



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Organs: Donors**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [8297] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to publicise the changes to the law resulting from the introduction of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

**Dan Jarvid (Labour)** [8298] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the timetable for the changes to the law following the introduction of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 and accompanying guidance and regulations.

**Caroline Dinenage:** The Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 heralds a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation in England, known as 'opt-out' or 'deemed consent'. The Government aims for the new consent arrangements to be introduced from spring 2020.

Ahead of the new system coming into force, the Government held a 12-week public consultation to seek views on a proposed list of organs and tissues to exclude from deemed consent. The Government Response to the consultation, the accompanying regulations and a Code of Practice for healthcare professionals, prepared by the Human Tissue Authority following public consultation, will be laid in Parliament in the near future, with information about the timetable.

To make the public fully aware of the new system of consent, NHS Blood and Transplant launched a communication campaign on behalf of Government in April 2019. Several platforms have been used since then to raise public awareness of the new system, more recently through TV and radio adverts, as well as public advertising with specific targeting of people with different backgrounds, faith and beliefs. NHS Blood and Transplant will continue to work with general practitioner (GP) practices, schools and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to address barriers to organ donation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8297/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8298/>

### **European Council of Imams: Muslim Brotherhood**

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [7128] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential connection between the European Council of Imams, launched in Paris in November 2019 and the Muslim Brotherhood.

**Brandon Lewis:** The Government's review of the Muslim Brotherhood, completed in December 2015 and published on gov.uk, concluded the movement is a secretive organisation and that parts of it – globally – have a highly ambiguous relationship with violent extremism. The Government keeps under review the views promoted and activities undertaken by the Muslim Brotherhood's associates in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament.

The Government continues to stand by the judgments of the review, and we will continue to consider any new evidence on the Muslim Brotherhood's activities against the UK's legal thresholds.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7128/>

*The review referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486948/53163\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood\\_Review\\_-\\_PRINT.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486948/53163_Muslim_Brotherhood_Review_-_PRINT.pdf)

## **House of Lords Written Answer**

### **Hate Crime**

**Lord Browne of Belmont (DUP)** [HL554] To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific offences are categorised as a hate crime; and what are the criteria for such categorisation.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The law responds to hate crime in four ways by:

- providing for additional “aggravated” offences with longer sentences in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 if an offender demonstrated hostility or was motivated by hostility based on race or religion.
- prohibiting conduct that is likely to stir up hatred on grounds of race, or intended to do so on grounds of religion or sexual orientation in the Public Order Act 1986.
- providing for enhanced sentencing under sections 145 and 146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 if hostility is motivated by any of the five protected characteristics: disability, transgender status, race, religion or sexual orientation; and
- providing Sentencing guidelines. Section 125(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 requires that a sentencing judge must follow any sentencing guideline which is relevant to their case. This includes, for example, consideration of whether the offence was motivated by racial or religious hostility, or if it was motivated by or demonstrated hostility towards the victim based on one or more of several of the victim's characteristics: age, sex, gender identity (or presumed gender identity), disability (or presumed disability) or sexual orientation.

The Government have invited the Law Commission to review the law relating to hate crime and to make recommendations to the Government for its reform. The

review began in March 2019.

Specifically, the Law Commission have been asked to consider the current range of offences and aggravating factors in sentencing, and to make recommendations on the most appropriate models to ensure that the criminal law provides consistent and effective protection from conduct motivated by hatred towards protected groups or characteristics. The review will also take account of the existing range of protected characteristics, identifying any gaps in the scope of protection currently offered under the law and making recommendations to promote a consistent approach.

The Law Commission plan to issue a consultation on this matter in early 2020. Further information on the review can be found on the Law Commission webpage at: <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL554/>

## Crown Prosecution Service

### CPS data summary Quarter 2 2019-2020

#### Hate Crime

Receipts	Pre-charge receipts from the police fell by 21.2% from 2,653 to 2,091. The Q2 RYTD figure of 9,432 compares to 10,749 from 2018/19.
Completed prosecutions	Completed prosecutions (across all strands of hate crime) fell from 3,110 in Q3 2018/19 to 2,978 in Q2 19/20. The Q2 RYTD figure is 12,085 which compares to 12,828 in 2018/19.
Uplifts (Disability Hate Crime)	For disability hate crime, the proportion of convictions which included an announced and recorded sentence uplift fell from 35.2% in Q3 2018/19 to 30.1% in Q2 2019/20.
Uplifts (general)	The proportion of convictions which included an announced and recorded sentence uplift increased from 73.6% in Q3 2018/19 to 78.3% in Q2 19/20, with 75.7% Q2 RYTD.

To read the data in full see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-data-summary-quarter-2-2019-2020>

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## Holocaust

**See also the House of Commons written answer on “Religious Freedom” which is included in the “Foreign Affairs” section below.**

## House of Commons Oral Answer

### Prime Minister’s Questions

**Carol Monaghan (SNP):** Monday was Holocaust Memorial Day, when we remember those who suffered under Nazi persecution. During that dark time, Britain stood out as a beacon of hope, and 10,000 Jewish children came here with the Kindertransport. When the Prime Minister’s Government rejected Lord Dubs’ amendment on unaccompanied child refugees, Britain’s beacon dimmed. Will the Prime Minister now devolve powers over

immigration to Holyrood, to allow Scotland to be that beacon of hope?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Lady does a disservice to this country's reputation and record, because not only have we taken 41,000 unaccompanied children since 2010, but the whole country can be very proud of everything that we continue to do to commemorate the holocaust and what took place then.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-29/debates/821DAC2A-A644-40CF-86AE-5D8CB585640D/Engagements#contribution-3F8DB335-9CD3-4D3C-93A1-ACE537DDDAD4>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Debate

#### **Iran: Stability in the Middle East**

*col 1555* **Lord Turnberg (Non-affiliated):** ... Hezbollah has taken over Lebanon and is heavily armed, with 50,000 trained troops and 100,000 missiles hidden in villages in the south, aimed at Israel and probably Jordan. Even more worryingly, Iran has begun fitting sophisticated guidance systems to its ballistic missiles so that they can pinpoint Israeli airports and strategic targets. In Gaza, Hamas is fully armed by Iran, while in Iraq it has managed to infiltrate a huge number of armed units and achieved what it was never able to achieve when Saddam Hussein was in power ...

... Iran has made no secret whatever that its intention is to see Israel wiped off the map. Its leaders repeat that message every week and we should not mistake that as any desire simply to support the Palestinians. Even if the Israelis and the Palestinians ever came to an agreement, leaving aside Mr Trump's doubtful "deal of the century", Iran would still keep up its animosity towards—and plan to remove—Israel. In truth, it seems to care little about the Palestinians; it just wants to get rid of the Jewish state.

Iran has its allies at the ready in Lebanon and Gaza and now, most worryingly from Israel's point of view, in Syria, right on Israel's northern border. So far, Israel has been surreptitiously reducing Iran's military capacity there, but it is quite unclear how long that can continue. Israel is surrounded and feels besieged. We should know that all these threats are in addition to the prospect of Iran going all out to develop its nuclear bomb. Israel takes the threat from Iran very seriously indeed. Anyone threatening to wipe out the Jews, now at the press of a button—with the memories of Auschwitz so strong this week—is taken very seriously. Israel is on ready alert to respond to any attack, or even, equally dangerously, to pre-empt one with a devastating attack of its own. ...

*col 1556* ... we should of course continue to press Israel and the Palestinians to come together and reach some form of agreement ... and we should urge restraint on Israel as it tries to deal with the threats surrounding it. However, we have to face up to the fact that Israel will listen to such words of caution only if they are accompanied by our own full recognition of the nature of Iran's threat. We should support Israel as it tries to work out how to deal with that threat, which is not only to Israel and the rest of the Middle East but, inevitably, to us too. What is the Government's attitude to Israel as it faces up to the threats to its existence? ...

