplies including medicine and food for people under siege.

Hospitals have been hit and are left without power while injured people are left without care.

UNRWA remaining shelters are so overcrowded, some displaced people are now forced to live in the toilets.

According to reports, people attempting to flee are getting killed, their bodies left on the street. Missions to rescue people from under the rubble are also being denied.

Humanitarian agencies including UNRWA must get access to north Gaza.

Denying & weaponizing humanitarian assistance to achieve military purposes is a sign of how low the moral compass is.

Assistance must reach everyone in need in Gaza: civilians, including children and the hostages.

No one should beg to assist or to be assisted.

A ceasefire is the beginning to putting an end to this endless nightmare.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/gaza-israeli-authorities-continue-deny-humanitarian-missions>

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Foreign Affairs

See also the Commons oral answer “Topical Questions: Home Department”, and written answer 900765 “Proscription: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps” that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and

Commons written answer HL1349 “Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: Proscribed Organisations” that is included in the Israel section above.

House of Lords Grand Committee Debate

Iran (Sanctions) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

col 67GC **Baroness Chapman of Darlington (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office):** ... The UK has ... deployed sanctions in innovative and impactful ways, including in our response to the threat from the Iranian regime. This instrument contains measures to deter the Government of Iran from causing regional and international instability by disrupting their unmanned aerial vehicles—UAVs—and missile industries, and their access to items critical to military

development.

The Iranian regime's development and proliferation of large volumes of advanced conventional weapons, including UAVs and missiles, continues to destabilise the Middle East and prolong Russia's illegal war in Ukraine. Iran's use of an unprecedented number of UAVs and missiles during its attack on Israel on 13 April 2024 demonstrated how Iranian weapons development and proliferation is fuelling conflict in the Middle East. The Iranian regime also used hundreds of these arms in its attack on Israel on 1 October, which we condemn in the strongest terms. This attack once more endangered the lives of innocent civilians and escalated an already incredibly dangerous situation. It cannot be tolerated. In response to Iran's attack on Israel on 1 October, the UK has designated nine individuals and entities involved in facilitating Iran's destabilising activity. These include senior military figures and the Iranian Space Agency, which develops technologies that have applications in ballistic missile development. We are deeply concerned about the prospect of further escalation. ...

This is the latest in a long history of Iran destabilising the region, including through its political, financial and military support for its proxies and partners, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis and aligned militia groups in Iraq and Syria. ...

Iran is now one of Russia's top military backers ...

This legislation expands the UK's trade sanctions against Iran with the aim of disrupting its UAV and missile industry, as well as its access to items critical to military development. ...
col 68GC All of the items prohibited by the EU in May have been prohibited by this instrument. In addition, prohibitions will also be applied to some items identified by the Ministry of Defence as significant to Iran's UAV and missile industries.

Finally, this Government are committed to enforcement. It is right that we ensure that we have the necessary powers, tools and capacity to implement and enforce our sanctions regimes effectively. ...

To conclude, these new regulations will increase the pressure on Iran's defence industry. They will disrupt Iran's production of UAVs and missiles that could be supplied to its proxies in the Middle East or to Russia. ...

Lord Polak (Conservative): My Lords, I totally support these regulations and agree with every word that the Minister has just spoken. ...

While I agree with everything that is being done, I hope that the Government are considering taking one step further to put pressure on the Iranian regime. I refer to proscribing the IRGC. ... it is the only way that the pressure will tell on the Iranian regime. ...

col 69GC **Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat):** ... I agree with everything the Minister said about the role of Iran in the Middle East and its relationship with Russia. ... I absolutely support the prohibition on equipment, but I noticed—if I read the measures correctly—an exemption for the personal property of someone travelling. Does that include designs? Do His Majesty's Government have any concerns about UK interest in the design of these munitions, not just the provision of equipment to manufacture them? ...

