



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Third Sector: Coronavirus

**Jane Stevenson (Conservative)** [90247] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support is available for (a) charities and (b) religious organisations to help them respond to the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Whittingdale:** The Government has made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. Religious activities are not eligible for this funding but religious organisations could be funded if their project benefits the wider community and does not include religious content. The funding is being allocated through the following ways:

£200 million is being distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund which is available to smaller and local VCSE organisations, including religious organisations that provide charitable services in response to the outbreak.

£360 million has been allocated by central government departments with £200 million of this directly supporting hospices.

To support the BBC's 'Big Night In', the Government matched the generous donations of the public across the country with grants for £20 million to the National Emergencies Trust who is working in Partnership with the UK Community Foundations and a further £17 million split between Comic Relief and Children in Need to issue grants to grassroots, local and community organisations providing charitable services during the outbreak.

£85 million has been allocated to the 'Community Match Challenge' which is matching funds raised by philanthropists, foundations and grant making organisations to further support organisations from across the country who are working with those who are most vulnerable and have been hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak. This Fund closed for bids on 2nd August and the outcome will be announced shortly.

A further £4.8 million was allocated to the Voluntary and Community Sector

Emergencies Partnership - a group that comes together to improve national and local coordination before, during and after emergencies - to help strengthen the voluntary sector's response to coronavirus and future emergencies.

In addition to the £750million, a further £150m has been unlocked from dormant bank and building society accounts which are being directed to charities, social enterprises and individuals.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-15/90247>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### **Israel: Trees**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8099] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel about the uprooting of olive trees for the construction of a settler-only road in Ras Karkarby by that government.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are troubled by reports of the destruction of olive trees and we have expressed our concerns to the Israeli Government on a number of occasions. We continue to oppose settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-14/hl8099>

#### **Palestinians: Armed Forces**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8097] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that the bodies of Palestinians who have been killed by the Israel Defense Force are being withheld.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made representations on these reports, we urge all sides to treat the dead with respect and to return any bodies they are holding.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-14/hl8097>

#### **Jerusalem: Demolition**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8098] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel demolished 51 Palestinian structures in East Jerusalem in August.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have 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. We call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-14/hl8098>

#### **Gaza: Coronavirus**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL8027] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide (1) ventilators, and (2) any other urgently required medical supplies, to Gaza; and what steps they are taking to encourage (1) parties in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, (2) the government of Israel and (3) the governments of other neighbouring states to Gaza, to cooperate to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government remains deeply concerned by

the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Gaza.

We have provided over £3.5million to the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, and the World Food Programme (WFP) to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel, scale up laboratory testing capacity and support vulnerable households. The British Consulate General also recently supported the delivery of 15 respirators to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Nine more respirators will soon be shipped for hospitals in Gaza.

In his recent visit to the region, the Foreign Secretary encouraged both Israel and the Palestinians to resume cooperation, including with regards to COVID-19.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-10/hl8027>

### **Armed Conflict: Schools**

**Lord Pendry (Labour) [HL7981]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving the UN in the application of pressure (1) to the government of (a) Israel, (b) Russia, and (c) Saudi Arabia, and (2) to any other government which has yet to sign and has been accused of (a) violating the rights of children, and (b) attacking schools, to sign the Safe Schools Declaration.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Safe Schools Declaration (Declaration) is a powerful initiative that has successfully shifted mind-sets globally on the impact of attacks and military occupation of educational infrastructure. The UK welcomes the Declaration and other efforts aimed at promoting and protecting the right to education and facilitating its continuation in conflict.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the UK is using its membership to engage with key states as they come onto the UNSC on the Declaration, to lobby for endorsement, push for effective implementation, and offer official level consultations where relevant. Through the UNSC Children and Armed Conflict Working Group, the UK supplements and supports the work of the UN to end all violations against children, including pushing states to ensure that educational facilities and related personnel are protected, in line with the Declaration. The UK lobbied successfully for key commitments in September's UNSC Presidential Statement on protecting education against attack, including securing reference to the Declaration and the critical role it plays, despite strong opposition.

In September 2020, the UK actively supported the implementation of the first International Day to Protect Education from Attack on 9 September. We participated in a related UNSC Open Debate, calling upon Member States to endorse and commit to avoiding military use of educational facilities. We will continue to call upon all UN Member States to endorse and implement the Declaration, including Israel, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-09/hl7981>

## **Scottish Parliament Motion**

**S5M-22793 John Finnie (Green): TUC Congress Recognises Israel as a State Practising Apartheid** – That the Parliament welcomes reports of the TUC Congress passing a motion that recognises Israel as a state practising apartheid; understands that the motion also commits the TUC to continued partnership with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in building opposition to Israel's annexation plans; believes that Israel's treatment of Palestinians has been regularly cited by UN Special Rapporteurs on the Human Rights Situation in Palestine as evidence of an apartheid system; understands that the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions National Committee in Palestine is supported by all

major trade unions; believes that acts of international solidarity can be a force for change, and thanks the TUC for its stance.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-22793>

*The TUC motion referred to above can be read on p60 of*

[https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Congress\\_2020\\_Final\\_Agenda\\_AW\\_Digital.pdf](https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Congress_2020_Final_Agenda_AW_Digital.pdf)

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Religious Freedom

**Steve Baker (Conservative)** [85038] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his oral contribution of 6 July 2020, Official Report, column 673, when he plans to co-host a conference on freedom of religion or belief; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:** Defending the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all is a priority for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. In line with our commitment to championing FoRB, the UK intends to host an international Ministerial conference on this issue. We will announce a date for hosting this conference over the coming months.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-04/85038>

*The comments referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-07-06/debates/24B78A01-061C-48A8-AA92-8E53C17516E3/GlobalHumanRightsSanctionsRegime#contribution-A4B85CEE-6EA1-47F2-8E64-D07719BCB2FB>

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

### UK Parliament

#### Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

#### Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

#### Genocide Determination Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

#### Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

### **Scottish Parliament**

#### **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

#### **Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

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### **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

#### **Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Weddings Law** (closing date 3 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

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