*col 1558* **Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat):** ... there is an absence of any measures constraining Iran's ability to fund terrorist organisations, such as Hezbollah, based in Lebanon. Hezbollah, which possesses a formidable stockpile of rockets and missiles, has made no secret of its desire to wipe Israel off the map ... Last year it was revealed that in 2015, months after the Iran deal was signed, a joint operation between the Metropolitan Police and MI5 uncovered highly explosive material in north-west London,

stored by radicals with ties to Hezbollah. ...

Having proscribed Hezbollah's military wing as a terrorist group in 2008, in March 2019 the UK Government declared Hezbollah in its entirety a terrorist organisation. ... In 2010 Iran provided Hezbollah with approximately \$200 million, having transferred as much as \$1 billion to the organisation between 2006 and 2009. Hezbollah is believed to possess as many as 100,000 missiles, 10 times its capacity during the 2006 war with Israel. What is the purpose of this armoury if not war on behalf of Iran? Can the Minister assure us that all contributions to Lebanon are being assessed through rigorous parameters and that DfID resources are not being used by Hezbollah for non-humanitarian purposes? ...

**col 1560 Lord Polak (Conservative):** ... many in this place, across the country and throughout the world marked the solemnity of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz this week. Yet Iran has openly and consistently expressed its willingness to commit another atrocity against the Jewish people and is actually pursuing the capacity to carry out that threat itself and with its proxies, including Hezbollah and Hamas. ...

**col 1566 The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon):** ... Since 1979, Iran's outlook has sadly been shaped by a radical revolutionary ideology ... with a number of crucial defining factors. Among them are a sense of self-reliance, forged during the horrific war with Iraq in the 1980s; a strategic rivalry with Saudi Arabia ... and enmity towards Israel ...

**col 1567** The United Kingdom remains committed to working with the international community ... to ensure that Iran abides by international laws and norms and is held to account for its destabilising activity in the region. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-30/debates/45D8CBD5-756E-4441-981D-B202861FF590/IranStabilityInTheMiddleEast>

## House of Commons Oral Answers

### Prime Minister's Questions

**Jeremy Corbyn (Labour):** ... President Trump's latest middle east peace plan is not a peace plan. It will annexe Palestinian territory, lock in illegal Israeli colonisation, transfer Palestinian citizens of Israel, and deny Palestinian people their fundamental rights. When the Government meet the US Secretary of State later today, will they make it clear that they will stand for a genuine, internationally backed peace plan rather than this stuff proposed by Trump yesterday?

**The Prime Minister:** Let us be clear that this is a problem that has bedevilled the world, and the middle east in particular, for decades. No peace plan is perfect, but this has the merit of a two-state solution—it is a two-state solution. It would ensure that Jerusalem is both the capital of Israel and of the Palestinian people. Rather than being so characteristically negative, I urge the right hon. Gentleman to reach out to his friends and my friends—our friends—in the Palestinian Authority, and to Mahmoud Abbas, for whom I have the highest respect, and, for once, to engage with this initiative and to get talking rather than to leave a political vacuum.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I have the greatest respect for President Abbas and those in the Palestinian Authority; I have met them many times—*[Interruption.]* ... The Prime Minister should acknowledge that President Trump's plan will not bring any move towards peace and that it has no support from any Palestinian anywhere in the world. Perhaps this would be a good opportunity for the British Government to say frankly and candidly to the US that, on this, it is wrong. There needs to be a two-state solution with international support.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-29/debates/821DAC2A-A644-40CF-86AE-5D8CB585640D/Engagements#contribution-E7295E05-1696-48E4-BBCC-FE459DEFC403>

### **Palestine: UK Aid**

9. **Robert Halfon (Conservative):** What steps [is the Minister] taking to ensure that UK aid to the Palestinians facilitates peace-building with Israel. [900471]

**The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Dr Andrew Murrison):** As my right hon. Friend knows, the UK is committed to making progress towards a negotiated two-state solution. Meanwhile, UK aid to Palestinians helps to meet immediate needs, deliver key services and promote economic development. It supports stability in the development of a capable and accountable Palestinian Authority who can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

**Robert Halfon:** UK taxpayers' aid pays the salaries of teachers in Palestinian Authority schools, yet at least 31 official PA schools are named after terrorists who killed innocent citizens. Does the Secretary of State share my concern that the children studying in those schools are being taught that it is honourable to commit violent acts against Israelis? Does he agree that, instead of prolonging the conflict by supporting such rhetoric, we must do more to press the Palestinians to stop glorifying terrorists and to use our aid as it is meant to be used?

**Andrew Murrison:** My right hon. Friend is right to raise this matter. We are clear with the Palestinian Authority on how we expect UK aid to be spent. Last week, I had a further meeting with the Palestinian Authority Education Minister, Professor Awartani, following our meeting in Ramallah last year. He expressed his commitment to the EU's review of teaching materials, as well as to the PA's own review, which will be available before the start of the academic year. Education means hope, and we need to be careful about removing hope from the OPTs, because hope is what is preventing people from falling into the arms of those with mischievous intent for the future of that part of the world.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-29/debates/EF296EAA-47A4-498F-8C35-292FF0B5243D/PalestineUKAid>

### **Middle East Peace Plan**

**Emily Thornberry (Labour) (Urgent Question):** To ask the Secretary of State if he will make a statement on the proposed middle east peace plan that was announced by President Trump this week.

**The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (Andrew Murrison):** ... the Government welcome the release of the proposal by the United States for peace between Israelis and Palestinians ... A peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians that leads to peaceful co-existence could unlock the potential of the entire region and provide both sides with the opportunity for a brighter future.

Only the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian territories can determine whether the proposals can meet the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. We encourage them to give the latest plan genuine and fair consideration, and to explore whether it might prove a first step on the road back to negotiations. The UK's position has not changed. Our view remains that the best way to achieve peace is through substantive peace talks between the parties, leading to a safe and secure Israel that lives alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders, with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

Our first priority now must be to encourage the United States, Israelis, Palestinians and our partners in the international community to find a means of resuming the dialogue necessary for securing a negotiated settlement. The absence of dialogue creates a vacuum, which fuels instability and all that follows from that.

**Emily Thornberry:** ... Later this year, we will mark 25 years since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, who, like Egypt's Anwar Sadat, was murdered because of his efforts to bring peace to the middle east; two leaders who had the courage to risk their lives to end

decades of bloodshed in their region. What we saw instead at the White House on Tuesday was a betrayal; a desecration of Sadat and Rabin's sacrifice. Trump and Netanyahu are two corrupt racist power-crazed leaders coming together not in the interests of peace, not to promote a two-state solution and not to end violence in the middle east, but simply to further their chances of re-election by doing the opposite. ...

Let us make no mistake: this so-called peace plan has nothing in common with the Oslo accords. It destroys any prospect of an independent, contiguous Palestinian state. It legitimises the illegal annexation of Palestinian land for settlers. It puts the whole of Jerusalem under Israeli control. It removes the democratic rights of Palestinians living in Israel and removes the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their land. This is not a peace plan; it is a monstrosity and a guarantee that the next generation of Palestinian and Israeli children, like so many generations before them, will grow up knowing nothing but fear, violence and division. ...

... why on earth are our Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary just going along with this sham of a peace deal by actively welcoming it and saying that Palestine should get behind it? That is a shameful betrayal of decades of consensus, across this House and from one Government to another, that we should unswervingly and neutrally support progress towards a two-state solution, a prospect that this plan permanently rips away. I ask the Government: why are they supporting this plan? Why will they not, for pity's sake, recognise the independent contiguous state of Palestine while there is still one left to recognise?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... I spent last night actually reading the plan. It is a large document. I do not know whether she has done more than just skim through it and read the remarks of her researchers, but I have actually read it. This has been years in gestation. America is one of our closest allies, and I think we owe America and its President at least the time to consider this plan.

