



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### **Business of the House**

**Laura Kyrke-Smith (Labour):** Last week, I joined Rabbi Neil Janes and Father Stuart Owen on a walk through my constituency to mark the Jewish festival of Sukkot, and to thank and raise funds for local organisations that support people in need of all faiths. Will the Leader of the House grant a debate on how we can support and encourage interfaith understanding, dialogue and action, of which this walk was a really powerful example?

**Lucy Powell:** I thank my hon. Friend for raising that question, and pass on my thanks to Rabbi Janes and those who have come together in her constituency to deal with these issues. She is right to call for interfaith communities to come together. I am sure that she will continue to do that in her constituency.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-24/debates/B1F9ED3A-CD19-493D-AF2D-70931158F269/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-C289FAE9-E7D5-4ED7-B9A2-38A85E46BEAA>

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Pupils: Bullying**

**Josh Babarinde (Liberal Democrat) [9254]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impact of her Department's anti-bullying funding on schools; and whether she plans to reinstate that funding.

**Josh Babarinde (Liberal Democrat) [9255]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support her Department plans to provide to tackle bullying in schools based on (a) perceived difference and (b) protected characteristics.

**Stephen Morgan:** The department's most recent anti-bullying grants, which totalled over £3 million and ran between August 2021 and March 2024, were procured to

support schools to target bullying related to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The department is currently reviewing the impact of these previous programmes and considering next steps for future programmes aimed at tackling bullying in schools. Funding beyond 31 March 2025 is subject to the next government Spending Review which will take place this autumn. The outcome of the Review will be communicated in due course.

The department published advice in 2017 to support schools with addressing incidences of bullying, including bullying based on perceived differences and protected characteristics. This is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

In 2016, the department also published a practical tool to help schools, which can be found on the Educate Against Hate website. This can be accessed at:

<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/9254>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/9255>

*The Equality Act 2010: protected characteristics, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1>

### **Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme**

**Adam Jogee (Labour)** [9392] To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

**Chris Bryant:** The Department continues to closely monitor the implementation and impact of the grant scheme through the regular reporting of the grant administrator, EMB. Since 2010, the Government has returned over £350 million to listed churches, synagogues, mosques and temples through the grant scheme. This has helped protect our listed places of worship and enabled them to continue their work as centres of worship and community assets.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/9392>

*Information about the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://listed-places-of-worship-grant.dcms.gov.uk/>

## **House of Lords Library Briefing**

### **Voluntary and community sector contribution to society**

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/voluntary-and-community-sector-contribution-to-society/>

## **Welsh Senedd Debate**

### **Assisted Dying**

*Motion NDM8656 Julie Morgan, Adam Price, James Evans, Heledd Fychan*

*Supported by Carolyn Thomas, Jenny Rathbone, Mick Antoniw, Rhys ab Owen*

*To propose that the Senedd:*

- 1. Notes that responsibility for legislating to allow assisted dying is not devolved to Wales as it is currently a matter governed by criminal law.*
- 2. Notes that if assisted dying were to be legalised, and given its responsibility for health and social care, the Welsh Government would require an in-depth understanding of any*

proposals.

3. *Believes that adults of sound mind who are intolerably suffering from an incurable, physical condition and have a clear and settled wish to die should have the option of an assisted death, subject to robust safeguards.*

4. *Notes that a recent inquiry by the Westminster Health and Social Care Committee found that the introduction of assisted dying has been linked with an improvement in palliative care in several jurisdictions.*

5. *Notes that the Office of Health Economics found that even if they received the best possible palliative medicine, in England and Wales at least 5,000 per year would die without any effective pain relief in their final month.*

6. *Notes that public attitudes towards assisted dying have changed, with up to 88% of the public favouring a change in the law.*

7. *Notes that more than one suffering person a week from the UK now chooses to end their life at one of the Swiss end-of-life centres, yet many others who would choose the same cannot afford the high costs involved, often well over £10,000.*

8. *Calls on the Welsh Government to:*

*a) support the principles of assisted dying; and*

*b) support Westminster parliament to introduce a compassionate assisted dying law in England and Wales.*

**237 Julie Morgan (Labour):** ... So, why am I supporting assisted dying? I believe we need to show more compassion to those people who are suffering intolerably from an incurable illness and who have a settled wish to die. At the moment, one person, every eight days, goes from the UK to Dignitas or somewhere similar in Switzerland. Under the present legislation, any relative or friend who assists them are liable for prosecution; they are criminalised. I listened to Sir Max Hill, former director of public prosecutions, who said it was very clear to him that the law is not working. During his period of office, he had 27 people referred to him—relatives of people who had died—and, in 26 cases, he took no further action. These were elderly people, usually in their 70s and their 80s, who had just lost someone very close to them, and he said it took sometimes up to two years for a decision to be made not to prosecute. ...

239 I also believe that we need to show our compassion by increasing our support for the hospice movement. ... And there is no way that wanting a change in the law diminishes the importance of the hospice movement. In fact, in some countries where assisted dying has been introduced, the amount of money spent on the hospices has increased. ...

240 ... the cost involved in having an assisted death and travelling to Dignitas is prohibitive, with the average cost being between £10,000 and £15,000. This means it is only an option for the wealthy. It is very distressing that people are forced to do this and only people who can afford it are able to do it. We must try to do something about it. Also, people are travelling to Dignitas while they feel well enough to get there, because they have to take that into account. The other big issue is the very great difficulty of having a proper funeral or a burial for somebody who had to leave the country. So, this is being forced on people because we haven't properly addressed the law. ...

242 We must ensure that at least two doctors are involved and present when assisted dying takes place—one with an expertise in assisted dying, another in the particular illness the person has. ...

245 In every survey taken on legalising assisted dying in the UK, the majority of people are now supportive. ...

247 In the medical profession, the royal colleges have taken the decision to have a neutral stance. The BMA has dropped its opposition and is now taking a neutral stance. ...

**250 Joel James (Conservative):** ... It has been repeatedly proven that assisted dying laws, when introduced, descend quickly into a range of problems, from coercion by relatives to the hand-picking of specific doctors willing to euthanise. It would, I believe, set

a dangerous precedent and lead to a catalogue of unintended consequences if it was introduced into the UK. ...

251 There is a clear difference between what we have here in the UK and what other countries offer in terms of palliative care. I believe that this very much skews the thinking and, perhaps, the reasoning in support of assisted dying. For instance, we find that in Canada less than 30 per cent of Canadians have access to high-quality hospice palliative care, and that access to hospice palliative care is not considered a fundamental healthcare right. In the Netherlands, palliative care is not a distinct medical speciality, but it is incorporated into general hospital care, which is typically focused on diagnosis, treatment and discharge. Studies of this system have shown that the needs of dying patients are unmet, and that there are serious deficiencies in the quality of their care. In New Zealand, the right to access palliative care has only now, in October 2024, been introduced by a private member's Bill.

252 In terms of unintended consequences, one of the outcomes we cannot prevent is that once this door of assisted dying is open, there's no stopping future generations of politicians from adversely reforming the legislation. Evidence has shown that in those countries that have introduced assisted dying there is a trend to broaden the eligibility criteria. It has been expanded in the Netherlands and Belgium to include children, and, in Canada, from 2027, they will allow people suffering solely from mental health issues with no physical condition at all. According to data from Canada, 17.1 per cent of those assessed for assisted dying in 2022 cited loneliness or isolation as the reason for their suffering.

253 There's growing evidence that people are gaining access to assisted dying because of financial issues. It was revealed in post-assisted dying investigations that a 41-year-old woman who was euthanised in 2021 after telling doctors she could no longer stand the pain caused by her fibromyalgia had told friends in private that she actually wanted to die because she was so poor. There's another case where a 61-year-old man was euthanised even though the only health problem listed on his application was hearing loss. ...

257 ... by introducing assisted dying you change the narrative from how we can provide the best possible care for someone dying to at what point do they become a burden, financially or otherwise, to the state, to their family or to their carers. ...

258 ... the internal feeling of being a burden is what elderly and disabled people have to live with on a daily basis. The external pressure they would feel from others to decide what the value of their life or death would be would be unbearable. It would be presumed that those with disabilities, particularly cognitive disabilities or those who are old and infirm, are better off dead. ...

261 **Delyth Jewell (Plaid Cymru):** ... My contention ... is that we must also look at this through the lens of those not surrounded by people they love: those marginalised, pushed to the sidelines by society—those people who could be placed under pressure in a future that is horrifyingly near at hand to end their lives because the necessary palliative care is not available, or because they feel themselves to be a burden.

262 My fear with this motion—well, my terror, really—is not so much with how it will begin as with how it will end. There are safeguards in what is being proposed in Westminster, indeed there are, but every precedent we see internationally shows that no safeguard is sacrosanct; the experiences of Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium and ... some states in the US show what can so easily, so inevitably, happen. ...

263 But more worryingly than that normalisation is how quickly the vulnerable in those societies felt and were at risk. In the US state of Oregon, over 47 per cent of people who ended their lives cited as a reason the fact that they didn't want to be a burden on their families or care givers, and I fear those changes will be inevitable if the Bill in Westminster passes, because courts in those places have felt obliged to extend the rights given to some citizens. ...

264 The debate around assisted dying is often presented ... as a way of offering people a

choice, but for many disabled people or people who are not close to their family, people who are worried and anxious and lonely, it would lead to them feeling they have no choice but to end their life. That's exactly what Tanni Grey-Thompson has warned about ... It's why Nicola Sturgeon said earlier this year she'd moved away from supporting assisted dying because of all these quiet, terrifying inevitabilities. ...

**269 Mick Antoniw (Labour):** ... this is really about choice ... Firstly, I think it is about the dignity of choice, and indeed about the dignity of death. Secondly, it would be about, in certain circumstances, my right to be able to choose. It is also, I think, very clear that the role of Government is not to deny me that choice, but to set the legislative framework within which that choice can actually be exercised. ...

