



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Coronavirus: Funerals

**Crispin Blunt (Conservative)** [105274] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2020 to Question 98661 on Funerals: Coronavirus, what is defined as a funeral for the purposes of covid-19 restrictions on attendance, and what the policy is on multiple events for one deceased individual.

**Nadine Dorries:** The current restrictions on social contact include an exemption for gathering to attend a funeral. Such a gathering can include no more than 30 people and must be held at a COVID-19 secure venue, not a private dwelling.

A 'commemorative event following a person's death' may be held following the funeral including a wake, stone setting or scattering of ashes. Commemorative events are limited to 15 people and also must be held at a COVID-19 secure venue and not a private dwelling.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/105274>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-02/98661>

### Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, and Glasgow Jewish Representative Council

**The Jewish Community in Scotland has issued the following statement in response to the publication of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report of their *Investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party***

The findings of the Equality and Human Rights Commission investigation are damning and a conclusive demonstration of antisemitism in the Labour party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. Not only did the Labour party fail, at the highest level, to stamp out anti-Jewish racism, but the leadership actively intervened to stop this issue from being dealt with.

For years now, the Jewish community in Scotland and across the UK has made efforts to engage with and work with the Labour party – to no avail. Our community has fought

against racism while facing an ongoing denial of antisemitism in the Labour party. Jeremy Corbyn's response to the findings continues to be a denial and minimisation of Labour antisemitism under his leadership, and we therefore support the party's decision to suspend his membership.

We are saddened that the leader of Scottish Labour has responded on what the UK leader has openly admitted to be "this day of shame for Labour" by merely repeating that "Corbyn is a lifelong anti-racist campaigner". The issue is not what he claims to be, but what he did – and failed to do – and his actions and inactions speak for themselves, as the investigation by the independent Equality and Human Rights Commission has exposed in painful detail.

We welcome Kier Starmer's supportive and honest comments, and hope that he is able to take on the task of tackling antisemitism and rebuilding trust with the community, and we find it literally beyond belief that there are still senior members of the Labour Party who remain in denial despite the findings of the UK Equality and Human Rights watchdog.

We call on Scottish Labour and its leadership to confirm that they accept the EHRC findings and to press for immediate and decisive action to deal with antisemitism.

[https://www.scojec.org/news/2020/20x\\_ehrc/labour.html](https://www.scojec.org/news/2020/20x_ehrc/labour.html)

***EHRC report: Investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party***

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/investigation-into-antisemitism-in-the-labour-party.pdf>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### **Palestinians: Police**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9332] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that 12 Palestinian police officers were detained as they returned to Ramallah after entering Area C to apprehend a Palestinian with criminal charges.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made representations on this case. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to regularly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/hl9332>

#### **West Bank: Demolition**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9333] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs COVID-19 Emergency Situation Report 17 (29 August–8 September 2020), published on 8 September, and the finding that there has been a 60 per cent increase in the demolition of Palestinian buildings demolished by the government of Israel since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the findings of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs COVID-19 Emergency Situation Report 17 regarding demolitions of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. The UK is

seriously concerned by the continued demolitions of Palestinian property, particularly at this time. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, is harmful to the peace process and weakens the capacity of Palestinians to withstand the impact of COVID-19. Under IHL, an occupying power has the duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene in the occupied territory to the fullest extent of the means available to it and with the cooperation of the local authorities. We call on both parties to avoid any provocative action which might undermine the cooperation that is so critical.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/hl9333>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/covid-19-emergency-situation-report-17>

#### **West Bank: Demolition**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9336] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the demolition of the homes of six Palestinian families in Masafer Yatta on 30 September.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made representations on this particular case, the UK is concerned by the continued demolitions of Palestinian structures by Israeli authorities. In a joint statement on 16 October, the UK, alongside France, Germany, Spain and Italy, urged Israel to halt its policy of evictions and demolitions of Palestinian structures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv also raised this issue with the Government of Israel on 13 October, alongside European partners. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/hl9336>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/quint-statement-on-israeli-settlements>

#### **West Bank: Breast Cancer**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9337] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take to ensure that women living in Gaza have access to medical treatment for breast cancer in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement between Gaza and the West Bank. Israeli restrictions severely restrict the movement of medical professionals, patients and families from Gaza, hampering the provision of quality health services. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the matter of medical permits, and the issue of movement and access, with the Israeli authorities. A lasting resolution to the situation is needed that will ensure that all those who are in need of medical attention and their families have unimpeded access to healthcare provisions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/hl9337>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2622>

## **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**

### **Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

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

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

Justice Committee: Stage 1 evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousaf

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12903&i=116638#ScotParlOR>

### **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

**Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type B Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations**  
(closing date 20 November 2020)

<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/consultation-specified-type-b-procedures/>

**Ethnic disparities and inequality in the UK** (closing date 30 November 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ethnic-disparities-and-inequality-in-the-uk-call-for-evidence/ethnic-disparities-and-inequality-in-the-uk-call-for-evidence>

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

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

**Hate crime laws** (closing date 24 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

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