



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Public Health England

New advice for safe funerals after discussions with faith leaders

Faith leaders have been consulted and worked with PHE to ensure that communities, the funeral industry and the NHS are protected. ...

To help reduce the risk of spreading the infection, funeral directors and faith leaders are advised to restrict the number of mourners who attend funerals, so a safe distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) can be maintained between individuals. Only members of the deceased person's household or close family members should attend funerals. Any individual displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend. Those who do attend will need to adhere to social distancing at all times, including when travelling to and from the funeral.

In addition, the guidance advises that since there is a small but real risk of transmission from the body of a deceased person, mourners are strongly advised not to take part in any rituals or practices that bring them into close contact with the body of a person who has died from or with symptoms of COVID-19. Practices that involve close personal contact with the deceased should only be carried out using the correct personal protective equipment (PPE). ...

Mohamed Omer, board member of Gardens of Peace, said: We welcome the new guidance from PHE and would like to reiterate that it is essential that we maintain social distancing at all times, including at funerals. We should also severely curtail the numbers who attend the funerals so as to ensure that staff working at burial sites and others are protected. If circumstances dictate then we should contemplate, as hard as it may seem, no attendees at funeral time. It is also welcoming to note that we can perform our ritual wash as long as we observe the necessary precautions of wearing the right PPE and follow the process included in this guideline. ...

Marie van der Zyl, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said: It is a central issue for the Jewish community that we honour and respect our departed loved ones while protecting the living. Our community introduced new strictures on handling the deceased in order to do this immediately after the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

This thorough and considerate guidance from government supports the Jewish community's safeguarding actions to date, and we are grateful to the government for their

continued efforts to preserve lives and community life. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-advice-for-safe-funerals-after-discussions-with-faith-leaders>

Guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Palestinians: Schools

Mary Robinson (Conservative) [31574] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with the Palestinian Authority on the Authority's internal review of the content of its national curriculum after reports of antisemitic and extremist content.

James Cleverly: The UK government is deeply concerned about the allegations of incitement in the Palestinian Authority's school textbooks.

The International Development Secretary reiterated our concerns in a call to the Palestinian Authority's Education Minister just last month, where they also discussed the Palestinian Authority's own textbook review.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-18/31574/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Palestinians: Textbooks

Lord Pickles (Conservative) [HL2550] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK aid supports the Palestinian Authority's production of school textbooks.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK does not fund textbooks in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our education funding to the PA contributes to the salaries of carefully vetted education public servants, including teachers. Following allegations of incitement in the Palestinian Authority's school textbooks, the UK secured agreement from our European partners to lead an independent review of the textbooks, which is underway. We expect interim findings by June 2020 and full findings later in the year.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-12/HL2550/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL2656] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have (1) made, and (2) intend to make, to the government of Israel about reports of the killing of a 15 year old Palestinian, and injuries to others, by Israeli forces at Jabal al-Arma.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made representations on this specific incident, the Government is very concerned at the high numbers of

Palestinians, including children, killed by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the West Bank and Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-16/HL2656/>

West Bank: Roads

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL2657] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have (1) made, and (2) intend to make, to the government of Israel about reports of the construction of a Palestinian-only road to connect the northern and southern parts of the West Bank, with the reported aim of separating Israelis and Palestinians driving in that area.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on these reports, we consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of a future Palestinian state. We urge Israel to halt its settlement expansion, and related activities which hasten the fragmentation of the occupied West Bank. Settlements are contrary to international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations. We want to see a contiguous West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as part of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-16/HL2657/>

Israel: Occupied Territories

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL2658] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 March (HL1981), what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about that country's compliance with international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have a regular dialogue with the government of Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa stressed the importance of Israel complying with international law during a meeting with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 12 March.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-16/HL2658/>

The answer number referred to above does not relate to this subject.

Baroness Tonge may be referring to HL1898 which was answered on the 9 March, and which does relate to this subject. It can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-25/HL1898/>

Israeli Settlements: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL2660] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by Hana Ashrawi, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee, that the government of Israel is allowing armed settlers to "terrorise" Palestinians in Judea and Samaria.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made a specific assessment of these remarks, we condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-16/HL2660/>

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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>

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>

Equalities and Human Rights Committee, Stage 1 Report

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdneq.azureedge.net/published/EHRiC/2020/3/31/Civil-Partnership--Scotland--Bill-Stage-1-Report/EHRiCS052020R1.pdf>

**** Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/114929.aspx>

Bill as introduced

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill66S052020.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill66S052020.pdf)

Explanatory Notes

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill66ENS052020.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill66ENS052020.pdf)

Financial Memorandum

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill66FMS052020.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill66FMS052020.pdf)

Policy Memorandum

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill66PMS052020.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill66PMS052020.pdf)

Delegated Powers Memorandum

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill66DPMS052020_\(1\).pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Coronavirus%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill66DPMS052020_(1).pdf)

Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Not Required Declaration

<https://tinyurl.com/wkyzs5m>

Equality Impact Assessment

<https://tinyurl.com/qt39cfw>

Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment

<https://tinyurl.com/yxxuj4sc>

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

<https://tinyurl.com/wzzvyqx>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes today**

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