**270 Sam Rowlands (Conservative):** ... this motion centres on how we value people in our society and all people in our society. No matter their current physical health situation, no matter their current mental health situation, no matter the stage in life in which they are, all people are precious, all lives are precious, and we should show that value to them at all times. And for me, this motion and what this motion implies is a message that says that not all lives have the same level of value in our society. ...

**274** ... sometimes, whilst it may be a theoretical choice, because of the burden that some people may feel, that isn't actually a real choice that they have. Because actually what happens in situations as outlined in Oregon, where a significant proportion of people feel that they are a burden to those around them, it moves from a right to die to actually a duty to die, because of the situation, and then people feel they have a duty to no longer be on Earth for the sake of those around them. ...

**275** And when the state sanctions this, and, in some cases, as we've seen in other countries and other states in the US, when the state sanctions this, that takes it to a whole new level, and, in some instances, the state is encouraging this as well. ... we know of examples where people are offered, in very much recoverable situations ... where, with the right care, with the right support, with the right love and attention, people can work through those extremely difficult circumstances. ... But very sadly, far too often, in other countries where this is taking place, people are offered the option of ending their lives. ...

**279** I know you perhaps don't accept this phase of a 'slippery slope' but it really is, because, once a law is passed in this area, with certain criteria by which some people may be able to access this, that will inevitably be challenged in the courts, as has been done in other countries, because it becomes an issue of equality—equality of access to that same level of what may be determined as a health option. So, it becomes an issue of equality, which will be challenged in the courts, and that is when it gets expanded, as it has in other countries, and most notably in Canada ... where, in 2027, people with mental illnesses will be able to access or will be offered—not even just able to access; they will be offered this—as a way out of their situations. ...

**281 Adam Price (Plaid Cymru):** As a point of principle ... I believe that individuals facing unbearable suffering and pain at the end of their life should have the right to choose how and when their life ends. However, I do recognise that many of the concerns of those who are opposed to this proposal are valid and they deserve thoughtful consideration. ...

**282** The first principle, for me, is the key one. It is autonomy and consent. Assisted dying must be based on the foundation of individual autonomy, the right of people to make decisions about their own bodies, about their own lives and, yes, about their own deaths. For those facing terminal illness and intolerable suffering ... the decision to end their life must be theirs and theirs alone. ...

**283** A second major principle is the need to safeguard the vulnerable ... who might feel pressured to choose assisted dying out of a sense of obligation or duty ... That's a valid worry, but it can be addressed by strong protections. ...

**284** Another key principle: medical integrity. Some fear that legalising assisted dying could undermine the ethical responsibilities of healthcare professionals, especially the principle



of 'do no harm'. But I believe that a system can be created that maintains the integrity of the medical profession while also allowing for compassionate care. Participation in assisted dying must be voluntary for healthcare professionals, and clear ethical guidelines should be in place. ... Accountability and transparency are critical. A system involving life-and-death decisions must be open to scrutiny. An independent body should oversee all cases of assisted dying to ensure that they meet legal and ethical criteria. ...

285 And compassion and dignity, finally, must be at the heart of any system and any policy. Assisted dying is about allowing people to end their lives on their own terms, avoiding unnecessary suffering. ...

289 **Rhys ab Owen (Independent):** ... Will assisted dying happen in a hospital, where a life is saved in one bed with assisted dying in another? Over the past year, I've lost a number of people in that very special hospice, Holme Towers. Will that hospice, which is in such a beautiful location, become a setting for assisted dying? Palliative care in one room and assisted dying in another. And do we intend to deliver a proper health and care service, an accountable, better service, before implementing this law? Nobody should have to face the choice between spending thousands of pounds per week on a care home or assisted dying. ...

290 Finally, I'm concerned about people changing their minds. A number of us have been through very dark times, and at those times have considered doing things, have even planned to do things, have even taken the initial steps towards ending our lives, but looking back, we're very grateful that that didn't happen. ...

295 **Darren Millar (Conservative):** ... I regard all life as sacred, I believe that all human beings are made in the image of God and that no matter what our age, circumstances or social status, every single life is precious, it has equal value and dignity and is worth living. But it's not only my faith and it's not only my conscience that draw me to the conclusion that assisted suicide is wrong. It's also the fact that legalising assisted suicide is fraught with dangers that no change in the law will ever be able to mitigate.

296 ... the motion today, before us, goes far beyond the scope of the legislation that's currently being considered in the UK and Scottish Parliaments. There, proponents of a change in the law are seeking to restrict access to assisted suicide to those who are terminally ill, but here we are being asked to subscribe to the view that assisted suicide will be available to anyone of sound mind and settled will who is intolerably suffering, whether terminally ill or not. ...

297 It can also be very, very difficult to determine if someone is of a sound mind and has a settled will. The Royal College of Psychiatrists have told us that evidence is limited as to whether psychological assessments and psychiatric assessments of sound mind and settled will are actually an effective safeguard in the process at all. And coercion, of course, is almost impossible, actually, to detect. ...

299 So, legalising assisted suicide would send a clear message that some lives are not worth living, and I don't think that that's a message that any civilised society, frankly, should be promoting to any of its citizens, especially when there are many people across Wales right now who are enjoying a fulfilling life in spite of their terminal illness, or in spite of a debilitating condition. ...

300 There's also—finally, if I may—another concern, and that is that, where assisted suicide has been introduced, it tends to have a disproportionate impact on poorer and marginalised communities in society, and there's no doubt that that would also be the implication here in Wales. ...

304 **Heledd Fychan (Plaid Cymru):** ... people are already making this choice. They are leaving the country, without the support of loved ones, or if their loved ones are with them, risking prosecution. People are making that choice by committing suicide. And we know that that happens. ...

305 We have to be honest that end-of-life care and palliative care aren't properly funded

here in Wales currently, and that people are dying without the support that they deserve. People are dying without that dignity. I absolutely also believe that, in terms of people with a terminal illness, some people can live fully supported, full lives and have a peaceful death, but not everyone has that peaceful death; not everybody has that nice death that we all see in movies as the thing that we all want to happen at the end of our lives.

**306 Darren Millar:** ... We heard, in some detail [at a briefing] yesterday, about the methods used in order to bring about an assisted death in some of the countries where it is legalised—that's not a pretty death, either. Many people struggle for many hours. In fact, we were reading reports from Oregon of 137 hours before they expire. Some people were reviving after having taken the poisons and other pills. That is not the Hollywood glamorous death either, is it, that some proponents and supporters of assisted suicide might suggest will be the case.

**307 Heledd Fychan:** No, and that's why you need to get it absolutely right. But I believe that someone has the right to choose when their suffering comes to an end. ...

**312 Jenny Rathbone (Labour):** ... the complexities of the issues that we are debating today are not covered adequately in the headlines or the soundbites. ...

**313** Unfortunately, because we don't discuss this absolute umbilical cord between birth and death, between loss and renewal, we fail to have those discussions with our loved ones in time. ...

**315** There are far too many ways in which modern medicine keeps alive people long beyond their capacity to enjoy life, and this is a dilemma faced by the medical profession every single day of their working lives ... We absolutely need to have the safeguards in place, but, at the same time, why do we need to ensure that the state does not prohibit us from ending our lives when we think we've had enough? ...

**320 Janet Finch-Saunders (Conservative):** ... this is not a devolved issue and is still governed by criminal law. Let's not forget the Hippocratic oath that those in the medical field take. To me, it just seems bizarre that we're asking somebody whose main role is to help the sick to the best of their ability and judgment and abstain from harming or wronging any man by it—of course, now it's 'and women by it'—. That orders doctors to do their best in their job, and not use their skill or knowledge to harm or kill patients. This is what we're talking about. ...

**321** They can give you a cocktail of pills, or perhaps an injection. It could take longer, and, in some instances, up to 137 hours—from 3 minutes to 137 hours, depending on your own individual body. And, in some instances, as has already been said, people have ended up being ... paralysed during this. I think we've got to be quite realistic about what we're asking Government to take responsibility for.

**322** A key issue is the link between terminal illness and mental health, as emotional distress, like depression, may drive the desire to hasten death. ...

**324** There's abuse of any system—we know of it. Do any of you here have any examples of the Liverpool care pathway? I have three relatives who were denied food and water so that they could have their death hastened. ... I can understand that people bringing this want to do it for the right reasons, to stop that immense suffering, but you can stop immense suffering by supporting mental health, by ensuring Government funding, making sure we've got enough mental health practitioners, so that someone who wants to die one day because of their pain and their suffering is helped into a better life to live. ...

**325** We also know that in Canada, where assisted dying has been brought in, the numbers of those choosing this are going up and up. It has increased by about 36 per cent. At the same time, we know the amount spent on palliative care has gone down and down. ...

**329 Mark Isherwood (Conservative):** ... When we last debated assisted dying here a decade ago, Baroness Ilora Finlay, who worked as a palliative care consultant for 40 years, told me that those of us who care for terminally ill people day in and day out are all too well aware of the vulnerability of people who are dying, how they can be prone to depression,

feel a burden on those around them, be pressurised by the unscrupulous, and veer from hope one day to despair the next and back again. This is not to mention the fallibility of medical diagnosis and prognosis. That is why, she said, the majority of doctors and especially those of us who treat dying patients are opposed to a change in the law. Legalising assisting dying might meet the wishes of a small minority of highly resolute, determined people, she said, but it has the potential to put many more vulnerable patients in harm's way.

330 When I spoke with her last week, she told me that she stands by what she said then. And as she stated only yesterday, one in six people over 65 are affected by abuse and there's a real danger of coercion. ... although this motion states that up to 88 per cent of the public favour a change in the law, the polls do not consider the practicalities of this. In contrast, in 2019 the Royal College of Physicians found in a poll that 80 per cent of palliative care physicians, those working with dying people, remain opposed to medicine's involvement in ending patients' lives, with only 4 per cent in favour.

