

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*  
**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**  
**SCoJeC**

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Occupied Territories

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op)** [133853] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations his Department has received on the legality under international law of potential UK trade with entities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Alistair Burt:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has in the past received Written Parliamentary Questions, on behalf of their constituents, and correspondence directly from members of the public about British businesses operating in, and trading with, illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We routinely update our guidance to British businesses on the Overseas Business Risk website. We advise British businesses to bear in mind the British Government's view on the illegality of settlements under international law when considering their investments and activities in the region. Ultimately it will be the decision of each individual or company whether to operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-22/133853/>

#### Gaza: Borders

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op)** [133854] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the compatibility with international law of (a) Israeli naval operations off the coast of Gaza and (b) that country's naval blockade there.

**Alistair Burt:** We consider that the level of control that Israel retains over Gaza amounts to occupation under international law and hence that Israel's conduct is governed by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which Israel is a state party. In line with these provisions the UK continues to call on the Government of Israel to ease movement and access restrictions into and out of Gaza. British officials encouraged an easing of restrictions and improvement in the humanitarian situation in Gaza at the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee on 20 March.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-22/133854/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israeli Settlements

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6467] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding claims that the Israeli military protect settlers whilst those settlers are attacking Palestinians and damaging or invading Palestinian property.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have repeatedly raised with the Israeli authorities our concerns about incidents of settler violence, most recently on 15 March, we stress the importance of bringing the extremist settlers responsible to justice, and of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-19/HL6467/>

### Jerusalem: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6468] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the amendment to the Entry into Israel Law 1972, passed by the Israeli parliament, which allows the interior minister to revoke the residency rights of any Palestinian in Jerusalem on the ground of a breach of loyalty to Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised this issue with the Israeli authorities on 15 February, noting the importance of ensuring that the legislation is compatible with Israel's obligations under international human rights law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-19/HL6468/>

### Israeli Settlements

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6469] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the comments by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein describing Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem as war crimes.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made any assessment on this specific issue, the UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-19/HL6469/>

### Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6470] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding reports of incursions by Israeli settlers into Al-Aqsa Mosque, escorted by Israeli police.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. We urge the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law as an occupying power in East Jerusalem.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-19/HL6470/>

### Haneen Zoabi

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6471] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the suspension of Haneen Zoabi from the Knesset in response to her calling Israeli Defense Force soldiers murderers.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-19/HL6471/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6472] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the raid on Birzeit University and the reported abduction of its Student Council President Omar al-Kiswani by undercover Israeli agents on 7 March.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we are aware that the Birzeit University Student Council President was arrested on campus on 7 March, we have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-19/HL6472/>

#### **Jerusalem: Churches**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL6561] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 15 March (HL5986), whether they have made representations to the government of Israel that the bank accounts of churches in Jerusalem should be unfrozen as part of the process of mediating the dispute between the churches, the government of Israel, and the Municipality of Jerusalem.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcomed the Israeli Government's announcement that the draft legislation and tax collecting activities will be suspended to allow dialogue to take place, and the commitment given to maintaining freedom of religion. We expect all Church bank accounts to be unfrozen by the Municipality as part of the process of mediating the dispute, and continue to raise this with the relevant Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-21/HL6561/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-01/HL5986/>

## **Scottish Parliament Motion**

**S5M-11451 Sandra White (SNP): Land Day Palestinians Right to Return** – That the Parliament notes with deep concern reports of 17 people being killed and hundreds injured by Israeli forces during the Land Day protest on 30 March 2018 at the barrier that separates Gaza and Israel; understands that Israeli forces fired live ammunition at protesters, who had set up camp to mark the beginning of a six-week sit-in to commemorate those killed for protesting against the Israeli Government's confiscation of large swathes of Palestinian land on 30 March 1976, and urges the international community to support the calls from the UN Secretary General and the EU for an independent and transparent investigation into the actions of the Israeli Government and what it sees as the excessive use of force on Palestinian civilians, who it considers have a right to peaceful protest.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11451>

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

### UK Parliament

#### **European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 2 days**

**Creating a Parliament for Wales** (closing date 6 April 2018)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=292>

**Integrated Communities Strategy green paper** (closing date 5 June 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

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