



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Charity Commission

Decision: Charity Inquiry: Jewish Seminary for Girls

... The charity was previously part of the Commission's 'double defaulters' class inquiry for failing to submit annual accounts ...

The inquiry ... identified concerns relating to a loan agreement ... between the charity and a company ... that was connected to Mr Kahn, a former trustee.

This loan agreement led to £472,394 being paid to the company. At this time, the charity had no other assets other than £816 held in cash ...

The Commission found that the loan agreement was signed by Mr Royde on behalf of the charity, and by Mr Kahn on behalf of the company, who was the sole shareholder of the company at the time. The charity's constitution requires three trustees for a quorum, therefore, as the loan agreement was decided by only one trustee, the decision was inquorate and a breach of the charity's constitution. ...

The inquiry found that Mr Kahn received unauthorised trustee benefit from the loan to the company by receiving £472,394 at a time when the inquiry is doubtful that it would have secured a loan for this amount on such favourable terms from a high street lender. Whilst there has been no loss to the charity, the inquiry found that due to the terms of the loan, the decision was not made in the best interests of the charity. ...

The former trustees informed the inquiry that the capital repayments from the company had been paid directly to Rabbi A and Rabbi B ... to meet the costs of delivering lectures ...

The inquiry found Rabbi A was a connected party, as he was related to one of the former trustees. ... this amounted to unauthorised benefit to a party connected to one of the former trustees. ...

The inquiry found that the former trustees failed to ensure proper financial controls were in place and there was inadequate record keeping which exposed the charity's property to unnecessary risk and failed to prevent substantial unauthorised trustee benefits. ...

The Commission concluded that the decision to make a loan of £472,394 to a company connected to one of the former trustees was made in breach of trust, was not in the best interests of the charity and has put the charity's main asset at unnecessary risk. Furthermore, the majority of the capital payments, which were due to the charity, have

been paid to Rabbi A to provide lectures that the trustees were unable to evidence took place, and which in themselves constituted unauthorised connected party transactions. ...

To read the full report see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-inquiry-jewish-seminary-for-girls/charity-inquiry-jewish-seminary-for-girls>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza: Israel

Andrew Selous (Conservative) [26824] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken in relation to the shooting of civilians across the Gaza border by the Israel Defence Forces; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly: The Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians killed by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We have repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces police the border areas, including the use of live ammunition. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest. We also encourage them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We did so most recently at the UN Security Council on 21 January.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-09/26824/>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/peace-for-both-israelis-and-palestinians-is-long-overdue>

Imports: Israel

Christian Matheson (Labour) [26892] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the (a) proportion of goods imported to the UK from Israel that were produced in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories in 2019 and (b) value of those goods.

Jesse Norman: The information requested is not available.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection of statistics on goods imported to and exported from the United Kingdom, including (separately) those to and from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. However, HMRC do not produce estimates or hold data on goods imported into the UK from Israel that were produced in Israeli settlements of the occupied Palestinian Territories.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-09/26892/>

Imports: Occupied Territories

Christian Matheson (Labour) [26891] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value of goods imported to the UK from the occupied Palestinian territories was in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, and (c) 2019.

Jesse Norman: HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection of statistics on goods imported to and exported from the United Kingdom, which are

published on a monthly basis as the Overseas Trade Statistics.

The value (GB pounds sterling) of goods imported into the UK from the occupied Palestinian Territories in calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019 is as follows:

UK Goods Imports From:	2017	2018	2019
Occupied Palestinian Territories	£1,246,795	£1,713,290	£1,794,947

Source: HMRC – UK Overseas Trade Statistics (extracted from uktradeinfo.com).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-09/26891/>

Israel: Palestinians

James Murray (Labour Co-op) [26994] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 13562 on Politics and Government, whether he has made an assessment of the adherence of the US Administration's framework for a Palestinian state to the statehood criteria of (a) ability to exercise effective control of territory and (b) independence in their external relations.