331 Baroness Grey-Thompson, the decorated wheelchair athlete, has stated that she's really worried about proposals to legalise assisted dying and warned that many disabled people could be classed as terminally ill, potentially making them vulnerable to the changes. Disability Wales and All Wales People First have warned that the implications of the private Member's Bill are far-reaching with serious potential consequences, adding that this is why no deaf and disabled people organisations in the UK are in favour of legislation. ...

338 **Jeremy Miles (Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care):** ... assisted dying is not, of course, devolved to Wales but, should either of these backbench Bills become law, they will, of course, have huge ramifications for Wales. As a matter of conscience, I can confirm that on these benches both Government members and backbenchers will have a free vote on today's motion. As a Member of the Senedd, I have a view, which I will reflect in my vote, but, in my role as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, I will not be speaking about the case for or against assisted dying today. ...

339 The UK Parliament last voted on assisted dying in 2015, when it rejected a private Member's Bill by 330 votes to 118. The latest attempt to change the law came this summer with the introduction of Lord Falconer's private Member's Bill on assisted dying for terminally ill adults in the House of Lords. This Bill seeks to give terminally ill adults with six months or less to live medical help to end their lives through the self-administration of a prescribed medicine. This would apply only to people who are mentally able to make the decision. The decision of the terminally ill adult would need to be approved by two doctors and the High Court.

340 MPs will also have a vote on assisted dying, as we have heard, after Kim Leadbeater won the right to introduce her own private Member's Bill on assisted dying. We will not know the precise details until next month ...

341 ... if an assisted dying Bill were to proceed, we would continue that engagement with the UK Government to determine which aspects of the Bill were devolved. ...

342 Whatever is the outcome of the assisted dying debate in the UK Parliament, it is vital that we continue our work in Wales to improve the quality of and access to palliative and end-of-life care. ...

345 The Government's position is neutral, and the Government recognises that Members, both in support and against the motion, will be casting their votes motivated by compassion and care. ...

348 **James Evans (Conservative):** ... I got into politics because I gave my grandmother a promise that I would never let anybody go through what she went through at the end of her life—never. ...

349 ... 31 countries across the world have brought this in. It's because of compassion. It's because of care. ... We owe people the right to make their own decisions. People can make decisions about their lives on a daily basis, how they choose to live it, who they



choose to love, who they even vote for, but we're not giving people that right at the end of their life to make a choice about whether they wish to end their life in dignity or in pain. Some people may decide they don't want to choose the assisted dying route—they'll go down the palliative care option. It's so important that we do fund our palliative care properly. But we have to give people the right to choose. ...

**350 Darren Millar:** ... I think one of the challenges here is we assume that a lot of the discussion and debate around this issue is because of pain towards the end of life. One thing that we do know from the Oregon experience is that only 28 per cent of people who choose to end their life via assisted suicide cite pain as a reason, or future pain as a reason—only 28 per cent. ...

**351 James Evans:** ... It's not policy makers' right to choose; we should enable people to make their own decisions. ...

**352** And I do understand there are concerns around safeguarding. ... but if we took the view on any piece of legislation or law that it's a slippery slope, or the safeguards aren't in place, we would never legislate for anything. ...

### **Voting Time**

*For: 19, Against: 26, Abstain: 9*

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/14144#A91472>

TOP

## Holocaust

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1454] To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to combating (1) antisemitism, and (2) anti-Zionism, in designing the contents of the planned Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens; and whether they have carried out an impact assessment of (a) that centre, or (b) any other Holocaust museum or memorial.

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Learning Centre will set the Holocaust within a context that includes the history of antisemitism, including the antisemitism experienced by Jewish communities in Britain over many centuries. The scope and content of the Learning Centre exhibition will be developed by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, drawing on a wide range of external advice and expertise.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-09/hl1454>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL1453] To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration has been given to the construction of an emergency exit from the underground Holocaust Learning Centre planned for Victoria Tower Gardens.

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** Plans for the national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre include an enclosed emergency escape stair leading to the escape exit at ground level. Escape plans have been approved by independent Building Inspectors at the appropriate stages of design, and reviewed by the London Fire Brigade.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-09/hl1453>

TOP

*See also the Commons debate “Sanctions: Iran” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.*

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Prime Minister’s Questions

**Dawn Butler (Labour)** [900825] I watched in horror and condemned the act of 7 October by the terrorist group Hamas. A year later, I watch in horror as 42,000 people are killed in Gaza, 11,000 of them children. People have been burned alive attached to drips, aid workers have been killed and now families are starving. Our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said that the world will not stand by and see the lack of humanitarian assistance. If the Israeli Government will not listen to our Prime Minister’s words, what tangible, measurable actions will we take as the UK Government?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I thank my hon. Friend for raising this serious and important issue. The humanitarian situation in northern Gaza is dire. We need an immediate ceasefire, much more aid allowed to flow in and an immediate release of all the hostages. We have suspended UK export licences to Israel for items that might be used in the current conflict. The Government have concluded that there is a clear risk that items exported to Israel might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza. That does not change our position of steadfast support for Israel’s security, but we will always do so in a manner consistent with our obligations under domestic and international law.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-23/debates/8A56F7D9-2286-4ED6-BF2C-B0A34B77A455/Engagements#contribution-12A07532-ADA2-4971-878E-939434CDB447>

#### Business of the House

**Marsha De Cordova (Labour):** Many of my constituents in Battersea have written to me to express concern about Israel’s ongoing siege in northern Gaza. The scale of the suffering and loss of life is enormous, and they are calling on the Government to use all their levers to take action, including suspending any trade negotiations with Israel. We need an arms suspension, as well as a ban on all goods that have been produced in settlements. Can we have a Government statement on the tangible actions that will be taken to bring an end to the awful suffering?

**Lucy Powell:** I thank my hon. Friend for her question, and she is absolutely right. The people of Gaza have endured 12 months of this conflict and are suffering from a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Over 100 hostages are still being held by Hamas in truly awful conditions, which is why this Government are absolutely clear that the fighting must stop now. We need an immediate ceasefire and the release of all the hostages. We need much more aid and support to get into Gaza, and we need long-term peace and stability. The Government are working at pace with our international partners to achieve those ends, and there should be a statement on this matter in the coming days.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-24/debates/B1F9ED3A-CD19-493D-AF2D-70931158F269/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-B7E1D9E0-8162-4DD5-8B97-D1F458DC0D00>

#### Business of the House

**Andy McDonald (Labour):** The UK was right to suspend direct arms export licences to Israel, the use of which risks breaching international humanitarian law, yet it continues to deliver F-35 components via the global supply chain. I have asked many times whether

the Government will negotiate an end-use agreement with international partners to end the supply of F-35s to Israel. In a written answer, I was told: "The US Government manages the...Global Supply Chain."

Sadly, that does not address the issue. Can we have a statement from the Foreign Secretary on what discussions he has had with US counterparts on ending the supply of F-35s to Israel from the global supply chain?

**Lucy Powell:** This Government have taken more action than many in suspending licences for arms exports, because we are upholding international law and we are following the legal advice that we have received. That is why we have suspended approximately 30 licences to the Israel Defence Forces for arms that may be used in the current conflict and would be in breach of international law. I anticipate that the Foreign Secretary will come to the House, hopefully next week, with a further update on the middle east.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-24/debates/B1F9ED3A-CD19-493D-AF2D-70931158F269/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-3B020E04-8F1C-4C19-8336-C04CAD02FF3B>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### International Law

**Ellie Chowns (Green)** [7173] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the points of action in the statement entitled Experts warn international order on a knife's edge, urge States to comply with ICJ Advisory Opinion, published by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 18 September 2024.

**Hamish Falconer:** We note the statement by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 18 September. The UK is fully committed to the international order, international law and the international rules based order. We continue to consider the ICJ's Advisory Opinion carefully. We are of the clear view that Israel should bring an end to its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as rapidly as possible - but we are clear that every effort must be made to create the conditions for negotiations towards the two-state solution. Our commitment to a two-state solution is unwavering. The UK abstained on the UN General Assembly resolution in September because it did not provide sufficient clarity to advance a negotiated two-state solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-04/7173>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/09/un-experts-warn-international-order-knives-edge-urge-states-comply-icj-advisory>

*The 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>

### Francesca Albanese

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [9120] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have (i) met and (ii) had discussions with UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese.

**Hamish Falconer:** I am not aware of any recent meetings by FCDO Ministers or senior officials with UNSR Francesca Albanese. The Foreign Secretary regularly engages with UN representatives to discuss aspects of shared interests and concerns. Minister Dodds and I met Sigrid Kaag, the UN Senior Coordinator for the

Occupied Palestinian Territories, on 21 October, where we highlighted the urgent need to increase aid and protect civilians in Gaza. The Foreign Secretary spoke with Secretary-General António Guterres on 16 October, to discuss the indispensable role of the UN in addressing the challenges in the Middle East.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/9120>

### **Israeli Defence Force: British Nationals Abroad**

**Chris Law (SNP)** [9184] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information his Department holds on (a) how many and (b) the identities of UK citizens who have travelled to Israel to volunteer for military service with the (i) Israeli Air Force and (ii) other branches of the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza since 7 October 2023.

**Hamish Falconer:** We are aware of reports of UK citizens travelling to fight for the Israel Defense Force (IDF), but the Government does not estimate the numbers of those who have done so. The UK recognises the right of British nationals with more than one nationality to serve in the legitimately recognised armed forces of their additional nationalities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/9184>

### **Israel: Air Force**

**John McDonnell (Independent)** [5837] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Air Force operated aircraft flew to Israel from 9 May to 4 July 2024.

**Luke Pollard:** Four Royal Air Force operated aircraft flew to Israel from 9 May to 4 July 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-04/5837>

### **Israel: Air Force**

**John McDonnell (Independent)** [5838] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, , how many Royal Air Force operated aircraft have flown to Israel since 5 July 2024.