That said, this is not our plan. What the right hon. Lady should have done is consider the remarks of our international friends and partners on this plan. She would have found, if she had bothered to take note of them ... that the UK position, iterated by the Foreign Secretary in his statement on Tuesday, is right in the mainstream of international opinion on this document. At the moment, we have a vacuum in which there is no negotiation. We want to see a return to negotiation, and we need something that will get us going in that respect. If this plan, with all its faults and foibles—every plan has them—enables us to get around the table again, that has to be a good thing.

**Bob Blackman (Conservative):** ... Will he confirm that no less than five Arab countries have already welcomed this proposal as a basis for restarting talks between the Palestinians and the state of Israel? Will he therefore commit the United Kingdom to helping the Palestinians to get around the table with the state of Israel and deliver peace in the middle east?

**Andrew Murrison:** It is clear that peace in the middle east needs to be negotiated by the parties concerned ... My hon. Friend is quite correct; I have a list of countries from across the world that have commented on the proposal, and I have been road-testing our statement against some of those comments. We have comments from Saudi Arabia, Egypt—we will come back to that—the United Arab Emirates, EU High Representative Borrell, the E3, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden and Australia. They all welcome this as the basis for talks and negotiation.

**Emily Thornberry:** It's a betrayal!

**Andrew Murrison:** The right hon. Lady can chunter as much as she likes, but she needs to understand where we sit in the mainstream of international opinion on this matter, which is as I have described.

**Stewart Malcolm McDonald (SNP):** ... The Minister can cite as many people as he wants who have come out in some guise or another to support this plan, but I am with the former

Israeli defence chief of intelligence and military attaché to Washington, Amos Yadlin, who has said that this is “not a peace plan”, and that it is not “even a basis for a peace plan”. This simply will not do. I get that the United Kingdom Government find themselves in a tough position, but simply uttering the words “this is not our plan” will not cut it. The Prime Minister of Israel has made it clear that he will unlawfully annex the Jordan valley—Palestinian land. Annexations are unlawful because they fuel conflict. If the Government can get that right on Crimea, why on earth can they not get it right in this instance? Can I ask the Minister what he is doing to make sure that no undue pressure is applied, either by Israel or by the United States Government, on the Palestinian Authority to accept a plan that delivers neither peace nor prosperity for anyone involved?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... Annexation would be illegal under international law. Some of the rhetoric we saw in the aftermath of the release of this document “Peace to Prosperity” was perhaps overdone and overblown, and it has been reined back on overnight by a number of those who claimed that that would happen in the immediate aftermath of the release of the plan. The UK Government’s position on annexation is, as he knows, very clear, and it is completely compatible with what others say and maintain on this matter: annexation—that is to say, Israel commanding space that has not been negotiated and agreed internationally—would be illegal.

**Tom Tugendhat (Conservative):** Will my right hon. Friend update us on what conversations he has had with UN partners and with the UN Secretary-General’s office?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... The UN General Secretary has made a statement that is in keeping with most of the comments made internationally yesterday and overnight. He welcomes this as a point of dialogue and is insistent ... that we need to get back around the negotiating table. I do not think that anybody really accepts—certainly not on the part of the UK Government—that this is a perfect plan by any means. It could be baby steps towards a negotiation, but it has to be a negotiated settlement that eventually falls out of this. Clearly, this has not been negotiated, so those who suggest that it is in some way a final settlement are way far of the mark. This clearly has to be the subject of a great deal of further work, but if it is the catalyst for negotiation, I suppose we have to welcome it in that stead.

**Andy Slaughter (Labour):** The Minister is an intelligent man. He must see how intellectually dishonest the position he is taking is. On the one hand he is saying that the UK Government’s position has not changed and they are against annexation, but this plan endorses that and makes it possible. He should not hide behind what others say. This country has an historical responsibility to Palestine, and he should stand up for what should be this Government’s policy.

**Andrew Murrison:** It is not a question of hiding behind what others say. Generally speaking, it is a good thing to be in the mainstream of international opinion. ... I have already read out some of the comments made over the past 36 hours or so, and most of them say that they want to see a negotiation between the parties. At the moment, there is none—there is a vacuum. What we have is this document, launched this week, and if this can be baby steps towards something that makes sense in the future, I would have thought that most of us would at least welcome that as part of a process.

**Robert Courts (Conservative):** We are dealing with one of the world’s longest-running and most complicated conflicts. Does the Minister agree that if these proposals represent a step towards negotiations and an acceptable agreement, we should give them fair consideration?

**Andrew Murrison:** It would be unwise to completely dismiss out of hand something of this nature, created and built by one of our closest allies ... We need to get to a position where we have the start of a negotiation. ...

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat):** This is not a plan. This is a scam. The Minister wonders

why those of us with Palestinian family, but also anyone else who believes in the international rules-based order, are suggesting that our Government should reject it. This is an insult. The Palestinians were not consulted during its wide gestation. This is not the best of us. We should reject it outright.

I remind the Minister of our Prime Minister's words when he was Foreign Secretary: "What we are saying is that you have to have a two-state solution or else you have a kind of apartheid system. You have to go for a two-state approach, that is the long-standing position of the government".

This plan is not the basis for a viable two-state solution. Does the Minister therefore accept that these are baby steps, to use his words, towards an apartheid system that we should reject outright?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... If I may quote the EU High Representative ... he said: "Today's initiative by the United States provides an occasion to re-launch the urgently needed efforts towards a negotiated and viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict"

He is welcoming this—*[Interruption.]* Yes, he is. I could read out any number of comments made along those lines by international leaders over the past 48 hours. The important thing is that this may be the start of a process after a very long period of stand-off between Palestinians and Israelis. If that proves to be the case, I would welcome it.

**Crispin Blunt (Conservative):** ... My right hon. Friend might want to remember what our manifesto said. It said that Britain would be a champion of...the rule of law, human rights, free trade, anti-corruption efforts and a rules-based international system."

Yesterday we welcomed the release of a proposal—which we described as serious—that ignored the Palestinians' right to self-determination, the 1967 borders, international humanitarian law, and repeated United Nations Security Council resolutions, the last of which the United Kingdom signed up to in December 2016. I have to say to my right hon. Friend that this is an annexation plan. Annexation is going to start on 2 February—and there is the map.

**Andrew Murrison:** I thank my hon. Friend for his remarks. Of course we welcomed the release of this plan, which has been worked out over several years. That is not to say in any way that we endorse its contents. Let me emphasise that our position, stated in our manifesto and elsewhere, has not changed. Indeed, that position has been reflected among most of our friends and allies in the region and elsewhere. According to President Macron, "France welcomes President Trump's efforts and will carefully study the peace plan". That is exactly where we stand on this matter, and that is not endorsement.

**Julie Elliott (Labour):** ... Britain has a long history of sometimes standing up for what is right in the world, and sometimes shouting about what is wrong. This plan is wrong. It is an annexation plan. It takes 60% of Palestinian land, it will not lead to peace, and it does not give the Palestinian people rights over their security, their borders or their water, to name just a few. What we need is a true plan to look at a two-state solution. The Government should be shouting that this plan, if implemented, would be a flagrant breach of international law, and would not bring peace to Palestinian people or Israeli people.

**Andrew Murrison:** ... this is a plan. It is not in any way an agreement. We need to get back to negotiation between Israel and Palestine. This peace plan has been a long time in gestation. It is not agreed, and in order for it to work, it must be agreed between Israelis and Palestinians.

**David Jones (Conservative):** ... if "global Britain" is to be anything more than a strapline, it surely means a commitment to an international order that is founded on the rule of law. My right hon. Friend has already said that the British Government would not acquiesce in the illegal annexation of land that is already illegally held. Can he confirm that he has communicated that position to the American Government?