Secondly, on the provision or export of goods to third countries that relay trade to Iran, I hope the Government have a response to what could be a particularly easy circumvention of these measures if our trade is with a broker country. ...

Lord Callanan (Conservative): ... Both the other noble Lords who have spoken outlined graphically how actively and malevolently Iran is undermining the international order through its support for Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. While it is tempting to think that these are faraway conflicts, any action by the Houthis in the Gulf has the potential to undermine international shipments of oil, gas and other important commodities, which can affect the economy and well-being of this country. Therefore, it is right that we are targeting further the Iranian regime. ...

I lend my support to the point made by my noble friend on the proscription of the IRGC. ...

I know that this is difficult, but political will must win over bureaucratic will. ...

col 70GC Baroness Chapman of Darlington: ... On the IRGC, I note the comments ... We have already sanctioned the IRGC in its entirety. The separate list of terrorist organisation proscriptions is, as noble Lords know, kept actively under review. ...

On the issue of personal property, we have in minds such things as laptops, phones and other personal items. It would be restricted to that. ...

This will apply to UK entities and individuals overseas and anyone who is in the UK. It will not apply any more widely than that. ...

Lord Purvis of Tweed: ... I understand that there will be a prohibition on exporting this equipment, but I am not sure that any of it has end-use certificate requirements. Therefore, how will we know if we are sending it to another country which then immediately ships it to Iran? How is that covered?

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: ... Brokers would be specifically in breach of sanctions were they to facilitate or knowingly support in any way something ending up with Iran. ...

These measures represent a step forward in our capability to restrict Iran's proliferation of advanced conventional weapons, which continue to fuel conflict in the Middle East and support Russia in its illegal war in Ukraine. The UK Government are firmly committed to using sanctions to hold the Iranian regime to account for its malign activities in the UK and elsewhere. ...

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-21/debates/57F1DD98-9555-45B5-BAA8-805B0E73301A/Iran\(Sanctions\)\(Amendment\)Regulations2024](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-21/debates/57F1DD98-9555-45B5-BAA8-805B0E73301A/Iran(Sanctions)(Amendment)Regulations2024)

House of Commons Written Answer

Nadia Ayoub McCulloch

Fabian Hamilton (Labour) [8106] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department are taking to help reunite Nadia Ayoub McCulloch with her family.

Hamish Falconer: The FCDO are aware of Nadia Ayoub McCulloch's situation and have been in contact with her directly. The FCDO's Consular team have been providing, and continue to provide, support to Nadia at what we recognise will be a distressing time for her, her family and her friends.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-09/8106>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

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

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3769>

**** Exemption from Value Added Tax (Listed Places of Worship)**

Bill homepage not yet online

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-21/debates/243188E7-A7CF-4919-9681-CF07DCA2C9C1/BillsPresented>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Palestine Statehood (Recognition)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3771>

**** Palestine Statehood (Recognition) (No. 2)**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3796>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-21/debates/243188E7-A7CF-4919-9681-CF07DCA2C9C1/BillsPresented>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3803>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-21/debates/243188E7-A7CF-4919-9681-CF07DCA2C9C1/BillsPresented>

Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3774>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3765>

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-bil>

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

**** closes in 7 days**

Northern Ireland Assembly: Inquiry into Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Schools (closing date 29 October 2024)

<https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2022-2027/education/inquiries/inquiry-into-relationship-and-sexuality-education-rse-in-schools/>

Northern Ireland Executive: Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 (closing date 4 November 2024)

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/PfG-consultation>

Curriculum and Assessment Review [England] (closing date 22 November 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/curriculum-and-assessment-team/curriculum-and-assessment-review-call-for-evidence/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Code of practice for services, public functions and associations (closing date 3 January 2025)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/code-practice-services-public-functions-and-associations-consultation>

Burial and Cremation [Law Commission] (closing date 9 January 2025)

<https://lawcom.gov.uk/project/burial-and-cremation/>

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