**Luke Pollard:** As of 7 October 2024, eight Royal Air Force operated aircraft have flown to Israel since 5 July 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-04/5838>

### **Middle East: Air Force**

**John McDonnell (Independent)** [5839] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many planes operated by the Royal Air Force have landed in (a) Lebanon, (b) Egypt, (c) Jordan and (d) Syria since 7 October 2023.

**Luke Pollard:** The RAF undertakes regular flights to the Middle East region as part of our routine engagement and to support regional partners. For operational security considerations I will not comment further.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-04/5839>

### **Aviation: Israel**

**John McDonnell (Independent)** [9404] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications for approval or exemption to overfly the UK when carrying munitions of war for which the final destination is Israel have been (a) received and (b) approved since 7 October 2023.

**Luke Pollard:** For operational security reasons and as a matter of policy, the Ministry of Defence will neither confirm, deny, nor comment on any foreign nations' military aircraft movement or operations within UK airspace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-16/9404>

## Israel: United Nations

**Uma Kumaran (Labour)** [9386] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will support an independent investigation into shots fired at UN peacekeepers by Israeli forces.

**Hamish Falconer:** The UK condemns the recent attacks on UN Peacekeepers. We have been clear: Israel must act in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. Alongside the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Italy, the Foreign Secretary expressed deep concern about attacks by Israeli Defense Forces on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) bases and condemned all threats to UNIFIL's security. The Prime Minister has spoken with international leaders, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, His Majesty King Abdullah II, President Macron and Chancellor Scholz, to press the case for a ceasefire. This builds on extensive discussions by the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary at the UN with regional leaders. We have been working with all parties to prevent escalation and will spare no effort to reduce tensions and find a path to stability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-15/9386>

*The joint statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-by-foreign-ministers-of-france-germany-italy-the-uk>

## Lebanon: Peacekeeping Operations

**Harpreet Uppal (Labour)** [9870] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with (a) his international counterparts, (b) the United Nations and (c) Cabinet colleagues on attacks on UN peacekeepers in Lebanon.

**Luke Pollard:** The Secretary of State for Defence has regular conversations with international partners and Cabinet colleagues, including on the situation in Lebanon.

As expressed in the G7 Defence Ministers joint statement on 17 October 2024, and in the joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of the UK, France, Germany and Italy on 14 October, the UK is concerned by the latest events in Lebanon and the risk of further escalation, as well as by all threats to UNIFIL's security.

The UK has been clear that Israel and all parties must uphold their obligations to always ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and to allow UNIFIL to continue carrying out its mandate. The protection of peacekeepers is incumbent upon all parties to a conflict any deliberate attack against UNIFIL goes against international humanitarian law.

The UK also reaffirms the importance of supporting UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces in their role of ensuring the stability and security of Lebanon.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-17/9870>

*The joint statements referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-by-foreign-ministers-of-france-germany-italy-the-uk>

*and*

<https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/Joint-Declaration-Defence.pdf.pdf>

## House of Lords Oral Answers

### Red Sea: Houthi Attacks

**Lord West of Spithead (Labour):** To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to respond to Houthi attacks on global shipping passing through the Bab el-Mandeb straits and Southern Red Sea; and what recent advice has been given to UK flagged



merchant ships travelling through that area.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Baroness Chapman of Darlington):** ... UK forces have participated in five joint operations with US forces against Houthi military facilities to degrade their ability to persist with their attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. We continue to defend the freedom of navigation, safe passage and British lives at sea. We share with British shipping regular updates containing relevant security information, which support commercial decision-making. ...

**Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, does the Minister agree that it is beyond urgent to put global pressure on the parties in the Middle East to bring the conflict to an end, given the devastation, loss of life and instability, as in this case, that it has produced? What action are the Government taking?

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The implication of that question is that somehow the behaviour of the Houthis regarding shipping is related to the instability and the war in Israel and Gaza. We do not accept that. The behaviour of the Houthis needs to stop. It is a threat to security and stability more widely in the Middle East. We do not accept the Houthis' contention that their behaviour is in any way related to the situation in Israel, Lebanon or Gaza. ...

**Lord Bellingham (Conservative):** ... will the Minister look at the wider situation regarding the peace agreement in Yemen? Until there is more momentum behind the peace talks in Yemen, this problem in the Red Sea is not going to be solved.

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** Until the horrendous attacks by Hamas on Israel on 7 October, the peace process was progressing. An envoy was engaged, and it looked as if there may well be some progress.

Sadly, that is not the situation that we are in at the moment. We will use every diplomatic lever that we can, in addition to the measures we are taking to defend shipping and prevent further attacks, to bring about stability and de-escalation. ...

**Lord Turnberg (Labour):** My Lords, the Houthis have cast the United Kingdom as one of their enemies. People have been marching on the streets of Britain disgracefully supporting that. Will the UK Government proscribe the Houthis now?

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** We are doing everything we can to de-escalate the situation. We do not seek a conflict with the Houthis. We have had to take military action to respond to the threats to shipping, including to British vessels, and we will continue to do that as we need to. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-24/debates/15D1D05E-2EE8-48E3-9DAA-86E70BF9992E/RedSeaHouthiAttacks>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: Diplomatic Relations

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL1203]** To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any inconsistency between the diplomatic pronouncements of (1) the Consul General in Jerusalem, and (2) the British embassy in Israel; and what plans they have, if any, to ensure such statements are consistent.

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The British Embassy in Tel Aviv and British Consulate General in Jerusalem work closely together as part of one diplomatic network to press for an immediate ceasefire and a resolution to the conflict. We do not agree that there have been any inconsistencies between public statements by either mission, both of which represent the policies of the UK Government. We condemn personal attacks on individual members of our diplomatic staff, and reject attempts

to portray differences in position which do not exist. An immediate ceasefire is the first step towards a lasting solution. Both the Embassy and Consulate General remain open and continue to work as normal, including providing services to British nationals.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1203>

### **Israel: Arms Trade**

**Lord Howard of Lympne (Conservative)** [HL1229] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Chapman of Darlington on 3 September (HL Deb col 1065), whether ministers were required to suspend certain export licences for items that could be used in the current conflict in Gaza.

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** I addressed this in the House of Lords on 16 October reiterating our position. The UK's Strategic Export Licensing Criteria state that the Government will not issue an export licence if it determines there is "a clear risk" that the items might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law. On 2 September, following a review of Israel's compliance with and commitment to international humanitarian law, the Government determined that there was "a clear risk", and took the decision that the UK would suspend relevant arms export licences to Israel which could be used for military operations in Gaza. The suspension will not change the UK's support for Israel's right to self-defence in accordance with international law. The decision will be kept under review.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-07/hl1229>

*Baroness Chapman of Darlington's comments referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-09-03/debates/9BD8C786-8AFB-484E-AF88-D353419E2004/MiddleEastUpdate#contribution-5F7A96A4-55FF-46C0-9EF3-BC2FC686D05C>

*Lord Collins of Highbury's earlier comments referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-16/debates/47E531AD-E4E0-4ABD-9518-738EFA326585/GazaAndLebanon#contribution-F9A24F3A-9162-42E4-B40F-F997F5E252E4>

*The Criteria referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws449>

### **Gaza: Buildings**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL1509] To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of (1) educational buildings, (2) mosques, (3) churches, (4) hospitals, and (5) synagogues, have been destroyed or damaged by war in Gaza since October 2023.

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** As of 24 July, 93 per cent of schools have been damaged or destroyed, and nearly 85 per cent will need either full reconstruction or rehabilitation to function again. As of late September, only 17 out of 36 hospitals were still partially functional. However, as of this week, three hospitals in North Gaza have been ordered to evacuate by the Israeli Defense Forces. We do not have data on the numbers of religious buildings that have been affected. Only when the fighting stops can a proper assessment be done. Experts estimate that Gaza's reconstruction will cost tens of billions of dollars.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-10/hl1509>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

### **Foreign ministers' statement on legislation against United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East under consideration by the Israeli Knesset**

"We, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom, express our grave concern over legislation currently under consideration by the Israeli Knesset, aimed at revoking the privileges and immunities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East [UNRWA], forbidding any contact between Israeli state entities, officials and UNRWA, and prohibiting any UNRWA presence within Israel.

"UNRWA provides essential and life-saving humanitarian aid and basic services to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and throughout the region. Without its work, the provision of such assistance and services, including education, health care, and fuel distribution in Gaza and the West Bank would be severely hampered if not impossible, with devastating consequences on an already critical and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, particularly in northern Gaza.

"It is crucial that UNRWA and other UN organizations and agencies be fully able to deliver humanitarian aid and their assistance to those who need it most, fulfilling their mandates effectively. We urge the Israeli Government to abide by its international obligations, keep the reserve privileges and immunities of UNRWA untouched and live up to its responsibility to facilitate full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian assistance in all its forms as well as the provision of sorely needed basic services to the civilian population.

"We once again condemn in the strongest possible terms the brutal and unjustified terror attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 7, 2023. UNRWA has taken steps to address allegations regarding individual employees' support for terrorist organizations and demonstrated its willingness to pursue and implement reform of internal processes in line with the independent review of April 2024, led by Ms. Catherine Colonna, on UNRWA neutrality. We call on UNRWA to continue its path of reform as a priority, demonstrating its commitment to the principle of neutrality, and ensure that its activities remain entirely in line with its mandate. We will continue to actively monitor and support this process."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-ministers-statement-on-legislation-against-united-nations-relief-and-works-agency-for-palestine-refugees-in-the-near-east-under-consideration>

---

### **Lebanon Support Conference 2024: Minister Falconer intervention**

The situation in Lebanon is worsening daily, and civilian casualties are mounting. The risks of further escalation cannot be overstated. We cannot let Lebanon become another Gaza.