**Andrew Murrison:** Yes. Of course we have done that consistently. We have made our position clear consistently to the Americans and to others, and our position has not changed.

**Gavin Newlands (SNP):** I think that the Minister's telling the only British Palestinian in this place to watch her language is regrettable. He should think about that, and apologise. I was ashamed of the Prime Minister's support for the President's disastrous and self-serving deal of the century. It is disastrous because it sets in statutory stone 50 years of occupation and institutionalised discrimination, and it is self-serving because it distracts from his, and his pal the Israeli Prime Minister's, legal difficulties. ...

**Andrew Murrison:** ... Our position would be that we need to get back round the negotiating table. If that provides a starter for 10 for some, that is a good thing. It has been well thought out; there is no doubt about that. He can doubt the intentions of President Trump if he wishes to, but I would recommend that he reads the document—*[Interruption.]* That is very good, if he has. He will therefore understand, although he might not agree with it, that it is certainly very well thought through. On that basis, it would be a reasonable start for negotiations—*[Interruption.]* We are not going to make any progress at all unless we get round the table and negotiate a solution in this matter.

**Bob Seely (Conservative):** Whether one likes it or not, this plan recognises the new realities, which are that the Palestinians have fewer and fewer friends and that every time there is something with the words "peace" and "plan", they will be offered less and less land. I just want to check with the Minister: are the Government endorsing the plan, or are they simply welcoming a document relating to the middle east that has the words "peace" and "plan" on it?

**Andrew Murrison:** We are welcoming the release of the plan, but we are in no way endorsing it. That is not really for us to do; it is a matter for agreement between the two principal parties affected by it. In this, we appear to be on exactly the same page as all the countries that I have read out, and, it would appear, as the great bulk of the international community.

**Hilary Benn (Labour):** May I urge the Government to have the courage of their convictions and to stand up for what has been the long-standing policy of successive British Governments on the essential elements of a peace plan for the middle east? This proposal fails a number of the tests, and the Minister knows it. Surely he recognises that an attempt to impose something on one of the parties simply cannot be the basis on which negotiations can begin.

**Andrew Murrison:** Yes, and that was essentially the burden of the Foreign Secretary's statement on Tuesday: for this to work, it has to be negotiated between the principal parties. I have to underscore and reiterate the fact that our position has not changed in that regard. That is to say, as the right hon. Gentleman has heard many times before, that we want to see a two-state solution based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital and a proper settlement for refugees.

**Alicia Kearns (Conservative):** Can the Minister confirm that the UK will continue to call for an end to all actions and hostilities that undermine the viability of a two-state solution? Specifically, will he look to invest in track 2 negotiations, which is where the UK's expertise could genuinely make a meaningful difference to securing peace in the region?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... I can tell her that we will go further than that. Although it is not a solution to the situation, which is intolerable, we are putting a huge amount of resource into the Occupied Palestinian Territories right now, through the Palestinian Authority and through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency—UNRWA—in order at least to try to do our bit in stabilising what would otherwise be a completely impossible situation, pending a definitive solution that would restore peace to the middle east.

**Olivia Blake (Labour):** The former Foreign Secretary, now the Prime Minister, had

planned to convene a summit of European and Arab Foreign Ministers with the Trump Administration to lay out their red lines for the Trump Administration's peace plan. Can the Minister of State tell us whether that summit ever took place? If not, why not, and what were our red lines?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... I hope she has been watching closely the reaction of leaders, particularly in the region—from Saudi Arabia, from Egypt, from the UAE and, yes, from Jordan. If she has, she will have noticed that, broadly speaking and in the round, they are supportive of the fact that the plan has now been published and they look forward to its being—possibly, potentially—the start of a negotiated settlement that would deliver on the imperatives that I have just repeated ...

**Steve Double (Conservative):** Will the Minister join me in condemning antisemitism in all its forms, both here in the UK and around the world, particularly when it is veiled in the cloak of anti-Zionism?

**Andrew Murrison:** I will answer that question very succinctly: yes, of course, I condemn antisemitism in all its forms.

**Jim Shannon (DUP):** I welcome the potential for a peace plan, and we must accept that. Christians are being attacked, persecuted and killed across the middle east, so what is being done within the peace plan to assist and help persecuted Christians in the middle east directly?

**Andrew Murrison:** The hon. Gentleman ... will forgive me if I do not answer for the peace plan, because it is not the UK Government's plan. We can welcome its publication, and we can welcome the process that may follow, but we cannot be answerable for the contents of the plan.

**Robert Halfon (Conservative):** The US peace plan calls for a just solution for Jewish refugees expelled from Arab lands—my father's family were forced to leave Libya shortly after the creation of the state of Israel—as well as a fair solution for the Palestinians. The plight of 850,000 Jewish refugees is key to understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Will the Minister welcome the recognition of the historical injustice against hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees?

**Andrew Murrison:** My right hon. Friend is of course absolutely right. The refugee issue is sometimes not necessarily associated with Jewish refugees. I remember reading a good book on this subject called "Uprooted"—he no doubt has a copy—that explains the situation exceptionally well. Of course, any settlement needs to include Jewish refugees as well as Palestinian refugees.

**Stephen Kinnock (Labour):** This is not a peace deal; it is an annexation plan. If another country wanted 60% of our territory and full control of our borders, natural resources and national security, we would not see that as a peace proposal; we would see it as a declaration of war. What will the Government do to enforce international law if annexation goes ahead?

**Andrew Murrison:** This Government uphold international law. Our position on annexation is very clear, and I do not need to repeat it.

**Flick Drummond (Conservative):** I welcome the prospect of negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians and note that the Palestinians are involved almost immediately. Will the Minister confirm that the UK Government's position remains that all existing and future Israeli settlements in occupied territories are illegal under international law?

**Andrew Murrison:** Annexation is clearly illegal. We continue to use every means available to ensure either that it does not happen or, if it does, that there is an appropriate international response. We uphold international law, and the law is perfectly clear.

**Paul Blomfield (Labour):** ... All of us who have visited the west bank know that the illegal settlements are designed to undermine the viability of a Palestinian state. Legitimising those settlements will therefore destroy any hope of a just peace. Can he not say so

unambiguously and reject this plan?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... This is not our plan, we welcome the fact that it has finally been published, and we hope that it may form the basis of negotiations.

**Damian Hinds (Conservative):** ... This plan is clearly not a final outcome, but it is a proposal. It is not a question of whether we endorse it, but progress needs proposals, and we should welcome it for that reason. Will he confirm that the British Government will do everything they can to continue to help facilitate progress based around the principles he set out and the two-state solution?

**Andrew Murrison:** I thank my right hon. Friend for being a voice of reason amidst the clamour. This is not our plan. It is almost as if the UK Government had published it, but this is not a UK Government plan.

**Emily Thornberry:** You welcomed it—

**Andrew Murrison:** We have welcomed the fact that it has been published, as the right hon. Lady knows full well. Since there is a complete stand-off between the parties at the moment, we need to get the parties back around the table with, I hope, the active involvement of America, which has a long history of trying to facilitate and broker agreements between the parties in this particular region. We need to get back to a position in which we can get a negotiated solution. This may well not be the solution, but it may be just about the start of it.

**Marsha De Cordova (Labour):** This so-called peace plan should in no way be welcomed by the UK Government. It legitimises the annexation of Palestinian land and the building of more illegal settlements. As we know, that would breach international law and UN resolutions. I am not sure why the Minister is not condemning the plan, as he rightly should, under the principles of international law. Will he now condemn this peace plan?

**Andrew Murrison:** With respect, the hon. Lady needs to read the peace plan. She will not find within its pages anything to legitimise annexation, which has been spoken about following the publication of this plan. I note that those who made those remarks are now rapidly winding back. I make it clear that the UK Government oppose annexation, which is contrary to international law.