James Cleverly: The United Kingdom supports Palestinians in realising self-determination through a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. We hope that the US initiative may lead to a first step on the road back to negotiations. It is through such negotiations that the parties will determine the specifics of how the aim of two states is to be achieved.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-09/26994/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-06/13562/>

Israel: Overseas Trade

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [27605] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps the Government has taken to support bilateral trade with Israel.

Conor Burns: Her Majesty's Government is deeply committed to promoting the UK's trade and business ties with Israel, a vital element of the flourishing partnership between the two countries. In 2019, the total value of trade between the UK and Israel was £4.7 billion, an increase of 8.3% since 2018, and we want to promote even greater bilateral trade.

The UK and Israel signed the Trade Continuity and Partnership Agreement in February 2019, which keeps trade open following the UK's exit from the EU. During a call between the Prime Minister and Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 6 February 2020, the two leaders agreed to continue to strengthen our bilateral relationship following the UK's departure from the EU, including in areas such as trade.

To that end Department for International Trade officials are working with their Israeli counterparts to explore options to host a future UK-Israel Trade and Investment conference in London to identify new opportunities for trade and collaboration, especially around the financial services and technology sectors.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-10/27605/>

Gaza: Non-governmental Organisations

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [27657] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2019 to Question 247112 on Gaza:

Non-governmental Organisations, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Government's support of the UN Access Coordination Unit in helping that organisation to achieve its objective of facilitating humanitarian access for UN and NGO workers to and from Gaza.

James Cleverly: The UK supports the UN's Access Coordination Unit (ACU), which works to ensure humanitarian access to Gaza for UN and NGO workers by intervening when Israeli travel permits are delayed. We assess that the ACU has been instrumental in facilitating such access, with more than 1500 humanitarian personnel receiving assistance between April 2019 and September 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-10/27657/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-24/247112/>

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Other Relevant Information

Office of the Chief Rabbi

Extraordinary times call upon us to take extraordinary measures

For several weeks, we have been seeking responsible and creative ways to ensure that our Shuls, the cornerstones of our communities, could continue to function as the anchors of Jewish life. Yet, it is now clear from the Government's latest guidance, that congregational activity of any kind, including those of religious communities, poses a significant danger to the vulnerable and will serve to hasten the spread of the virus.

With this in mind, our Torah obligation to protect the sanctity of life transcends all other considerations. Therefore, with much pain and with the heaviest of hearts, in consultation with the Dayanim of the London and Manchester Batei Din, I have concluded that we have a Halachic imperative to suspend all activity at all of our Synagogues until further notice. This includes on-site and off-site prayer services, educational, cultural and social meetings and activities for all ages. The Dayanim and I will now be praying all weekday, Shabbat and Yom Tov services by ourselves at home.

This inevitably raises many questions about how we sustain Jewish communal life, particularly with Pesach approaching. Further specific guidance will follow soon. For now, let us comfort the bereaved and pray for the recovery of the sick. Let us guarantee that the physical distance that this virus creates between us will be bridged through compassion and kindness. And let us all resolve to play our part in overcoming this pandemic by carefully following medical advice and public health guidelines. ...

<https://twitter.com/chief Rabbi/status/1239992151628558337/photo/1>

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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>

Report Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-17/debates/0A5B4680-8185-4007-8F06-A4B6464A0ED5/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-17/debates/0A5B4680-8185-4007-8F06-A4B6464A0ED5/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill(HL))

Education (Assemblies) Bill

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

Genocide Determination Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.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

**** closes in 9 days**

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>

Hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland: an independent review (closing date 31 March 2020)

<https://www.hatecrimereviewni.org.uk/sites/hcr/files/media-files/Consultation%20Paper%20Feb%202020.pdf>

Electing a more diverse Assembly (closing date 22 April 2020)

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=389>

Amendments to the organ donation regulations (Wales) (closing date 30 April 2020)

<https://gov.wales/amendments-organ-donation-regulations>

Regulating Independent Educational Institutions (closing date 8 May 2020)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/regulating-independent-education-institutions/>

Protecting places of worship (closing date 10 May 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

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