This is why today the UK repeats our call for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese Hizballah.

Let us not forget that this conflict started when Hizballah launched rockets at northern Israel, forcing the Israelis to flee their homes.

The UK stands with Israel and recognises its right of self defence in the face of unlawful Iranian attacks.

Iran must immediately halt those attacks, and stand down its proxies.

Meanwhile, we are working with the Lebanese Armed Forces, the sole legitimate defender of that state, to support security and stability. ...

We are also committing £15 million to respond to the humanitarian emergency in Lebanon, supporting food, medicine and clean water. ...

The aid workers striving to alleviate suffering in Lebanon must be able to carry out their

duties in safety – including UN workers, who have a vital role to play in resolving armed conflict and mitigating its impact.

Britain condemns all threats to the security of UNIFIL.

We call on all parties engaged in this conflict to take all necessary precautions to avoid civilian deaths and injuries and protect essential infrastructure.

Before I conclude, let me reflect briefly on the wider crisis in the region.

Following the death of the terrorist leader Yahya Sinwar, it is time for a new chapter in Gaza.

We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and an increase in humanitarian aid.

We must focus all our efforts on stopping this cycle of violence.

A political solution consistent with 1701 is the only answer – and the only way to secure a stable future for those on both sides of the Blue Line. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/lebanon-support-conference-2024-minister-falconer-intervention>

*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))

-----

### **UK commits additional £3 million to bolster aid to Syria**

... The most vulnerable civilians fleeing the Lebanon conflict into Syria will be provided with life-saving emergency assistance and healthcare, as the UK boosts its humanitarian support with a £3 million package.

Taking refuge from the escalating conflict, more than 400,000 people – over half of whom are women and children – are estimated by the UN to have been displaced from Lebanon into Syria since September. The majority of those who have been displaced are Syrians, who initially fled to Lebanon after the Syrian civil war which began in 2011.

The UK funding will help trusted aid organisations to deliver immediate healthcare at border crossings, including trauma and injury support, as well as targeted protection assistance for women and girls.

Minister for Development Anneliese Dodds said: The humanitarian situation in Lebanon and the wider Middle East is extremely concerning. It is critical that vulnerable civilians fleeing the conflict in Lebanon are given safe passage, and for their lives to be protected. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-commits-additional-3-million-to-bolster-aid-to-syria>

-----

### **Updated Travel Advice: Israel**

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

### **Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories**

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

## **Scottish Government**

### **First Minister issues call for peace in the Middle East**

Marking a year since Israeli forces began their ground invasion of Gaza, First Minister John

Swinney said:

“The ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is now entering its second year. The horror, suffering and killing we have watched unfold in Gaza in real-time, on such a devastating scale, has now spread across the region.

“The need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza is at the heart of reaching wider peace in the Middle East, and we must see the unconditional release of all hostages.

“International recognition of the sovereign state of Palestine, as part of a two-state solution, is also a fundamental pillar upon which we can build lasting peace.

“There have been repeated breaches of international law and violations of human rights since the conflict began, and Israel must stop blocking essential humanitarian aid from reaching wounded and starving civilians who are surviving in nightmarish conditions.

“I repeat the Scottish Government’s calls for an end to all UK arms sales to Israel.

“Tens of thousands of lives have been lost, and millions more have been directly affected by this catastrophe. I stand with our communities in Scotland who have lost loved ones and face the daily torment of not knowing if their family members will make it through the day.”

<https://www.gov.scot/news/first-minister-issues-call-for-peace-in-the-middle-east/>

---

### **Updated UN Database: letter from Minister for Business to public bodies**

... In December 2021, the Scottish Government wrote to the Chief Executives of relevant Scottish public bodies about the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (OHCHR) database of companies active in listed activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (“the UN Database”). That letter asked whether the public bodies had any ongoing relationship with the 112 businesses identified on the UN Database and, if so, what the nature of that relationship was. Examples of engagement considered to form an ongoing relationship included grants or other types of funding or investment, procurement, partnership or sponsorship. The letter also reminded Chief Executives about the Scottish Government’s general approach to business and human rights and about our specific [Guidance on due diligence: human rights](#) and [policy guidance on procurement](#).

This exercise led to the identification of several businesses on the UN Database with whom Scottish public bodies had relationships. The then Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise, Ivan McKee MSP, subsequently wrote to those companies in June 2022, asking them what they were doing to cease the specific activities which had led to their inclusion in the UN Database.

An updated UN Database was subsequently published last year and can be found [here](#). All of the companies identified by public bodies in the 2021/22 exercise remain on the UN Database, although I am aware that some have contested their inclusion.

We advise that Scottish public bodies consider the UN Database as part of their human rights due diligence processes; and ensure that they follow the Scottish Government’s [Guidance on due diligence: human rights](#) and, if applicable, their own internal guidance and processes, when entering into an investment relationship.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/updated-un-database-letter-from-minister-for-business-richard-lochhead-to-public-bodies/>

## **United Nations**

### **Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General - on the Middle East**

Following the attacks overnight by the Israel Defense Forces on targets in the Islamic



Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General is deeply alarmed by the continued escalation in the Middle East. All acts of escalation are condemnable and must stop.

The Secretary-General urgently reiterates his appeal to all parties to cease all military actions, including in Gaza and Lebanon, exert maximum efforts to prevent an all-out regional war and return to the path of diplomacy.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2024-10-26/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-the-middle-east>

-----

### **Each Day that Passes Only Deepens Misery, Suffering of Lebanon's People, Secretary-General Tells Conference, Urging Ceasefire, Hostage Release**

... Each day that passes only deepens the misery and suffering of people in Lebanon.

Since last October, over 2,300 people have been killed in Lebanon, and at least 50 in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan.

More than half of the deaths in Lebanon have occurred since the dramatic escalation in Israeli strikes on 23 September.

Many of those killed were children and women. More than 1.2 million people have been displaced or affected in Lebanon. And in the last year, more than 60,000 have been displaced in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan.

We see continued intense aerial bombardment by Israel in densely populated areas in Lebanon — including Beirut — and ground incursions across the Blue Line ... as well as ongoing missile, drone and rocket attacks by Hizbullah into Israel.

An immediate ceasefire is needed now — along with meaningful steps towards full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected.

Civilians must be protected.

Civilian infrastructure must not be targeted.

Obligations under international law must be upheld. ...

I salute the brave women and men of our peacekeeping force in Lebanon — UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) — and the UN family across the country, who are striving to implement their mandates in such challenging conditions.

Let me be clear: Attacks against UN peacekeepers are completely unacceptable.

They are in breach of international law, against international humanitarian law and may constitute a war crime.

I also pay tribute to humanitarian workers working to help communities in dire need.

Excellencies, we know what is happening in Lebanon today is not an isolated phenomenon.

We had the abhorrent terror attacks by Hamas on 7 October and the taking of hostages.

Since then, Israeli military operations in Gaza have caused death and destruction at a speed and scale beyond anything in my years as Secretary-General.

We have seen the impacts from Syria to Iraq to Yemen.

Now we see the growing threat of a major conflagration between Israel and Iran that would upend the entire region.

We need a ceasefire in Lebanon — as we need a ceasefire in Gaza and the immediate release of all hostages.

Escalation after escalation is leading to the unimaginable for the people of the region — including the people of Lebanon for whom we have all come together today.

Let us show our solidarity with action to ease the suffering and push for peace.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22421.doc.htm>

*UNSCR 1559, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1559\(2004\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1559(2004))

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))

-----  
**Joyce Msuya [Acting UN Humanitarian Chief]** What Israeli forces are doing in besieged North Gaza cannot be allowed to continue.

Hospitals have been hit and health workers have been detained. Shelters have been emptied and burned down. First responders have been prevented from rescuing people from under the rubble. Families have been separated and men and boys are being taken away by the truckload.

Hundreds of Palestinians have reportedly been killed. Tens of thousands have been forced to flee yet again.

The entire population of North Gaza is at risk of dying.

Such blatant disregard for basic humanity and for the laws of war must stop.

<https://x.com/JoyceMsuya/status/1850090614861283387>

-----  
**Highlighting “Alarming” Effects of Israel’s Regional Incursions on Syria, Security Council Underscores Need to Protect Thousands of Refugees Pouring into Country**

... “I want to issue a clear warning: regional spillover into Syria is alarming and could get much worse, with serious implications for Syria and international peace and security,” **Geir O. Pedersen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria** [said] ...

“The past month has seen the fastest paced and broadest ranging campaign of Israeli air strikes in the last thirteen years,” he said, adding that hundreds of thousands of Syrians and Lebanese have fled Lebanon into Syria, despite the latter experiencing escalating conflict. He reported that, according to the Syrian Government, Israel has hit Syrian territory more than 116 times since 7 October 2023, resulting in the deaths of more than a hundred people. In the Golan, he noted construction activity and a drone strike by the Israel Defense Forces around the area of separation, counter to the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The uptick in violence has dangerously catalysed conflict in north-west and north-east Syria, he said, warning of “a military, humanitarian and economic storm breaking on an already devastated Syria, dangerous and unpredictable consequences”. ...

... **the Russian Federation’s speaker** said Washington, D.C., continues occupying vast areas in the north-east of Syria and continues looting the country’s oil and agricultural resources, urging for a stop to air strikes in Syria and the withdrawal of all military contingents from the country that violate its sovereignty. Pointing to a “real possibility that Syria will be provoked by Israel to a fully fledged military clash”, he said “Washington and its satellites continue with their destructive and inhumane course vis a vis Damascus”. ... Similarly, the United States’ representative voiced concern about a recent escalation in “regime and Russian attacks on north-west Syria” ...

For his part, **the representative of Syria** observed that the Israeli occupation and policies of those supporting it are the main reason for regional instability. Hundreds of meetings, conferences and adopted resolutions have failed to find solutions, because some States in the Council do their utmost to serve and prolong the Israeli occupation, he said, assailing Washington, D.C., for enabling Israel to increase its attacks on his country. As many as 116 attacks have been conducted against Syria since 7 October 2023, he said, urging the Council to stop these attacks and hold Israel responsible. ...