**Tim Loughton (Conservative):** ... we need to get back to negotiation, and the UK has an important role to play in that. ... When I last went to the region, the two-state solution was regarded by many as dead. How does he think a two-state solution is realistic when the Palestinians do not get even part of East Jerusalem and are confined to outside the city walls, and when there are no plans to remove those Jewish settlements that are illegal under the Oslo accords?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... I reiterate the point that this is not our plan, and we are not endorsing it. I suspect he will have gone through this, as I did last night, and made his own annotations about its faults and foibles, and it may well be a long list, but at least the plan is something on the table. At the moment we have no negotiations or talks at all. He will be familiar with both the west bank and Gaza and the terrible situation that people face in those territories, and he will want to do something about it. The only way to do something about it is to get back to political talks and negotiation.

**Jonathan Edwards (Plaid Cymru):** Setting the terms of the plan so far in favour of one side without the participation of the other, and then attacking that side for not participating, is not a negotiation. It is a fait accompli, isn't it?

**Andrew Murrison:** It is not a fait accompli because the parties have not agreed to the plan. The only way there will be agreement is through negotiation, and there are not even talks at the moment.

**Andrew Percy (Conservative):** There will not be any progress unless we accept the reality on the ground, which is that no democratically elected Israeli Government of any complexion will accept the division of Jerusalem or withdraw from the settlement blocs. Whether we like it or not, that is just the reality. May I urge my right hon. Friend to continue

in the mainstream of European opinion, as he and this Government are, and cautiously welcome this as a basis for starting negotiations?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... Our hope, alongside all our European friends and allies it would appear, is that this may be the start of a renewed process. In that light, we have to welcome it.

**Chris Bryant (Labour):** Is there not a danger that all the countries that say they welcome the plan but do not endorse it will start sounding as if they are hypocrites or two-faced? In the end, the only thing that is likely to achieve success in the middle east is if both sides of the argument feel they have an investment in a potential future and an element of hope. If they feel that all the countries of Europe, including the UK, are hypocrites on this, there will not be any hope.

**Andrew Murrison:** ... It is right that the international community, particularly so soon after the publication of this thing, should at least welcome the fact that it has finally been published and urge both parties at least to have a conversation about the future. Ultimately, that is the only way we will get some sort of settlement that brings equanimity to a very troubled region.

**Stephen Crabb (Conservative):** Anybody who has visited the region recently and spoken to Palestinians and Israelis will have been struck by a growing sense of despondency about the peace process, with nothing happening at all. So does my right hon. Friend agree that the value of this intervention from President Trump this week is precisely in creating a catalyst for talks and discussions? Will he join Arab states in encouraging the Palestinian leadership to sit down, get around the table and have a proper discussion about peace?

**Andrew Murrison:** ... I think this is why so many of our friends and partners across the world have been cautious and moderate in the language they have been using about this plan, using it as a prompt to urge both parties to get back around the table to try to find a way forward.

**Margaret Ferrier (SNP):** Does the Minister agree that this proposal, which offers Palestinians barren and inhospitable desert land, and a tunnel between the west bank and Gaza, is a fundamentally unserious one, which has been drafted without Palestinian input? What representation will he make to US counterparts about the urgent need to include Palestinian diplomats in a discussion about their future peace settlement?

**Andrew Murrison:** I am certainly not going to get drawn into the detail of this plan, but I would say that in all the conversations we have had with our US friends and allies, and others, we have made it clear that a solution to this has to be negotiated and agreed by both of the principal parties to this dispute.

**Simon Jupp (Conservative):** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the settlement expansion and the demolition of Palestinian property in the west bank is undermining the peace process?

**Andrew Murrison:** I certainly can do that. We have lost no opportunity to condemn that behaviour. Every time we speak to our Israeli interlocutors we hammer this home: it is completely unacceptable and it must stop.

**Clive Betts (Labour):** Any successful peace plan is likely to need land swaps based on the 1967 borders, but does the Minister accept that those swaps have to be agreed by both parties? When looking at the map that is proposed for a Palestinian entity, does he not see fragmented bits of land, joined in some cases by a very narrow corridors? Does he not see a map that is completely unsustainable and one where those corridors could be cut at any time by Israel at a moment's notice?

**Andrew Murrison:** I certainly agree with the hon. Gentleman that any land swaps need to be agreed—that is self-evident. I am also surprised at how the map looks. It is a challenging map to examine and one has to understand the geography on the ground in some intimate detail in order to get to grips with it. Sometimes simple maps are the best, are they not? I am no cartographer, but the map that has been

produced is quite a challenge to understand.

**Aaron Bell (Conservative):** I share the Minister's position that to welcome something is not to endorse what is in it, and certainly not the aspects that run counter to long-held UK policy. But the plan contains a proposal for a new Palestinian entity to receive up to £50 billion of international investment. Would such a proposal increase the peace and prosperity in the region?

**Andrew Murrison:** I certainly think there is a need for investment in the region, and opening up the region politically is, obviously, key to that—without that it is difficult to see how the lives of Palestinians are going to be lifted. That is going to require a great deal of money, but as we made clear at the Manama conference, with others, money is not the first step in this; the first step has to be political.

**Karen Buck (Labour):** Does the Minister not accept that the imposition of this so-called “plan” is the worst possible context for any form of negotiation? Can he think of another example of an independent and viable state that is an archipelago of non-contiguous lands, where the state has no control over its coastal waters, its airspace or its security? If he cannot think of such an example, why should the Palestinians accept this as the basis for the beginning of talks?

**Andrew Murrison:** The aim is clearly to have a peaceful settlement that enables a two-state solution. Clearly, that has to be a viable state and the hon. Lady has identified some of the characteristics of a viable state. We have not endorsed this, but we have welcomed its publication and we hope it will be the start of negotiations that will lead to a solution that both parties to this dispute can accept.

**James Murray (Labour Co-op):** There is a fundamental point on which the Minister needs to be pushed, which is whether he will make it absolutely clear from the Dispatch Box today that Britain still abides by all the international laws and UN resolutions that have ruled that the annexation of Palestinian land and the building of settlements is illegal, and therefore must be condemned, not legitimised in the form of this plan.

**Andrew Murrison:** We stand by the existing UN Security Council resolutions, of which there have been 100 since 1946. They remain extant until they are replaced by others.

**Diana Johnson (Labour):** The Minister has said that it is a well-thought-through plan; how, then, can he make the case for the fact that the Palestinians have not been involved in the plan at all? How can that really be well thought through? Is that really the case?

**Andrew Murrison:** Well, I think it has been well thought through. It has been three years in the making and is extensive. The hon. Lady makes her own point in her own way. It is not a UK Government plan, but we do welcome its publication as the potential start for negotiation between the principal parties.

**Clive Efford (Labour):** To welcome something that is not going to go anywhere is the equivalent of doing nothing. Surely, given this country's historical involvement in this part of the world, the Government should convey to the United States, as a critical friend, the message that the plan has no prospect of going anywhere. It is not going to bring the Palestinians to the table. We should be reiterating our policy and making that clear.

**Andrew Murrison:** What I think we should be doing is encouraging both parties to get around the negotiating table and talk, which they are not doing at the moment.

**Jonathan Reynolds (Labour Co-op):** How can a plan that has not included one side, offers no concessions to one side and proposes as a destination a state without any of the real aspects of sovereignty as we understand it, be the basis for meaningful negotiations? Does this plan not risk prolonging the conflict? It will play into the hands of extremists who say that violence is the only way forward. I have to say that it is depressing to see a British Minister reduced to reading out what other countries have said, rather than sticking up for British policy, the British national interest and a real and meaningful peace.

