



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister's Questions

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): I know the whole House will want to join me in sending our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who sadly passed away on Saturday. His leadership had a profound impact on our whole country and across the world. May his memory be a blessing. ...

col/ 898 Keir Starmer (Labour): May I join the Prime Minister in his comments about Jonathan Sacks? ...

col/ 901 Ian Blackford (SNP): May I associate myself with the remarks of the Prime Minister on the death of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks? ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-11-11/debates/DAA7FB2E-1B29-4C00-A085-26530A5BEA74/Engagements>

House of Commons Written Answer

Travel: Funerals

Matthew Pennycook (Labour) [91904] To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether travelling overseas for the purposes of (a) arranging and (b) attending funerals are legally permitted reasons to travel during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Robert Courts: You can leave home to attend a place of worship for individual prayer, a funeral or a related event for someone who has died, to visit a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a deathbed wedding. A list of what constitutes a 'reasonable excuse' for leaving home can be found in the [regulations](#). You can travel internationally if travelling for a reason which would permit you to leave your home under the national lockdown rules, including those set out above. Guidance for overseas travel is published in gov.uk, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-06/91904>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-23332 Elaine Smith (Labour): Keep Churches and Places of Worship Open – That the Parliament believes that churches and places of worship have made every effort to reduce the opportunity for the spread of COVID-19; understands that the procedures put in place are in the main working effectively; appreciates that being able to worship together is crucial for many people; acknowledges that this provides personal connection and gives people hope, which is vital for mental health and wellbeing, especially for people who are older or isolated, and believes that, as far as possible, churches and places of worship should be kept open during any further lockdown restrictions.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-23332>

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Welsh Assembly Debate

The Armed Forces

492 Rhianon Passmore (Labour): On this Armistice Day we mark the ultimate sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that we today can live our lives free from tyranny, racism and fascism. We will not forget all those who have died in the call of serving their country or those who have been impacted in so many ways still today in war and conflict. We will also not forget the millions of Jewish families—children and babies, brothers and sisters—systematically and horrifically tortured and murdered, alongside other ethnic groups, the disabled and political prisoners. We will not forget you. ...

<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/6619#C330617>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

West Bank: Demolition

Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat) [91910] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the demolition of the Ras At-Tin school in the West Bank.

James Cleverly: The UK is seriously concerned by the possible demolition of a Palestinian school in Ras Al-Tin by Israeli authorities. I raised UK concern about the planned demolition of humanitarian structures, as well as the wider demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concern with the Government of Israel on 13 October, alongside European partners. Officials also visited the school on 16 October. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We recognise that Palestinians face severe difficulty in securing building permissions for homes and infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Area C. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop

improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-06/91910>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Gaza aid worker must be given fair trial or released, say UN experts

Israel must release a former Gaza aid worker who has been in prison for more than four years without a verdict, or immediately grant him a fair trial, UN human rights experts* said today.

Mohammed el-Halabi, the former Gaza director of the World Vision charity, was arrested by Israeli security forces in June 2016 on allegations that he diverted millions of dollars in development funds to armed groups in Gaza, charges he denies, and which audits have not substantiated.

“Mr el-Halabi’s arrest, interrogation and trial is not worthy of a democratic state,” the experts said. “Israeli authorities must grant him the full rights of a fair trial, or else release him unconditionally.

“What is happening to Mr. el-Halabi bears no relation to the trial standards we expect from democracies, and is part of a pattern where Israel uses secret evidence to indefinitely detain hundreds of Palestinians,” they said. ...

“It’s particularly disturbing that the prosecution is relying upon confessions allegedly obtained by force while he was denied access to a lawyer, and on testimony from undercover informers,” the experts said. ...

“These fundamentally unfair practices stain the justice system of any state,” the experts said. “We demand that Israel adhere to the requirements of the international rule of law.” ...

“Even in security trials, these fundamental rights must be respected,” the experts said.

“Unfortunately, Mr el-Halabi has been put in the position where he is required to refute allegations against him without knowing the details or who the accusers are. Keeping him in the dark like this shifts the burden of proof to the defendant, and is a fundamental violation of the right to a fair trial.” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26496&LangID=E>

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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>

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

**** closes in 8 days**

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