“The solution is available if your Administration is honest, but you are not: Stop your engagement in killing civilians in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Stop arming the Israeli killing machine. And enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities.”

Rounding out the meeting, **Iran's delegate** urged the Council to compel Israel to end its aggression in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15861.doc.htm>

-----  
**'We Know What Apartheid Looks Like,' South Africa's Delegate Tells Third Committee amid Mounting Calls for Justice for Palestinians**

Amid a climate of systemic impunity, aggressors and their accomplices must be held accountable for crimes against humanity and genocide, delegates told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) ...

It has been 11 months since the Hamas attack killed 1,200 people and hostages were taken, recalled **the representative of South Africa**. In response, Israel embarked on collective punishment on Gaza. The torment of the people in the Strip continues unabated, with over 40,000 Palestinians killed, homes, schools and hospitals destroyed, and famine and disease stalking the streets.

"This cannot but shock our collective humanity," he asserted, underscoring that the violence against the Palestinian people is a grim continuation of over half a century of apartheid. "We South Africans know what apartheid looks like — we have lived through it, suffered and died under it," he stated, adding: "We cannot remain silent and watch as apartheid is perpetrated against others." ...

International humanitarian law is under threat due to the ongoing abuse committed by Israel against the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Syrian Golan and Lebanon, echoed **Kuwait's delegate**, adding that "the country is yet to be held accountable", including for attacking the UN forces in Lebanon. Its aggression against Lebanon has resulted in the internal displacement of over a million people — 22 per cent of the population, he noted, calling on all countries to help stop the criminal war against the Palestinian people, including by blocking arms transfer to Israel.

**Israel's representative** stated that the protection of human rights stands at the core of her country's democratic values, declaring that this commitment has not been shaken by the 7 October 2023 massacre and the security challenges her country faces from Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and the Iranian regime. Yet, many countries singled out Israel and tarnished its name, she added, vowing to continue efforts until all the hostages safely return home.

"It is a demonstration of self-denial when a genocidal State targeting civilians in an atrocious war of aggression claims adherence to human rights," observed **Egypt's delegate**, noting that Israel denies the Palestinian people the right to life and self-determination. Categorically rejecting the forcible displacement of Palestinians and "attempts to erase the question of Palestine", she spotlighted her country's efforts to end this war and ensure guarantees for civilians and humanitarian workers. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/gashc4417.doc.htm>

## World Health Organisation (WHO)

### **Intense bombardments, mass displacements and lack of access in northern Gaza force the postponement of polio vaccination campaign**

Due to the escalating violence, intense bombardment, mass displacement orders, and lack of assured humanitarian pauses across most of northern Gaza, the Polio Technical Committee for Gaza, including the Palestinian Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief

and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and partners have been compelled to postpone the third phase of the polio vaccination campaign ... This final phase of the ongoing campaign aimed to vaccinate 119 279 children across northern Gaza.

The current conditions, including ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure continue to jeopardize people's safety and movement in northern Gaza, making it impossible for families to safely bring their children for vaccination, and health workers to operate.

All logistics, supplies and trained human resources were prepared to vaccinate children across northern Gaza with a second dose of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), following a first round conducted across the Gaza Strip from 1-12 September 2024. However, given that the area currently approved for temporary humanitarian pauses was substantially reduced—now limited only to Gaza City, a significant decrease from the first round—many children in northern Gaza would have missed out on the polio vaccine dose. To interrupt poliovirus transmission, at least 90% of all children in every community and neighborhood must be vaccinated ... Humanitarian pauses are essential for its success, allowing partners to deliver vaccination supplies to health facilities, families to safely access vaccination sites, and mobile teams of health workers to reach children in their communities. A delay in administering a second dose of nOPV2 within six weeks reduces the impact of two closely spaced rounds on concurrently boosting the immunity of all children and interrupting poliovirus transmission. Having a significant number of children miss out on their second vaccine dose will seriously jeopardize efforts to stop the transmission of poliovirus in Gaza. ...

It is imperative to stop the polio outbreak as soon as possible, before more children are paralyzed and poliovirus spreads further. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.who.int/news/item/23-10-2024-intense-bombardments--mass-displacements-and-lack-of-access-in-northern-gaza-force-the-postponement-of-polio-vaccination-campaign>

-----

**Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** The situation in northern #Gaza is catastrophic. Intensive military operations unfolding around and within healthcare facilities and a critical shortage of medical supplies, compounded by severely limited access, are depriving people of life saving care. The Health Ministry in Gaza informed us that the siege at Kamal Adwan Hospital has ended, but it came at a heavy cost. Following the detention of 44 male staff members, only female staff, the hospital director, and one male doctor are left to care for nearly 200 patients in desperate need of medical attention. Reports of the hospital facilities and medical supplies being damaged or destroyed during the siege are deplorable. The whole health system in Gaza has been under attack for over a year.

@WHO cannot stress loudly enough that hospitals must be shielded from conflict at all times. Any attack of healthcare facilities is a violation of international humanitarian law. The only path to safeguarding what remains of Gaza's collapsing health care system is an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Lives depend on it!

<https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1850185021400691126>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Israel's military strikes on financial institutions in Lebanon violate international humanitarian law, says expert**

Israel's multiple bombings of a financial institution in Lebanon were illegal attacks on civilian objects under international humanitarian law, an independent human rights expert said ...

“International humanitarian law does not permit attacks on the economic or financial infrastructure of an adversary, even if they indirectly sustain its military activities,” said Ben Saul, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.

Israel warned publicly in advance that it would attack offices associated with a specific financial institution, which Israel says finances the Hezbollah organisation: “The purpose of this strike is to target the ability of Hezbollah’s economic function both during the war but also afterwards to rebuild and to rearm.”

The financial institution provides interest-free loans and undertakes charitable activities, counts thousands of customers in its clientele and has numerous bank branches in Lebanon.

Saul reiterated that in armed conflict, only “military objectives” can be attacked, defined as objects that effectively contribute to military action and whose destruction “offers a definite military advantage.” Unlike fighters or weapons, the mere economic activities of an adversary do not effectively contribute to military action, he said.

“Bombing banks obliterates the distinction between civilian objects and military objectives which is fundamental to protecting civilians from violence. It opens the door to ‘total war’ against civilian populations, where fighting is no longer limited to attacking militarily dangerous targets,” the expert said. “Such attacks jeopardise the right to life”.

He warned that international counter-terrorism law does not authorise military attacks to prevent alleged terrorist financing or money laundering.

“Bombing banks is not a lawful solution to the challenges of financial crime and regulation,” Saul said.

All states have obligations under international law to take administrative and criminal law measures to prevent and suppress terrorist financing and money laundering.

These attacks are the latest escalation of violence in Lebanon over the past year, with over 2,400 people killed and 1.2 million displaced, and 59 people killed in northern Israel and Syria’s Golan Heights, occupied by Israel.

“The parties must immediately cease fire, to preserve civilian lives and restore peace,” the Special Rapporteur said.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/israels-military-strikes-financial-institutions-lebanon-violate>

-----

### **Türk says world must act as darkest moment of Gaza conflict unfolds**

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said ... the darkest moment of the Gaza conflict is unfolding in the north of the Strip, where the Israeli military is effectively subjecting an entire population to bombing, siege and risk of starvation, as well as being forced to choose between mass displacement and being trapped in an active conflict zone.

He called on the world’s leaders to act, saying States have a duty under the Geneva Conventions to ensure respect for international humanitarian law.

“The bombing in North Gaza is non-stop,” he said. “The Israeli military has ordered hundreds of thousands to move, with no guarantees of return. But there is no safe way to leave: the bombs continue to fall; the Israeli military is separating families and detaining many people; and people fleeing have been reportedly shot at.

“Unimaginably, the situation is getting worse by the day. The Israeli Government’s policies and practices in northern Gaza risk emptying the area of all Palestinians. We are facing what could amount to atrocity crimes, including potentially extending to crimes against humanity.”

Türk said Palestinian armed groups also reportedly continue to operate amongst civilians, including in places of shelter, putting civilians in harm’s way, which is totally unacceptable.

“There is extremely limited access to this part of Gaza,” the High Commissioner added.



“Next to no aid has reached the area in weeks, with unlawful restrictions remaining, and many are now facing starvation.

“The Israeli military is striking hospitals, and staff and patients have been killed and injured or forced to evacuate simultaneously. Shelters, once schools, are struck daily. Communication with the outside world remains extremely limited. Journalists continue to be killed.”

Already over 150,000 people are reportedly dead, wounded or missing in Gaza. “My gravest fear is, given the intensity, breadth, scale and blatant nature of the Israeli operation currently underway in North Gaza, that number will rise dramatically,” he said.

“I have repeatedly expressed alarm at the methods and means of warfare, and the gravity of the violations committed by all sides.”

He said the International Court of Justice has also been clear on Israel’s obligation to ensure entry and delivery of humanitarian aid, and to this effect has issued binding orders to ensure Israel conforms with its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

“Under the Geneva Conventions, States have an obligation to act when a serious violation of international humanitarian law has been committed,” Türk said. “Under the Genocide Convention, State parties also have the responsibility to act to prevent such a crime, when risk becomes apparent.

“For months, I have pleaded with all parties to the conflict, as well as all States, particularly those with influence in the region, to act to stop the carnage and destruction, to ensure the prompt and unconditional release of all hostages, and to ensure international humanitarian and international human rights law are respected. But still this goes on and on and on.

“Now, the international rule of law is being progressively dismantled,” he added. “Either the world ashamedly fails those who so desperately need help, or we stand united and put a stop to this.