**Andrew Murrison:** The UK is not the only country with an interest in the region. Sometimes, we have an overblown sense of our importance. It is important that we

work with partners towards a negotiated settlement. We are one of many. The comments that we have seen over the past 36 hours from our friends and allies in the region and further field are very much in line with the remarks made by the Foreign Secretary on Tuesday. I think that is a comfortable place to be.

**Thangam Debonnaire (Labour):** The Minister spoke of maps and the difficulty of understanding the proposed map, which does not make clear the extent of the water crisis that already exists in the occupied territories and that in my view—I have seen other coverage of this—will only be exacerbated, with the implications for the Jordan valley. Will the Minister comment on whether he thinks the plan, which I know is not his, will either help or hinder the water crisis in the occupied territories?

**Andrew Murrison:** I thank the hon. Lady for her question, because she is absolutely right: in the context of this particular piece of geography, water is key. To be fair, if I can be, about the plan, it is called a “conceptual map”, which to me means that it is not a definitive map. It seems to me that in any talks that may now happen, water is going to be absolutely key to what eventually transpires ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-30/debates/EECA3331-80B3-45C5-B823-95564EE73495/MiddleEastPeacePlan>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Jerusalem: Palestinians

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [6753]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department can take to prevent the (a) eviction of Palestinians from and (b) demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem.

**Andrew Murrison:** We are gravely concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel’s commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, most recently on 17 December 2019. We call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. We support Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or eviction through our legal aid programme. This helps residents challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system and remain in their homes.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-22/6753/>

### Palestinians: Schools

**John Spellar (Labour) [7115]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 272116, if he will place a copy in the Library of the inception report which formed the basis of the independent review of Palestinian Authority textbooks.

**Andrew Murrison:** The UK commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute to produce an inception report. I can confirm that we will place a copy of this inception report in the Library and I will write to the Right Honourable member once this has been done.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7115/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-02/272116/>

### **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [7145] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Official Development Assistance is not allocated by the Palestinian Authority to the families of people who have been involved in terrorist activity.

**Andrew Murrison:** No UK aid is used for payments to prisoners or their families or the Martyrs Fund. DFID has robust measures in place to ensure UK Aid reaches only its intended beneficiaries. UK aid to the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) health and education sectors is channelled through the EU Palestinian-European Socio-Economic Management Assistance Mechanism. Our money goes into a dedicated bank account before being paid to individuals who have been carefully vetted in advance. The bank account is only used for UK aid. Independent auditors check that the money paid out from this bank account only went to the vetted individuals after every disbursement.

UK assistance to the PA for water and energy will be through the World Bank Partnership for Infrastructure Development in the West Bank and Gaza Multi Donor Trust Fund. UK aid will flow from the trust fund to dedicated accounts that will be managed by the PA in accordance with rules established by the World Bank, and be subject to the review of external financial auditors to provide assurance that the expenditure of funds was only on agreed programme activities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7145/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-release-of-us-proposals-for-middle-east-peace>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**John Howell (Conservative)** [7602] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of Fatah's recent celebrations marking 55 years since their first terrorist attack against Israel on the prospects of securing a peaceful two-state solution.

**Andrew Murrison:** The UK strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and incitement to violence, which are a significant barrier to achieving a negotiated solution. There can be no justification for such acts of violence. Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that act as obstacles to peace and undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-24/7602/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Sharon Hodgson (Labour)** [8197] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans he has for the People for Peaceful Change programme after 31 March 2020.

**Andrew Murrison:** Our people to people programme aims to bring together Israelis and Palestinians. This is aimed at having a positive impact on both communities and at building understanding between people on both sides of the conflict. The programme is due to be completed by March 2020. It includes a research

component that is looking more broadly at the impact of people to people work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to build the evidence base in this area, which is presently limited. We will evaluate the evidence which will inform future decisions on work in this area.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8197/>

Information about the programme referred to above can be read at <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300366>

### Developing Countries: Education

**Harriett Baldwin (Conservative)** [7204] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 3741 on Developing Countries: Education, how much of the £7.08 billion was spent bilaterally in each year from 2009 to 2018; and what the top 10 countries were in which that funding was spent.

**Andrew Stephenson:** Distribution of the £7.08 billion spent bilaterally on education between 2009 and 2018 is listed below:

2009	£523m		2014	£820m
2010	£482m		2015	£651m
2011	£649m		2016	£961m
2012	£620m		2017	£785m
2013	£905m		2018	£686m

These amounts include contributions which cannot be disaggregated by country, some of which is channelled through multilateral programmes such as the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait.

Top ten country spend over this time period is as below:

1. Pakistan
2. India
3. Bangladesh
4. Malawi
5. China
6. Nigeria
7. Ghana
8. Ethiopia
9. West Bank & Gaza Strip
10. South Africa

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7204/>

## House of Lords Oral Answers

### Middle East Peace Plan

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon** repeated the first answer given by Andrew Murrison to the “Urgent Question” that has been included in the “House of Commons Oral Answers” section above.

**Lord Tuncliffe (Labour):** My Lords, the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East is a two-state solution negotiated with the consent of both sides. I note that the Government have welcomed this proposal, but surely it is striking that it has been published after consultation with only one of those states. If we are to find a diplomatic resolution, the Palestinian Authority must be involved in the process. Does the Minister agree that the involvement and consent of Palestine is vital for any agreement?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... the UK’s “view remains that the best way to

achieve peace is through substantive peace talks between parties, leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on the 1967 borders, with agreed land swaps” and “Jerusalem as the shared capital”.

**Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, this plan goes contrary to international law. It is an annexation plan and would give the Palestinians no control over their borders, water or security, no port and no airport—to mention just a few points. Yet the Government’s press release—I notice the Minister has added a few words to the end of it—welcomed this as “a serious proposal” that should be given “genuine and fair consideration”. How can the Government claim that in leaving the EU we will be better placed to fight for the rules-based international order and human rights? If annexation goes ahead, what will the Government do to protect international law?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, the noble Baroness suggested that I added certain lines. Just for clarity I should say that, as she knows from her own experience, that is not how government works. I have stated the Government’s position, which again restated that, as far as we are concerned, “the best way to achieve peace is through substantive peace talks”.

She is right to raise concerns about annexation. We have always retained and sustained, and I reiterate again, that any annexation of any lands would be against and contrary to international law.

**Lord Grocott (Labour):** Can the Minister confirm absolutely clearly that this proposal involves further annexation of Palestinian land? Is there any other part of the world where the Government sanction annexation of neighbouring territories or even countenance it? Further, although he repeats the commitment to a two-state solution, as all Ministers of all parties have, can he confirm that this latest proposal manifestly makes any possibility of a two-state solution almost impossible?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... This proposal has been put forward by the United States. Like any peace proposal or peace plan, it is worth consideration. It has been described as a first step. I agree with the noble Lord that, as I have said before and continue to say, any settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians has to be credible, has to be accepted and must involve consideration by both sides. We hope the current proposal on the table means that the Palestinians will also seek to engage on this, but as I have reiterated, from our perspective this is a first step.

**Lord Lamont of Lerwick (Conservative):** ...some press reports have said that the proposals actually double the land available to the Palestinians. Where is this extra land coming from? Is it just the bits in the desert bordering Egypt? Secondly, do the Government actually approve of the annexation of the Jordan Valley, thus cutting Palestine off from Jordan?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I will not go into the specific details of the plan. I have stated what the UK’s position is. On the reported annexation and the plan for the Jordan Valley, the position of Her Majesty’s Government is very clear: the unilateral annexation of any lands is against international law.

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean (Labour):** My Lords, the Minister said that he hopes this will be the basis for taking forward discussions. Has there been any indication whatever from the Palestinians that they are willing to take forward discussions on this basis?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I can share with the noble Baroness that my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary spoke with President Abbas on these proposals earlier this week. I understand that my right honourable friend the Minister for the Middle East is also meeting the Palestinian representative. I hope that they will engage with the proposals. ... we hope that this plan is a first step and will engage all communities towards the final objective of two viable states.

**Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, is it not difficult for the

Government to maintain what is essentially a position of neutrality on this matter given our responsibilities under, for example, the Balfour Declaration? The truth is that this is neither a peace plan nor a two-state solution. It is a fait accompli in favour of Mr Netanyahu, as demonstrated by his public response to it in the White House. It is an annexation not just of land on which illegal settlements have been based, nor of the Jordan Valley, but of the Golan Heights, all of which is contrary to international law. Why do the Government not give a robust response in favour of the principles of international law—the kind of response we gave when Mr Putin annexed the Crimea?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, on the point about annexation, the noble Lord mentioned the Golan Heights. When the United States made that statement in support of Israel, we made our position clear: we are against annexation, which is against international law. I reiterate that annexation of any territory unilaterally is against international law.

**Lord Polak (Conservative):** My Lords, it is a strange phenomenon that so many noble Lords are quick to reject the proposals. What do they know better than the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Bahrainis and the UAE, who have all welcomed the proposals? That is a promising sign, but most notable is the statement from Qatar. So often in the rejectionist camp, Qatar is now calling on the Palestinians and Israelis to sit down together. What efforts is my noble friend making with the Palestinian leadership to encourage them to sit down and talk rather than reject the initiative as, sadly, they have done too often in history?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, my noble friend is right that certain parts of the Arab world share the objective of the plan's being a first step. Countries have made statements according to how they view it. On the issue of engagement with the Palestinians, and I have said, we hope that the Palestinians engage on the first step of the proposals. We are making efforts. As I said earlier, my right honourable friend has spoken to President Abbas, and we will meet the Palestinian representative to London later today.

**Lord Turnberg (Non-affiliated):** My Lords, it would be no exaggeration to say that this proposal is controversial, but it is certainly not the endpoint. It is not even the beginning of the end, nor the end of the beginning. It being on the table might be the beginning of the beginning of a process. Surely both sides can discuss it, at the very least. Does the Minister agree that objecting from the outset, as the Palestinians have done, is not terribly helpful?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... It is important that there is something on the table. Countries across the region have sought to give due consideration and, as I said, this is not the UK plan but an American plan. The United Kingdom position, of a viable two-state solution with a shared capital in Jerusalem, has not changed.

**Lord Pickles (Conservative):** My Lords, surely Her Majesty's Government should be not neutral on this issue but on the side of peace. The period since the Oslo accords has been littered with missed opportunities, generally involving the Palestinian Authority's refusal to engage. Everyone in this House with any influence on the Palestinian Authority should urge it to engage in this. A large part of the Arab world is behind this, and Her Majesty's Government should do their best to facilitate this important peace process.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I assure my noble friend that we are on the side of peace. I share his belief in the importance of all parties engaging. We are doing our utmost to ensure that the Palestinians engage with this proposal, but as I said, it is an American plan, which we believe to be a first step.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-30/debates/DC9BBD5D-EC7C-41D0-998B-C64F8E20EE63/MiddleEastPeacePlan>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Palestinian Prisoners

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL589] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that Palestinian child prisoners were relocated to a prison in Israel without the presence of adult representatives on 13 January, in contravention of international law.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain concerned by the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities outlining our concerns around Israel's treatment of Palestinian children in detention. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv did so most recently on 16 December 2019. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention. We welcome the recent reduction in the number of detainees aged 12 to 14 years old and the establishment of separate juvenile courts.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL589/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL590] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about that government designating the killing of a Palestinian woman as an act of terrorism perpetrated by Israeli settlers but not allowing that woman's family the compensation that is paid to victims of terrorism.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians and urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and bring those responsible to justice. We have also stressed the importance of Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL590/>

### Gaza

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL591] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that unarmed men leaving Gaza through gaps in the separation fence to seek work in Israel have been shot at with live and rubber ammunition.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the way Israel Defense Forces police protests and the border areas, including the use of live ammunition. We did so most recently at the UN Security Council briefing and consultations on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 November. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL591/>

*The statement at the UN Security Council, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-importance-of-israel-and-palestine-living-in-peace>

## Gaza

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL655] Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the arrangement under discussion between the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Gaza and the Palestinian Authority, to make Mohammed Dahlan the leader of the government in Gaza, and so partially lift the closure on the Strip by Egypt and Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of media reports that suggest some coordination between Hamas and Egypt in order to tackle the ongoing electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip. We are clear that there needs to be a long-term solution to the situation in Gaza, which results in the Palestinian Authority resuming control and restoring effective and accountable governance for the benefit of the Gazan people.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-07-10/HL655/>

## Hamas Charter

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL656] Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the new Hamas Charter of 1 May 2017, in particular paragraphs 16 and 17.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware Hamas has released a policy document. Our position on Hamas remains clear, they must renounce violence, recognise Israel and accept previously signed agreements. Hamas must make credible movement towards these conditions, which remain the benchmark against which its intentions should be judged. We call on those in the region with influence over Hamas to encourage Hamas to take these steps.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-07-10/HL656/>

*The Hamas Charter, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-2017-document-full>

## Gaza: Seaport

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL657] Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel concerning their suggestion that a seaport be built in Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not had any discussions with the Government of Israel on this issue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-07-10/HL657/>

## Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL658] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to government of Israel about the reported imprisonment and torture of (1) Mays Abu Gosh, and (2) Samir Arbid, in Israeli custody.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we are aware of the cases of Samir Arbid and Mays Abu Gosh, we have not made representations to the government of Israel about these specific cases. The British Government has concerns about mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and about Israel's respect for its obligations as an occupying power, under applicable international law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have raised the treatment of Palestinians in Israeli prisons with the Israeli authorities, most recently on 16 December. We emphasise the importance of treating prisoners and detainees humanely and in accordance with international law.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL659] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) use of, and (2) amount of land covered by, military firing zones in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; and what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the eviction and criminalisation of long standing residents who live in those areas.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to be gravely concerned by the impact of military firing zones in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, most recently on 17 December 2019. The UK and international partners will continue to call bilaterally, and in international fora, for Israel to abandon demolition plans entirely, and instead provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-21/HL659/>

### **Israel: Peace Proposals**

**Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat)** [HL616] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the governments of (1) Israel, and (2) the United States, in relation to proposals by the US that the Golan Heights should be annexed by Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have been clear to both our Israeli and US counterparts that the UK views the Golan Heights as territory occupied by Israel. The UK did not recognise Israel's annexation in 1981 and we have no plans to change our position. On 26 March 2019, following the US Presidential Proclamation recognising that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel, we reiterated our firm position on this matter at a meeting of the UN Security Council. Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law. Any declaration of a unilateral border change goes against the foundation of the rules-based international order and the UN Charter.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-21/HL616/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/latest-rocket-attacks-in-israel-humanitarian-situation-in-gaza-and-the-status-of-the-golan-heights>

## **British Embassy Tel Aviv**

### **HRH Prince of Wales visits Israel**

... HRH started his visit meeting President Reuven Rivlin ... The two leaders planted a tree together in the garden of the residence.

Later in the day, HRH visited the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where he met with two Holocaust survivors ...

During the visit, the prince saw the two reconstructed synagogues from three continents

featured in the Synagogue Route and viewed the collection of Hanukkah lamps from Jewish communities all over the world, as well as the Shrine of the Book that houses the Dead Sea Scrolls.

HRH later carried a speech at the International Holocaust Forum at Yad Vashem ...

Prince Charles said he was pleased to return to Israel, noting Israeli innovation in the fields of medicine, research and science and the flourishing links between Britain and Israel in these areas.

