



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Housing, Communities and Local Government

Janet Daby (Labour): YourNeighbour.org, a digital platform supporting over 1,300 churches, estimates that faith groups are providing more than 10 million meals a month to people up and down our country who would otherwise go hungry. Our faith groups have missed out on weekly donations and opportunities to raise funds, and they are running out of money and are in desperate need of financial assistance. What assessment has the Minister's Government made of the financial hit to places of worship, and why have the Government not provided ring-fenced support to ensure that they can continue their very much needed work?

Robert Jenrick: I pay tribute to the work of faith groups across the country. I have been regularly meeting with faith leaders from all the major religions through our places of worship taskforce. I am extremely grateful for the hard work of that organisation, which has helped us to reopen places of worship safely. I am aware of the financial impact that the pandemic has had on many places of worship and faith organisations. The schemes created for charities by the Chancellor were open to those from faith organisations and many have taken part in them.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-07-20/debates/6BDA7475-DEE0-4655-B0C7-F7347FE892FA/TopicalQuestions#contribution-DDC01576-E1BC-41CE-A40B-3B0B65EE3708>

House of Commons Written Answer

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Afzal Khan (Labour) [904965] Whether his Department plans to provide financial support to (a) places of worship and (b) faith organisations to help them to reopen safely as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Robert Jenrick: I am very grateful to faith leaders across the country for the leadership they have shown on behalf of their communities during this crisis.

I am also grateful to the Places of Worship Taskforce, which met again last week,

and which has been extremely productive. There are still issues we are working through together, including music for services and singing.

As of the 4th of July, places of worship were allowed to re-open with social distancing in place. Today they are able to hold services, or lead communal worship, and important events in the lives of their communities, such as weddings and funerals. Faith organisations have been able to apply for a range of Government-backed financial packages which support charities and businesses.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-20/904965/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Animal Welfare

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Non-affiliated) [HL6511] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring forward legislative proposals on animal sentience.

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is committed to further strengthening our world-leading animal welfare standards. We have committed to bringing in new laws on animal sentience. Any necessary changes required to domestic legislation will be made in a rigorous and comprehensive way and will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows.

Additionally, we have committed to ending excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening and to banning the keeping of primates as pets. The Government is supporting the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill. This will increase the maximum custodial penalty for animal cruelty from six months' imprisonment to five years' imprisonment. The new maximum penalty of five years is in line with campaigns by key stakeholders such as Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, Dogs Trust and the RSPCA. This is a positive step forward in improving animal welfare, and will act as a serious deterrent against cruelty and neglect. It will provide one of the toughest sanctions in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-06/HL6511/>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Education: Travellers

Baroness Whitaker (Labour) [HL6546] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their expected timetable for implementing the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' recommendation of 1 July that the governments of Member States should include Roma and Travellers' history in school curricula and teaching materials.

Baroness Berridge: The history curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to use specific examples from history to teach pupils about the history of Britain and the wider world.

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers' history can already be taught as part of schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Resources are available from experts in the communities themselves and bodies such as the Historical Association.

As part of Holocaust education, a wide array of resources are available to help teachers explain the persecution by the Nazis of different groups of people. The Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz programme and the knowledge and training provided by the Centre for Holocaust Education include information and resources to support an understanding of the Holocaust and the Nazi's persecution of other non-Jewish groups including the genocide of the Roma.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-06/HL6546/>

The recommendation referred to above can be read at

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016809ee48c

House of Lords Library Briefing

Terezin Declaration: The restitution of property

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/infocus/terezin-declaration-the-restitution-of-property/>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Middle East: Peace Negotiations

Steve McCabe (Labour) [73705] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the passing of The Middle East Partnership for Peace Act 2020 by the US House Committee on Appropriations on peace in the Middle East.

James Cleverly: Peace will only come through negotiations between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress. We welcome all efforts towards peace. The UK remains committed to the objective of making progress towards a two-state solution. We support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living 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.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-14/73705/>

Middle East

Theresa Villiers (Conservative) [74464] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2020 to Question 69487, if he will make it his policy to refer to the 1949 Armistice Line as the pre-1967 lines and not the 1967 borders.

James Cleverly: The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. We are clear that the borders should be based on the lines as they stood on June 4 1967 - the eve of the Six Day War - with equal land swaps reflecting the national, security, and religious interests of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The UK supports UN Security Council Resolution 2334 which paved the way for agreed changes to the 1967 lines as part of a final status deal and as agreed by the parties.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-15/74464/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-06/69487/>

Israel: Palestinians

Sharon Hodgson (Labour) [73751] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to coexistence projects in Israel-Palestine.

James Cleverly: Our people to people programme aimed to foster cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians on issues that can have a positive impact on both communities and build understanding between people on both sides of the conflict, helping build support for a peaceful, negotiated resolution. This programme ended in March 2020.

The programme's research component will analyse the impact of people-to-people work, building an evidence base which will inform any future work in this area.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-14/73751/>

UNRWA: Finance

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [74592] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her Department's policy is on funding for UNRWA.

James Cleverly: The UK is a long-term supporter of UNRWA as a vital humanitarian and stabilising force in the region. We recognise UNRWA's unique mandate from the UN General Assembly, to protect and provide protection and core services to Palestinian refugees across the Near East.

The UK provides multi-year funding to UNRWA. Our contribution to UNRWA will help to provide basic education to more than 533,000 children a year (half of which are girls), access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-15/74592/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Trade Agreements: Israel

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL6677] To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the implications of the government of Israel's planned annexation of parts of the West Bank on the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement, in particular UK preferential imports from Israel; and whether any such implications have been discussed with the government of Israel.

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including settlements, as part of Israel.

For this reason, goods imported from the settlements are not entitled to benefit from trade preferences under the United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement. We will maintain this approach. HM Government has maintained a dialogue with Israel and we will continue to work towards a negotiated two-state solution, using the diplomatic means we have at our disposal.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-09/HL6677/>

The trade and partnership agreement referred to above can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf

Israel: Visas

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL6532] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a distinction is made between Israelis who live in Israel and those who live in the Occupied Palestinian Territories when deciding whether Israelis are eligible for the six-month visa waiver to the UK.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Nationals or citizens of Israel who hold a full Israeli passport do not require a visa to come to the UK as a visitor or for any other purpose, for less than six months. Each applicant is assessed against a set of suitability and eligibility criteria under the Immigration Rules. Applicants are considered on their merits, regardless of where they live.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-06/HL6532/>

Police: Israel

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL6534] To ask Her Majesty's Government what training British police officers have received from the Israeli police force in (1) the UK, and (2) Israel, in the last five years.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are not aware of any British police officers having received training from the Israeli police force, nor the Israeli Defence Force, in the UK or Israel in the last 5 years.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-06/HL6534/>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

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

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>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 3 days**

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill (closing date 24 July 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115038.aspx>

Legislative proposals for religion, values and ethics [Wales] (closing date 28 July 2020)

<https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>

TOP

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