“To all the world’s leaders, I remind you of your responsibility to ensure respect for international humanitarian law as set out in the Geneva Conventions. These are universally accepted and binding norms developed to preserve the very bare minimum of humanity. I implore you to put the protection of civilians and human rights first, and not to abandon that minimum of humanity.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/turk-says-world-must-act-darkest-moment-gaza-conflict-unfolds>

-----

### **A tragedy within a tragedy: UN experts alarmed by harrowing conditions for Palestinians with disabilities trapped in Gaza**

One year into the ruthless military assault by Israel in Gaza, UN experts warned ... that Palestinians with disabilities face unbearable protection risks, including inescapable death and injuries, amid indiscriminate attacks by Israeli occupation forces which have destroyed critical infrastructure, and annihilated the possibility of humanitarian assistance.

“A tragedy within a tragedy is taking place in Gaza, where Israel’s genocidal campaign has left persons with disabilities completely unprotected. Persons with disabilities are being killed and injured by indiscriminate attacks despite posing no security threat, epitomising the deliberate assault on civilians by Israel,” the experts said.

The experts noted that multiple evacuation orders totally disregarded persons with disabilities who often face extreme difficulties to follow or understand instructions. “They were in the impossible situation of either leaving their houses and the assistive devices they require to survive or staying behind without their families and caregivers and being exposed to a heightened risk of being killed,” they said. ...

“With the health system in Gaza decimated and medical supplies unavailable, Israeli authorities have refused to establish a system for medical evacuations nor allowed life-saving support, so that thousands of persons with disabilities, especially children, can

obtain the assistance they desperately need. ...

They warned that Palestinians with disabilities, including children, women, girls and older persons are facing extreme psychological harm and trauma, and that persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities are also in immensely vulnerable situations.

“Many of the almost 100,000 injured Palestinians in Gaza will acquire long-lasting impairments requiring rehabilitation, assistive devices, psychosocial support and other services that are severely lacking,” they said. “The impact extends beyond physical injuries, with grave emotional and psychological traumas and wider effects on the social fabric and needs of families and communities, especially impacting women who often bear the brunt of caregiving.”

Referring to the situation of escalating violence by illegal Israeli settlers and Israeli forces, mass destruction of homes and roads, and movement restrictions in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the experts warned that Palestinians with disabilities in those occupied territories cannot access health, rehabilitation, and other essential services.

“Over the past year, Israel has been in breach of its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict,” the experts said. ...

“Israel must comply with its international obligations and the provisional measures ordered by the ICJ regarding its conduct in Gaza that aim at preventing further acts of genocide,” the experts said. “Israel must also fully and effectively cooperate with international investigations and preserve evidence, particularly in relation to violations of the rights of persons with disabilities.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/tragedy-within-tragedy-un-experts-alarmed-harrowing-conditions-palestinians>

*The ICJ provisional measures referred to above can be read at*

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

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240328-ord-01-00-en.pdf>  
and

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240524-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

## UNIFIL

### **UNIFIL statement (25 October 2024)**

Peacekeepers continue to monitor and report to the Security Council on the situation in south Lebanon, despite the dramatic escalation and violence on the ground in recent weeks. Since early October, peacekeepers have observed clashes on the ground in or around Alma Shaab, Aytarun, Bint Jbeil, Hanin, Houla, Kunin, Labbouneh, Markaba, Maroun ar-Ras, Meiss ej Jebel, Ras Naqoura, and Yaroun. Rocket fire from Lebanon and heavy air and artillery strikes from Israel have continued.

While UNIFIL has taken extensive measures to protect the safety and security of its peacekeepers, the security situation is extremely challenging.

Early in the morning on 23 October, two medevac teams meeting at Yarin to transfer a patient came under fire of unknown origin. One vehicle was immobilized and had to be left at the scene.

In the evening that same day, a medical facility at a UNIFIL position in Beit Leif was hit by a shell or rocket of unknown origin, causing damage to buildings.

Later, two shells or rockets, also of unknown origin, impacted near a UNIFIL position in Kafer Chouba, causing damage to living accommodations and shelters. Peacekeepers in both positions were in shelters at the time.

Fortunately, no peacekeepers were hurt in any of these incidents.

All actors are reminded of their obligation to avoid actions putting peacekeepers or civilians in danger. We continue to urge all actors involved in the conflict to resolve their differences at the negotiating table, through a political and diplomatic solution — not through violence. UNIFIL remains on the ground and ready to support this.

<https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-statement-25-october-2024-0>

-----

### UNIFIL statement (25 October 2024)

On 22 October, peacekeepers on duty at a permanent observation post near Dhayra were observing IDF soldiers conducting house clearing operations nearby. Upon realizing they were being observed, the IDF soldiers fired at the post. The duty guards withdrew to avoid being shot.

The IDF has repeatedly demanded that UNIFIL vacate its positions along the Blue Line and has deliberately damaged camera, lighting, and communications equipment at some of these positions. Despite the pressure being exerted on the mission and our troop-contributing countries, peacekeepers remain in position and on task. We will continue to undertake our mandated tasks to monitor and report.

We remind the IDF and all actors of their obligations to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel and property. Any deliberate attack on them is a grave violation of international humanitarian law and of Resolution 1701.

<https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-statement-25-october-2024>

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))

TOP

## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Debate

#### Sanctions: Iran

*col 356* **The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Stephen Doughty):** I beg to move, That the Iran (Sanctions) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SI, 2024, No. 944), dated 11 September 2024 ... be approved. ...

*col 357* 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 also prolongs 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 demonstrated how Iranian weapons development and proliferation is fuelling conflict and escalation in the middle east.

The Iranian regime also used hundreds of these arms in its attack against Israel on 1 October, which we condemn in the strongest terms. That attack once more endangered the lives of innocent civilians and escalated an already incredibly dangerous situation, and that cannot be tolerated. In response to Iran's 1 October attack on Israel, the UK has designated nine individuals and entities involved in facilitating Iran's destabilising activity. That includes 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, and all efforts must now be concentrated on breaking the cycle of violence. ... this is the latest incident in the 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 its aligned militia groups in Iraq and Syria. ...

**Gavin Williamson (Conservative):** ... Does he accept that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is a key component of the destabilisation sponsored by the Iranian regime? ...

**Stephen Doughty:** ... We of course recognise the huge threat that the IRGC poses, and we will take the necessary measures to counter it at home and around the world. ...

*col 358* The legislation before us expands the UK's trade sanctions against Iran, with the aim of disrupting its UAV and missile industry and its access to items critical to military development. ...

We are also prohibiting the provision of ancillary services associated with the goods, such as brokering services, technical assistance, financial services and funds. ...

**Alicia Kearns (Conservative):** The Conservative party supports the regulations ... However, these sanctions seek to address issues emblematic of a far larger threat. The Government should be in no doubt that Iran's malign influence is one of the biggest challenges to both global and British security. For decades, Iran has deliberately undermined the rules-based international order, destabilising its neighbourhood and funding terrorism globally, all while brutally repressing its own people and committing a femicide.

For years, the Iranian regime has created asymmetric threats, co-opted existing movements and provided weapons, money and training to its proxies and ideological partners. Be they Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen or Shi'a militias and the popular mobilisation forces across Iraq and Syria, they are terrorist organisations that have no interest in their local people and instead pursue the aims of the ayatollah; hostage captors and committers of the worst atrocity against the Jewish people since the Holocaust; and actors disrupting maritime traffic in the Red sea, a sea link that is vital for the delivery of food and fertiliser to countries facing serious hunger crises in east Africa and south Asia. ...

*col 358* Here at home, there have been numerous Iranian plots to assassinate British or UK-based individuals whom the regime considers its enemies. The UK has had to respond to more than 15 such plots since 2022. We have seen Iranian cut-outs investigated for spreading IRGC propaganda and for glorifying sanctioned individuals and terrorists. We have seen IRGC generals providing radicalising lectures here in our capital city. Even on our streets, we have seen people glorifying organisations such as the Houthis and others who are not acting in defence of Gaza and who are not progressive movements; they are terrorists. ...

When the Government propose measures such as the regulations before the House to counter Iran's appalling behaviour, we will support them, but we are also very clear that the Government need to maintain the pressure and look at the bigger picture in equal measure to respond to the ever-growing threat. ...

We must stop compartmentalising our response and approach to Iran. We need to work out how we will measure success in reducing the threat of Iran to our people and our interests. ...

*col 360* We need long-term thinking on how we restore state control over areas abused by Iranian-backed non-state actors. That includes the implementation of UN resolution 1701 and the removal of Hezbollah military positions from southern Lebanon, with the Lebanese military being able to reassert sovereign control. We also need a strategic approach to the Houthis that prioritises the restoration of proper governance in Yemen ...

Internationally, we must work with our partners to contain the looming threat of a nuclear Iran. ...

I will be grateful if the Minister answers the following questions. When will the Government

proscribe the IRGC? ... Will he work with allies to ensure that sanctions are international and ensure their effectiveness in curbing Iranian drone development exports? ...

Will the Minister work to ensure that the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation is pursuing penalties against those who breach sanctions? ...

Finally, with proxies such as Hezbollah being degraded, will the Minister commit to working towards freeing captured societies from Iranian influence and helping states such as Lebanon to reassert their independence and state effectiveness? ...

**col/ 361 Calum Miller (Liberal Democrat):** ... The Liberal Democrats have for a long time supported a strengthening of UK sanctions against the Iranian regime ...

Just as the Iranian regime sees fit to violate the basic rights of its own citizens at home, its influence abroad is similarly malign, both in the middle east and closer to home. ...

**col/ 362** The Liberal Democrats also urge the Government to go further on sanctions. The past few weeks have served as a demonstration of Iran's terrible influence within the middle east, and in particular the role of the IRGC. We condemn the barrage of ballistic missiles fired against Israel by Iran's IRGC at the beginning of the month. The IRGC continues to supply rockets and weaponry to its terrorist proxies, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, who have caused so much death and misery in the middle east. In 2022, security services revealed 10 plots organised by the IRGC in that year alone here on British soil where the intention was to kidnap or kill British nationals or UK residents. ...