During the event, HRH, who was engaged in the past few decades in actions for a sustainable global future, was presented with a unique demonstration of four innovative technological solutions in the fields of healthcare and sustainability ...

The demonstrations showcased Israel as a leader in innovation and the strong strategic partnership between the UK and Israel in the fields of innovative technology.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hrh-prince-of-wales-visits-israel>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Israel/OPT: UN expert alarmed by 'lopsided' Trump plan, says will entrench occupation**

The Trump plan on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a lopsided proposal entirely in favour of one side to the conflict, said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

"What the Trump plan offers is a one and a half state solution," Lynk said. "This Potemkin state – lacking most of the commonly understood attributes of sovereignty beyond the right to fly its flag and issue stamps – would become an entirely new entity in the annals of modern political science.

"This is not a recipe for a just and durable peace but rather endorses the creation of a 21st century Bantustan in the Middle East. The Palestinian statelet envisioned by the American plan would be scattered archipelagos of non-contiguous territory completely surrounded by Israel, with no external borders, no control over its airspace, no right to a military to defend its security, no geographic basis for a viable economy, no freedom of movement and with no ability to complain to international judicial forums against Israel or the United States."

The Special Rapporteur expressed alarm that the plan announced this week by the United States would discard virtually every major principle of international law governing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "This plan would turn the rules-based international order on its head and would permanently entrench the tragic subjugation of the Palestinians that is already existing on the ground," he said. "The abandonment of these legal principles threatens to unravel the long-standing international consensus on the conflict, favouring realpolitik over rights, power over justice and conflict management over conflict resolution." A central aspect of the Trump plan would allow Israel to annex around 30 percent of the West Bank. "The annexation of territory is strictly prohibited by international law, beginning with the 1945 Charter of the United Nations," Lynk said. "Since 1967, the UN Security Council has proclaimed this fundamental principle on eight occasions respecting the Israeli occupation, most recently in December 2016, when it reaffirmed: 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.'"

The Special Rapporteur urged the international community to clearly condemn the plan's green light to allow Israel to annex Palestinian territory. "This unilateral act undermines the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and it threatens to drag the world back to darker times, when conquest was acceptable, borders could be redrawn and territorial integrity was regularly undermined," he said.

As well, the Special Rapporteur deplored the Trump plan's proposal to legalize the 240

Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. "International law has expressly forbidden the transfer of the civilian population of an occupying power. The United Nations Security Council has condemned the Israeli settlements as a flagrant violation under international law, and the 1998 Rome Statute has deemed them to be purported war crimes."

The Trump plan's proposals for Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees are equally distressing, said Lynk. "The United States now recognizes the conquest and illegal annexation of East Jerusalem, which remains occupied territory under international law, as embedded in scores of United Nations resolutions."

Equally, the Trump plan's proposal to unilaterally abrogate the long-recognized right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Israel if they choose, and to annul any obligation by Israel to compensate these refugees for their material and moral losses, is an evasion of well-established international principles going back to 1948.

"Nothing in the Trump plan alters the continuing prevalence of the laws of occupation, the human rights of the Palestinians under occupation, and the absolute obligation on the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve a just, equitable and durable solution on the basis of equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis alike," said the Special Rapporteur. "International law remains the Northern Star, the only guide to a sustainable peace."

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25513&LanglD=E>

## United Nations

### **UNRWA Launches 2020 Budget Appeal for US\$ 1.4 Billion**

The Acting Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Christian Saunders ... called for a minimum of US\$ 1.4 billion to fund the Agency's essential services and assistance, including life-saving humanitarian aid and priority projects, for 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees across the Middle East for the year 2020. ...

"The immense support that UNRWA received at the General Assembly in December of last year was an overwhelming validation of the Agency and of our mandate," said Mr. Saunders. "We now need our donors and partners to match that support with the necessary funding to allow us to provide Palestine refugees with protection and those critical services considered a basic human right. In return, we commit to upholding the values and principles enshrined in the UN charter and to ensuring that every penny of public funding we receive is used wisely, properly and effectively." ...

"Until there is a just and durable solution to the plight of Palestine refugees, we are the only agency able to provide the type of essential services that Palestine refugees are entitled to. I humbly call on our donors and partners to strongly support UNRWA this year; your investment is very well-placed, it is an investment in a beleaguered people deserving of your continued support and it is an investment in the region's stability," said Mr. Saunders. ...

**To read the press release see**

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-launches-2020-budget-appeal-us-14-billion>

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### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Diplomatic Service: Religious Freedom**

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [7134] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure the implementation of its revised toolkit on freedom of religion or belief by embassies.

**Heather Wheeler:** We have developed a workshop that helps our Posts to implement the toolkit on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The toolkit was developed with top legal and academic experts and is intended to support FCO human rights desk officers as they promote this human right in practice, and respond to violations of it. This workshop has been successfully trialled with colleagues at our Embassy in Bahrain. We are looking for further opportunities to run the workshop and other means of encouraging posts to make active use of the toolkit.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7134/>

*The toolkit referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/561516/Freedom\\_of\\_Religion\\_or\\_Belief\\_Toolkit\\_-\\_2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561516/Freedom_of_Religion_or_Belief_Toolkit_-_2016.pdf)

#### **Religious Freedom**

**Laurence Robertson (Conservative)** [8136] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts throughout the world on the protection of religious freedoms in their countries; and if he will make a statement.

**Heather Wheeler:** Defending and promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a longstanding human rights priority for the British Government. Through our diplomatic network, we lobby governments for changes in laws and practices that discriminate against individuals on the basis of their religion or belief. Over recent months, ministers and diplomats have raised FoRB concerns in many countries both bilaterally and through multilateral institutions such as the UN, EU and OSCE. Our Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has held Freedom of Religion or Belief roundtables, including in Lebanon. He met the Polish Foreign Minister on 19 January at the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ministerial meeting to reaffirm their commitments to defend FoRB for all. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB has visited Bahrain and the Holy See and has held discussions with the Ambassadors of a number of countries in London and also with a number of other FoRB Special Envoys to see how they can work more closely together to advance FoRB. Ministers have also pressed for the rights of those unfairly detained, including calling for the immediate release of all Baha'is in Iran and Yemen imprisoned for their beliefs.

We have encouraged our diplomatic missions to consider what they can do to engage their host governments where human rights violations and abuses relating to freedom of religion or belief are of concern. We will also continue to work with faith leaders and civil society organisations to tackle discrimination and persecution and to promote the value and benefit - to individuals, communities and wider society - of Freedom of Religion or Belief and mutual respect.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8136/>

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## Other Relevant Information

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

#### **Stop this story – recommit to countering antisemitism**

It was 75 years ago today that soldiers liberated the Auschwitz extermination camp. A poignant time to learn from the horrors of the past and build for a better future. ...

Tragically, 75 years on, Jews in Europe continue to face persistent and widespread antisemitism.

[FRA's survey findings](#) reveal entrenched antisemitism across society, particularly online. It leaves many Jews feeling unsafe. Many avoid Jewish sites. And a high proportion consider emigrating because they do not feel safe as Jews in their own countries.

Antisemitism is so deep-rooted in society that regular harassment is part of everyday life for many Jews.

Antisemitism is commonplace, but many do not report incidents to the police or any other organisation.

Why? Simply because they feel nothing will change.

This sad but telling fact underlines the urgent need for policymakers at all levels to recommit to preventing and combating antisemitism. ...

We all need to work together to find long-lasting effective solutions that will stamp out antisemitism.

FRA commits to continue to support these efforts by working alongside the EU, its Member States and Jewish communities and organisations.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2020/stop-story-recommit-countering-antisemitism>

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/assisteddying.html>

#### **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

#### **Education (Assemblies) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/educationassemblies.html>

#### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageandcivilpartnershipminimumage.html>

### Scottish Parliament

#### **Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education** (closing date 27 March 2020)  
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf>

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