In opposition, the now Foreign Secretary said: "The IRGC is behaving like a terrorist organisation and must now be proscribed as such."

I agree, so will the Minister take that long overdue step and proscribe the IRGC as a terrorist organisation? ...

**col/ 364 John Whittingdale (Conservative):** ... Iran is a malign influence that is fuelling many of the most serious conflicts around the world. There was Iran's horrendous attack on Israel recently, but there has also been its supply of weapons to Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis—and particularly to Russia, in its invasion of Ukraine. ...

**col/ 365** Imposing sanctions is clearly an important part of putting pressure on Iran, but they need to be enforced. ...

**col/ 368 Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru):** ... we should also bear in mind that sanctions can form only part of any strategy. As the United Nations stated: "Sanctions do not operate, succeed or fail in a vacuum. The measures are most effective at maintaining or restoring international peace and security when applied as part of a comprehensive strategy encompassing peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peacemaking."

The sanctions must therefore fit into a wider approach that the UK takes towards the situation in the middle east, where we also support de-escalation and peacebuilding initiatives as they arise. We must be firm and fair. Where there are opportunities for de-escalation, we must take them, while remaining steadfast in our support of international law and preparedness to sanction states such as Iran that act to undermine it. ...

**col/ 370 Stephen Doughty:** ... I should point out that we do not just have these regulations. Continuing on from measures under the previous Administration, on 2 September we sanctioned four IRGC Quds Force targets who have a role supporting Iranian proxy actions in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. We announced sanctions against 15 Iranian and Russian targets on 10 September, cancelled our bilateral air service arrangements with Iran Air and targeted those who were involved in a series of actions.

We have consistently raised our concerns directly with the Iranian regime and, indeed, with a range of partners. On 14 October we designated nine individuals and entities involved in facilitating Iran's destabilising activity. That included senior military and IRGC figures and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile programme. ...

**col/ 372** Before concluding, let me briefly touch on a couple of the specific themes that came out of the debate. Let me be clear: Iran's actions in relation to Israel are completely unacceptable. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have been absolutely clear



that we stand with Israel and recognise its right to self-defence in the face of Iranian aggression. We absolutely condemn in the strongest terms its attack against Israel. We designated individuals specifically in response to the attack on Israel, including senior military figures and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile programme.

... let me be clear that Iran's nuclear escalation since 2019 has gone far beyond JCPOA limits and is undermining the deal. Alongside our E3 partners, we will use all diplomatic options available to ensure that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon, including triggering the snapback of all UN sanctions lifted under the JCPOA if necessary. I mentioned the actions that we have taken against regional proxies, but let me remind the House that the UK proscribes the entirety of Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation, and has an asset freeze in place against the entire organisation. We assess Hamas in their entirety to be concerned with terrorism, and therefore proscribe the organisation in full. The Houthis are sanctioned in their entirety by the UK and are subject to a targeted arms embargo. ...

col 373 The safety and security of the United Kingdom from Iran's malign actions has been raised on a number of occasions. It was rightly pointed out that the UK has identified at least 15 threats towards UK-based individuals. Our police, intelligence and security agencies have been confronting these threats for many years, but their seriousness has increased in recent months. ...

Lastly, on Lebanon, we have been very clear that a political solution consistent with resolution 1701 is the only way to restore its sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability. We have been calling for an immediate ceasefire between Lebanese Hezbollah and Israel, and a political plan that will enable civilians on both sides to return to their homes. Nobody wants further escalation, and we will continue to work with partners across the region on that.

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 proxies in the middle east or Russia. We will continue to work with likeminded partners. The regulations send a clear message to the Government of Iran and those seeking to harm the UK's security and that of our partners: we will not stand idle in the face of this aggression. I commend the regulations to the House. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-23/debates/53DA91BF-286B-436C-AC1A-BE262804C74F/SanctionsIran>

*The Iran (Sanctions) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SI, 2024, No. 944), under discussion above, can be read at*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/944/made>

*UNSCR 1701, referred to above by Alicia Kearns and Stephen Doughty, can be read at*

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

*The UN statement referred to above by Ben Lake can be read at*

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/information>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Religious Freedom

**Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1361]** To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the targeting of women and of minorities around the world because of their religion or belief; and whether they plan to publish their estimate of the number of people adversely affected and of the countries where such violations occur.

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Women and minority groups can be disproportionately affected on the basis of their religion or belief. Individuals can also face persecution grounded in religious or belief-based justifications, relating to the backlash against

women's, girls and LGBT+ rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. We do not hold figures on those adversely affected. However, the latest Pew Research Center study reports that in 2021, government restrictions on religion reached a new peak globally. We are committed to promoting freedom of religion or belief, for all, everywhere, and seek opportunities to advocate for women and minority groups.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-08/hl1361>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2024/03/05/globally-government-restrictions-on-religion-reached-peak-levels-in-2021-while-social-hostilities-went-down/>

TOP

## Other Relevant Information

### European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

#### **Muslims in Europe face ever more racism and discrimination**

One in two Muslims in the EU face racism and discrimination in their daily life – a sharp rise since 2016. Muslim women, men and children are targeted not just because of their religion, but also because of their skin colour and ethnic or immigrant background. Young Muslims born in the EU and women wearing religious clothing are especially affected. ... Based on an [EU-wide survey among immigrants and their children \(2022\)](#), the report shows a surge in anti-Muslim racism since the last edition of the survey in 2016, most notably in the job and housing market.

Looking at the five years before the survey, the key findings are:

- **Racism** – nearly 1 in 2 Muslims (47%) experience racial discrimination, up from 39% in 2016. The highest rates in the 13 survey countries are in Austria (71%), Germany (68%) and Finland (63%).
- **Work** – Muslims most often face discrimination when looking for work (39%) or in the workplace (35%), up from 31% and 23% in 2016. ...
- **Religious clothing** - women wearing religious clothing face more racial discrimination than those who do not, especially when looking for work (45% compared to 31%). This goes up to 58% for young women (16-24 years) wearing religious clothing.
- **Racist harassment** – almost 1 in 3 (27%) Muslim respondents were racially harassed in the five years before the survey; most of them more than once.
- **Discriminatory profiling** – almost half (49%) of those stopped by the police in the year before the survey thought their last stop was due to racial profiling.
- **Education** – Muslim respondents are three times more likely to leave school early, compared to the general EU population (30% compared to 9.6%). ...

To tackle racism and discrimination effectively, FRA calls on the EU and its Member States to:

1. **Focus on anti-Muslim racism** ...
2. **Collect data** - collect data on all grounds of discrimination to support better policymaking and develop benchmarks, targets and indicators for monitoring.
3. **Enforce laws** – properly enforce anti-discrimination laws as well as tougher sanctions for discrimination and hate crimes. ...
4. **Tackle racism in all areas of life** – this includes targeted efforts to combat racism in education, employment, housing and healthcare. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2024/muslims-europe-face-ever-more-racism-and-discrimination>

### **Being Muslim in the EU: Experiences of Muslims**

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2024-being-muslim-in-the-eu\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-being-muslim-in-the-eu_en.pdf)

#### **Findings Q & A**

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/being-muslim-eu#publication-tab-1>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Freedom of religion or belief is fundamental to achieving lasting and sustainable peace: UN expert**

In a context of worsening violence and war, protecting freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief is more urgent than ever, a UN expert said ...

“... As ever higher numbers of people suffer in contexts of violence, conflict, and insecurity, it is urgent to demand respect for freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief,” said Nazila Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

In her report to the General Assembly, Ghanea said that the right to peace and the right to freedom of religion or belief were long recognised as integral to one another, yet widespread barriers to both remained.

“Religion does not inherently contribute to peace nor to conflict. Nonetheless, essentialising and discriminatory assumptions about the relationship between religion, conflict, and war remain widespread and underpin a host of harmful policy approaches,” Ghanea said. “Such assumptions are, regrettably, particularly common among purportedly ‘anti-extremist’ and ‘counter-terrorist’ policies. These can have the effect of securitising, collectively punishing, and dehumanising entire communities, and are ultimately self-defeating.”

The report highlights that States’ obligations to respect freedom of religion or belief bear directly on, and can positively contribute to, conflict prevention, mitigation, and transformation. “Fulfilling freedom of religion or belief can undermine the structural drivers of conflict. It frees up the human conscience to think beyond, and to challenge war and militarism. It also facilitates more inclusive, intersectional, and participatory approaches to addressing conflict,” Ghanea said. ...

Ghanea said when freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief is respected, alternative movements and pro-peace narratives are more likely to emerge.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/freedom-religion-or-belief-fundamental-achieving-lasting-and-sustainable>

### **Freedom of Religion or Belief (A/79/182)**

<https://undocs.org/en/A/79/182>

TOP

## **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)**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3847>

## **Holocaust Memorial Bill**

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

## **\*\* Meat (Information About Method of Killing) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3843>

First Reading, House of Commons

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

## **Palestine Statehood (Recognition)**

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

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

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

## **\*\* Palestine Statehood (Recognition) (No. 3)**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3831>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-23/debates/7EF8068F-4C8C-448D-8910-1D37BC02D246/PointOfOrder#contribution-C689242F-73AF-4887-992D-30592D36C0B7>

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

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

## **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/s6/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Letter from Liam McArthur MSP (Bill proposer) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/committees/health-social-care-and-sport-committee/correspondence/2024/liam-mcarthur-ad-bill-financial-memorandum-clarification.pdf>

### **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 2 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/>

**\*\* closes in 8 days**

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

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

**\*\* Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill** (closing date not stated but advice to “submit your written evidence as soon as possible”)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2024/october/terrorism-protection-of-premises-bill-call-for-evidence/>

**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/>

TOP